

Titus

Godliness – The Demonstration of True Faith and Knowledge

A compilation commentary on Titus

Grace Baptist Church

Winterset, IA

Titus

Background: Titus was a Greek Gentile (Gal. 2:3). He had probably become a Christian under the influence of Paul and had become one of the apostle's protégés (Titus 1:4). Titus had been with Paul since the apostle's early ministry. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their mission of mercy to the Jerusalem church when Paul was laboring in Antioch of Syria, Titus' home before his first missionary trip.

Titus was Paul's special representative to the Corinthian church during Paul's third missionary journey. He carried the "severe letter" from Ephesus (2 Cor. 12:18; cf. 2 Cor. 2:3-4; 7:8-12) and, returning to Ephesus through Macedonia, met Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor. 7:6-16). He was also the leader of the group of men Paul sent to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to pick up the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:6, 16, 23).

It is believed that Titus was with Paul, following his release from his first Roman imprisonment, when he wrote his first letter to Timothy. After the writing of the first letter to Timothy, Paul and Titus visited Crete and the churches in Crete. Paul left Crete and instructed Titus to remain there when he departed to set the church there in order (Titus 1:5).

Paul planned to send Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus so Titus could join him in Nicapolis for the winter (3:12); Nicapolis being the town in Dalmatia / Illyricum (parts of modern Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and northern Albania) that lay east of northern Italy across the Adriatic Sea.

Most commentators believe that Paul wrote the letter to Titus either from Nicapolis or from Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3) sometime between A.D. 62 and 66; after Paul's first imprisonment but before his second

imprisonment. Zenas and Apollos may have delivered this letter to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:13).

Titus' task of setting the churches in order included dealing with false teachers (1:10-11) and motivating believers on Crete to change; changing from unfruitful conduct to good works (3:14).

Titus 1:1: Paul begins his letter to Titus by identifying himself as a slave of God and a messenger (apostle) of Jesus Christ. Paul's identification as a slave shows his complete and willing servitude (submission) to God (I Cor. 6:20). As a slave, Paul could not act on his own authority because as a slave he had none. But a slave could act on the authority of his master; for Paul his master was God and Jesus Christ and he acted on their behalf with the authority given to him by them.

Paul's concern as a slave of God and the messenger of Jesus Christ was the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of truth that leads to godliness. It was Paul's purpose, as an apostle, to see people brought to Christ; coming to faith and the knowledge of truth. This faith and knowledge of truth produces godliness (godly living) in those who believe; godliness is the demonstration of true faith and knowledge of truth.

Titus 1:2-3: The faith and knowledge of truth results in a life that has a view toward eternal life. Paul's entire ministry demonstrated his view toward / of eternal life. It was hope (the certainty, not wishful thinking) in eternal life, promised by God before time began by God who cannot lie, that motivated Paul's life and ministry. It was this hope that was the foundation of Paul's ministry.

This hope and promise of eternal was demonstrated in Paul's ministry, a ministry he did not choose for himself but received by the command of God – His (and our) Savior. It is God's eternal plan to save (salvage) people for Himself, which was the focus of Paul's ministry.

Titus 1:4: Paul addressed the letter to Titus. The letter was a personal letter but it was intended to be read widely to all churches. Titus was considered by Paul to be a true son; meaning Paul probably led Titus to Christ and was his mentor in the ministry.

Paul greeted Titus with his typical greeting – desiring for Titus “grace” (receiving something not deserved), “mercy” (not receiving something deserved), and “peace” (quietness and rest with contentment) from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. This should be the desire of our heart for our fellow believers.

Note: Paul uses the term “Savior” interchangeably for God the Father and Christ Jesus the Son in Titus.

Titus 1:5: Paul had left Titus in Crete to provide leadership to the churches in Crete. The churches were not organized and Titus was to straighten out (to set in order) the organization of the churches. He was to do that by appointing elders in every city in Crete. Paul, whose authority was given by God and recognized by believers in Crete, was delegating his authority to Titus.

Titus 1:6-7: Paul provides Titus instruction on who was qualified to be an elder/bishop in the church. Paul listed 17 qualifications for an elder in Titus. This list is very similar to 15 qualifications Paul identified in I Tim. 3:2-7. The qualifications of the elder/bishop are categorized into 3 distinct areas of qualifications: social / domestic; personal; doctrinal.

NOTE: “Above reproach” (1:6-7) = blameless. It is the translation of the Greek word used in 1 Tim. 3:10 (*anegkletos*), translated there as “beyond reproach.” Paul used a synonym as the first qualification of elders in 1 Tim. 3:2 (*anepilempton*) translated there as “above reproach.” Blameless means that the elder/bishop must have no obvious flaw in his character or conduct that would bring justifiable criticism on him or the church. Paul gave the reason for this

qualification in verse 1:7a; “the elder must be blameless” because he is entrusted with God’s work. The remainder of the qualifications in Titus place 'blamelessness' into a concrete framework. This is an emphatic requirement that is an absolute requirement for an elder / overseer. He must be above reproach in his behavior, which means he must have nothing evident in his conduct on which someone could base a charge or accusation; no valid accusation of wrong doing can be made against him. This is the overarching requirement of leadership of the elder / bishop. The rest of the qualifications elaborate on what it means to be blameless.

1) Social and Domestic Qualifications:

- **"Husband of one wife"** (Gr. *mias gunaikos aner*; 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:2) means a man must presently be a moral husband of one wife. The literal translation of the Greek means “a one-woman man”. The best interpretation of this phrase is that a “one-woman man” is a man who is exclusively devoted to his wife; maintaining a singular devotion to her in affection and sexual purity in both thought and deed....and it is not a reference to marital status.
- **"Having children who believe"** (Gr. *tekna echon pista*, 1:6; 1 Tim.3:4) means “having his children under control”. The context seems to limit this to the children who are still living at home and are not yet an adult, assuming the elder has children. The strict interpretation means that elders must have families that all believe. The best interpretation, in light of Titus1:9; 3:8; 1 Tim.3:11, 15 and 3:1, states that the elder's children are to be faithful in obeying the head of the house. In fact, the rest of the verse contrasts 'faithful' with “*the charge of being wild and disobedient*”, which suggests faithfulness to obedience. This interpretation is supported by the fact that a decision to believe in Christ is the child's, and even the best Christian parent cannot guarantee that any of their children will be believers.

2) Personal Qualifications:

Blameless (no obvious flaw in his character or conduct) is the overarching requirement of leadership and all qualifications listed elaborate on what it means to be blameless. Paul switches in verse 7 from “elder to “bishop/overseer” indicating the words are interchangeable. God's overseer of His church must be a servant (cf. Mark 10:41-45; 1 Cor. 3:5-9; 4:1-2); a **steward (one who manages someone else’s property) that is.....**

- **“Not self-willed” or “not self-pleasing”**; meaning he is not arrogant, overbearing, or self-willed. He does not insist on having his own way. Such a person will usually not take other people's criticisms and suggestions. Much damage has been done in churches by elders who force their will on others.
- **“Not quick-tempered” or “not soon angry”**; meaning he is to be clear-headed and sober-minded when dealing with the matters of leadership of the church. The overseer is to have a calm temperament and quiet speech that does not promote disunity or disharmony (James 1:19-20). It is described as being uncontentious (not contentious) in 1 Tim.3:3.
- **“Not addicted to wine” or “not a drunkard”**; another translation is “not given to much wine”. There is a debate if this phrase requires the elder to be abstinence from drinking or not (Prov. 23:29-35, 31:4-7). While that can be debated, the clear interpretation of this qualification is that the overseer must not have a reputation of being a drinker or a drunkard. The implication is that the overseer’s lifestyle is to be higher than the world’s standards of conduct for the purpose of leading others to a life that reflects Christ.

- **"Not pugnacious" or "striker"**; meaning literally "not a giver of blows". The overseer must react to difficult situations calmly and gently...and under no circumstances should they react with physical violence from an angry temper. The overseer's self-control is to extend to his emotions. It is my personal belief that this also extends beyond the physical violence to verbal abuse as well (I Peter 2:18-23, 3:8-12), for it is rare that physical violence occurs separately from verbal abuse - the two are companions.
- **"Not fond of sordid gain"**; meaning "free from the love of money" with emphasis on not making profit out of Christian service or through dishonest gain. Complete honesty in financial matters and an attitude of detachment toward wealth that leads to generosity are the signs of a leader who will be able to model freedom from the allure of money. The overseer is to be motivated by love for God and His people (the church) to minister; not motivated by money (II Peter 5:2). He is not to be in the ministry for the purpose of monetary gain, which would show that he has a heart set on the world's standards and desires.

Titus 1:8 – Personal Qualifications continued...

- **"Hospitable"**; meaning "having a love of strangers". The overseer is to set the example of the virtue of hospitality before the church.
- **"Loving what is good"**; meaning having a heart and mind that is directed (disposed) toward good words, kindness, and gentleness. The overseer is to set the example of goodness before the church.
- **"Sensible"**; meaning sober, sober-minded, self-controlled and prudent. The overseer is to be "safe in mind" and serious with the right priorities when leading the church.

- **"Just"**; meaning upright, fair, and equitable. The overseer is to be righteous and innocent of deceit and prejudice.
- **"Devout"**; meaning holy, set apart to God. The overseer is to be pure and free from vice; not controlled by out-of-balance desire.
- **"Self-controlled"**; meaning disciplined, temperate and "sober-minded". The overseer is to be disciplined, knowledgeable in how to properly order his priorities, and serious about the spiritual matters of the church. The overseer is not to lead a chaotic life but a life of order and discipline.

3) Doctrinal Qualifications (Titus 1:9)

- **"Holding fast the faithful word"**; meaning committed to God's truth with deep conviction. The overseer/elder conserves it and preserves it from dilution, deletion, and distortion.
- **"Able . . . to exhort in sound doctrine"**; meaning to encourage others with "healthy truth" or "health giving truth". Teaching truth is a distinguishing requirement (and duty) of the overseer/elder. This specific skill is an exclusive requirement of the overseer/elder. A man who desires to be an overseer/elder must have the aptitude and ability to handle the Word of God with integrity and skill.
- **"Able . . . to refute those who contradict"**; meaning to point out the error of false teaching and explain why it is wrong. He must be able to defend the faith while confronting error (false teaching).

The overseer/elder must meet the moral standard outlined in Titus 1:6-8 and he must be a reliable man of the Word (Titus 1:9). The key phrase of Titus 1:9 is "as he has been taught", which means that the overseer/elder is man who has been intentionally disciplined and who

is a conservator and handler of the truth; he is one who understands it, teaches it, and defends it.

The overseer/elder must be blameless (no obvious flaw in his character or conduct) as a servant and a steward. He is to be a man of integrity; his integrity of character (Titus 1:6-9) is more important than the skill of his gifts. It is important that a church agree on the required qualifications of an overseer/elder in the selection and approval of an overseer/elder; because it is this selection and approval that assures proper Biblical leadership for the church.

THE IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS

1:10-11: Paul, in his letter to Titus, emphasizes the need to guard the church (a group of individual believers) against false teaching. The instruction of Paul to Titus in 1:10-11 is a contrast to the elder's qualifications and responsibility to handle the Scriptures accurately, outlined in 1:5-9. Paul instruction to Titus in 1:10-11 outlines the reason why Titus must appoint only qualified people to church leadership.

1:10 - Paul characterized the false teachers in the churches of Crete as; 1 - insubordinate (rebellious, against God's truth), 2 - empty (idle) talkers and 3 - deceivers. Their teaching was only human opinion, words without meaning, rather than the truth of God's Word. These false teachers were mainly Jews who claimed to be believers (or possibly Jewish believers who were seriously misled). They taught that salvation required the physical cutting of circumcision and complete adherence to Mosaic Law.

NOTE: The false teachers described by Paul were individuals who were accepted into a church and had assumed positions of leadership. Their listeners expected that what they were teaching was the truth, but it was not.

1:11 – Paul instructed Titus to silence the false teacher's teaching (mouths must be stopped) because they were causing great damage in the church. He was to rebuke them by instructing them not to teach because they were misleading entire households (family units or possibly house churches) or they would be excommunicated from the church. So why were they teaching lies? Their motive was money. It was money that was being obtained illegitimately by teaching falsehood as truth. When a teacher or a preacher looks on his teaching or preaching as a career for personal profit and gain, it is not God's calling; which is a perilous position and condition to be in.

1:12: The Cretan poet that Paul quoted was Epimenides (a native of Crete that was widely accepted as a prophet), who lived in the sixth century B.C. Paul agrees with Epimenides' statement about the Cretan's as being true. Historians of the day agree, stating that the Cretans were liars, beastly, lazy, and gluttonous. So notorious were the Cretans that the Greeks actually formed a verb "*kretizein/kretizo*", stated as "to Cretize/to Cretanize"; which means "*to lie and cheat*".

1:13-14: Paul believed the qualities of the Cretans were also the qualities of the false teachers. He charges Titus to sharply rebuke them; so they have the opportunity to turn from their error and become sound in the faith. The goal of rebuking is to salvage and recover the false teacher from teaching error. Failure to confront problems within the church is indicative of a basic indifference to God's truth. The restoration that is possible, both in fellowship and in sound doctrine, is compromised by a reluctance to confront. The ultimate goal of discipline should be to recover the one in error and to restore to fellowship with believers.

The Jewish myths and laws taught by the false teachers in Crete tended to be Gnostic based. Gnostic beliefs are: 1-knowledge is superior to virtue; 2-scripture can only be understood by a select few;

3-evil in the world precludes God from being the only creator; 4-deity cannot unite with anything material; and 5-there is no resurrection of the flesh. Paul's exhortation to Titus was to severely rebuke these false teachers to turn them away from lies to the truth of God's Word; and in doing so protecting the believer from error.

1:15: The "commandments of men" mentioned in 1:14 involved circumcision and asceticism (abstaining from certain foods). Paul tells Titus that to the pure in heart all things are pure and clean; including food. However, the defiled heart spreads impurity wherever it goes through words and deeds. If the mind is defiled it cannot accurately inform the conscience. Therefore, the conscience cannot warn a person accurately. When the conscience is accurately and truthfully infused with God's Word, it can function as the warning system God designed it to be. Therefore, nothing from the outside can corrupt one who is internally pure, but someone who is internally impure corrupts everything they touch.

1:16: The internal impurity and unbelief of the false teachers rendered them as abominable and disobedient to God as well as disapproved (unfit) by Him for doing anything good. Even though the false teachers claim to know and follow God, their actions demonstrated just the opposite; there is a one-to-one relationship between theological error and moral deficiency. Of all bad men, religious bad men are the worst; because under the guise of truth they lead people to an eternal hell. Whenever a person's talk and walk conflict - it is usually his walk rather than his talk that reveals what he really is.

Verse 16 is the hinge verse of the epistle. Here Paul identifies a key issue: the false teachers are teaching that what a person believes and how a person behaves are not related, and that godly living is not a necessary corollary to God's salvation plan and work. Later in Titus, Paul will give two creedal statements that show that obedience

comes out of salvation and must come out of salvation, for it is a purpose for which salvation was provided.

THE CONDUCT OF THE SAINTS: To establish order in the church Paul gave Titus instructions concerning the behavior of Christians that was appropriate for them. He now stresses the importance of building up the inner life of believers as the best protection against error.

2:1 - Introductory charge: Paul introduces the instructions concerning individual conduct by focusing on Titus... "But as for you". In contrast to the false teachers, Titus was to teach the believers conduct that was in harmony with sound (i.e., healthy) doctrine. Paul wanted believers to behave consistently with what they profess to believe; something that was not occurring with the false teachers and those who were following them. The "things" Paul will write about pertains to truths, attitudes, and actions that correspond to and are based on biblical truth. In order to please God and be an effective witness to unbelievers, God's people must know the truth that leads to spiritual health. The primary motivation for this exhortation comes from and agrees with sound doctrine. A secondary motive is that the behavior of a believer should make a positive impact on unbelievers who observe their life.

2:2 - Older men: Paul begins his exhortation on conduct by addressing older men, which appears to be men over the age of 60 years old. The older men were to be temperate (sober, vigilant, clearheaded), dignified (reverent, worthy of respect, honorable, serious-minded rather than clowns), and sensible (temperate, self-controlled). They were also to be sound in faith (exhibiting trust in God in conjunction with correctness in doctrine), love (Gr. *agape*; concern and self-sacrifice for other people), and perseverance (patiently enduring in view of their hope as believers). A seriousness of purpose with dignity; yet gravity must never be confused with gloominess; the years ought to bring an increasing understanding and

wisdom in all areas of life. The older men were to be the primary, lead examples of a Christ-like, spiritually mature life. These characteristics, in combination together, are marks of maturity and good spiritual health.

2:3-5- Older and Young Women: Paul addresses older women (which appear to be women over the age of 60 that no longer have children at home) and young women (which are women over the age of 14 who were married and raising children). Paul's instruction to the older women and young women are intertwined because of the role of the older women in training the young women.

The older women were to have the same attributes as the older men (2:2). They were to behave reverently (dignified, worthy of respect, honorable, serious minded – not a clown); but they had idle time on their hands and were not using their time wisely. They were to avoid malicious gossip (slandering others); and enslavement to controlling substances. They were to teach what is good; meaning they were to give instruction in wise behavior and good judgment. This instruction was to be given to the young women.

The principle being taught here is that the older is to be teaching and mentoring the younger. The teaching of the older women was practical; about loving their husbands and children, about being sensible and self-controlled, about being pure, about being orderly workers at home, about being kind, and about being submissive to their husbands (see Eph. 5:22-24, Col. 3:18, 1 Pet. 3:1). Such behavior guards the Word of God from dishonor (blasphemed) by those who would otherwise observe inconsistency between the teaching of Scripture and the conduct of these women.

Note: "Loving their husbands" means unconditional acceptance; not dependent on performance. Being "obedient" (subject) is best

understood as "order"; again being the acceptance of a relationship that God has placed you in (Gen. 2:18,23; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

Note: A woman's home is the primary arena of her ministry. It also makes a statement about her values. Homemaking includes raising and nurturing children, if God blesses the marriage with children (cf. Prov. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:7). Working at home and taking care of the day-today responsibilities of the home and rising of the children is the primary responsibility of the wife. Unfortunately many women ignore scripture under the pretense of needing the additional income to help pay bills.

The training of the younger women is the duty, not of Titus, but the older women, qualified to do so by position and character. Many older women have discovered secrets of godly living in relation to their husbands, children, neighbors and personal relationships that could save younger women a lot of unnecessary grief. When the unavoidable trials of life come to the young woman, who better to guide her through than an older woman who has been through it before? It is the responsibility of the church to see that younger women have contact with older women.

By manifesting the qualities Paul identifies, women (wives and/or mothers) will earn the respect of unbelievers who observe them, thus preventing the Word of God from being maligned. This is the purpose of godly conduct – to eliminate any reproach on the Scripture. When a believer claims to believe God's Word but does not obey it, the Word is dishonored.

2:6-8 - Young men: Paul now addresses the younger men over the age of 12; who are single or married and raising families. Paul begins by telling the young men that the same principles that applied to the older men, older women, and younger women also apply to their conduct and behavior. They are to be a lover of their wife and

children, self-controlled, pure, providers for their family, kind, and the leader of the home.

Since Titus was considered a young man, Paul addressed him personally. Titus had a special obligation to demonstrate and exhibit the moral and spiritual qualities that he was to teach to others; he was to be an example (a pattern) to all in every good work. As a pattern, his life was to be an exhibition of integrity, seriousness, and sound speech; he was to live blameless, not giving any who opposed him any basis to condemn him. The attacks of those who opposed him would always occur, but they would have to make up falsehoods to attack him; which would cause the attacker shame when it was found out.

The young men were to be sensible (self-controlled; moderate, sensible, self-restrained) and an example of good deeds. Since young men are inclined to be impulsive and unrestrained in conduct, their basic need is to be self-controlled; cultivating balance and self-restraint in daily life. They are to do this by meditating in God's truth as believers. They were to be dignified (serious), using speech others cannot legitimately criticize. Obedience to these teachings would rob others of any reasonable grounds for criticism. Thereby the enemies would be "put to shame" because they would have no factual basis for their opposition.

2:9-10 - Bondservants: The final group Paul addresses are the bondservants (slaves), who made up a significant portion of the first century church. It is quite possible that the false teachers' disruption of Cretan households (1:11) accounts for the disrespectful behavior among slaves to their masters, which prompted Paul to instruct Titus regarding their behavior. The term "bondservant" would be best understood as an "employee" today. Paul is not condoning slavery but is teaching that whatever circumstance one finds themselves in they are to serve Christ first.

Paul wrote to Titus that slaves were to: (1) be submissive to their masters, (2) please their masters, (3) refrain from talking back, (4) not to steal from them, and (5) prove to be completely trustworthy. This kind of behavior is in harmony with how Christ lived His life. During this time the slave had few, if any civil rights; and they were treated like domesticated animals. As a believer, regardless of our situation, we are to be submissive to and serve our employer (master) because this attitude and life "adorns" (compliments) the teachings about God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is an opportunity for witness that we have today. As believers and employees in the workplace, we must: (1) obey orders, (2) not talk back when given a task to do, (3) not steal, and (4) respect and obey our employers. This behavior is to be demonstrated in your life whether the employer is fair or unfair, kind or cruel (1 Peter 2:18-25). This behavior will create a contrast between you, as the believer, and the unbeliever because it demonstrates the reality of Christ in your life; and it will make attractive the truth of the Word of God that God saves sinners.

2:11-12 - Living in Response to God's Grace - The previous paragraph [2:1-10] was a challenge to the believers in the Cretan churches to accept and demonstrate patterns of righteous behavior. Godly living is demanded by God's truth; the truth that demands godly living is "grace".

Believers are to live this way because ("for") the grace of God that saves also instructs one to live in a new way, in contrast to the world. God has manifested His grace (unmerited favor) in Christ and the gospel. Christ and the message of the Gospel has resulted in two things: the possibility of salvation for all and the actual salvation of all who believe in Christ (1 Tim. 2:4, 6; 4:10).

In the Greek, the term “has appeared” (meaning “to become visible, make an appearance”) declares the manifestation of grace as a historical reality. This is a reference to Christ's entire earthly life—his birth, life, death, and resurrection. The phrase “all men” or “all people” does not teach universal salvation, but is a reference to the offering of salvation to all mankind in general – no one is excluded. Jesus Christ made a sufficient sacrifice to cover every sin of everyone who believes; which is what Paul referenced in his opening words to Titus in 1:1 – out of all humanity, only those who will believe will be saved.

2:12 - When the believer understands “grace”, it teaches them that salvation is transforming and it produces new life in which the power of sin is broken. This new lifestyle provides a witness to all who observe that God’s plan and purpose of salvation is fulfilled through grace. Saving grace teaches believers to say “no” to sin and “yes” to godliness.

Negatively it instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly passions, which are the passions and desires that unbelievers find so appealing but which are not in harmony with God's character and will.

Positively it instructs the believer to live sensibly (self-controlled inwardly), righteously (morally upright outwardly), and godly (reverent upwardly) in this present age.

The use of the term “present age” stresses that believers are to live sensibly, righteously and godly...today in the here and now. It also sets up the reference to the future return of Jesus Christ. Certainty about the future enables constancy in the present.

2:13-14 - Living in Response to God’s Grace -. Godly living is demanded by God’s truth; the truth that demands godly living is “grace”. The grace of God should result in the believer’s present commitment to deny what God detests and to pursue what He

values. God's grace is evident in His provision of salvation in Christ and in the prospect of Christ's future return to take the believer to be with Him forever.

2:13 - The hope of Jesus Christ's second coming should motivate the believer to honor God by their behavior today. The Greek word translated "looking for" is in the present tense indicating that the believer’s waiting should demonstrate an imminent readiness to welcome the returning Lord.

In the Greek text, the article "*the*" introduces both the "*blessed hope*" and the "*glorious appearing*", suggesting that Paul was viewing one event from two aspects. The "*blessed hope*" is the "*glorious appearing*" of our Savior. The term "*hope*", as used here, does not indicate what is wished for but what is assured - the imminent coming of Christ (it is assured, meaning it is guaranteed).

The "*holy people*" Paul refers to are believers who are Christ’s purpose in dying as a ransom payment. Therefore, knowing all He has done and why He has done it, a believer who truly loves Christ looks forward to His return....and is willing to pursue godliness and to deny themselves the passions of the world. Conversely, a believer who is not looking forward to Christ’s return and is living an ungodly life does not clearly understand what Christ has done for them or they do not actually believe in Christ.

The unusual phrase "*the/our great God*", found only here in the New Testament, is best accounted for as being a description of the appearing and glory of one Person, our great God and Savior - Jesus Christ.

2:14 – Paul establishes his call for godliness in the fact that one purpose of Jesus’ death was to make His people holy. Christ's intent in providing salvation for the believer was to buy their freedom from slavery to sin and wickedness.

The verb “*gave*” portrays Christ's death as a ritual offering made specifically to atone for sins (Rom 4:25; 8:32). Here the willingness of Christ to pay the ransom is emphasized because He “*gave himself*”. The phrase “*for us*” reveals that this offering was both representative and substitutionary. Christ's purpose included the purification of a people for Himself; ones who are eager to do what is right and good. The highest and purest motivation for a believer’s behavior is not based on what they can do for God but rather upon what God has done for them and yet will do.

For the believer to forsake godliness is to despise the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The believer is to seek godliness because they are a “*special people*” (a prized, treasured possession of Jesus Christ); Jesus paid a high ransom price of His own blood to satisfy God’s required justice. As a “*special people*” we, as believers, are to be zealous of good works because they are the product of salvation (not a means of salvation). There is no room for claiming to be a believer if there is no evidence of a life transformation.

Summary – 2:11-14: Living in Response to God’s Grace. Godly living is demanded by God’s truth; the truth of God that demands godly living is “*grace*”. This paragraph provides the theological basis for the “*lifestyle*” commanded in verses 1-10. The grace of God should result in the believer’s commitment to deny what God detests and to pursue what He values. God's grace is evident in His provision of salvation in Christ; a salvation that involves the double work of redeeming the believer from judgment and of producing moral purity and service to others. This salvation is positively expressed by a looking forward with hope to the prospect of Christ's future return to take the believer to be with Him forever.

Verses 11-14 are notable for their balance of doctrine with living. Beginning with the incarnation (vs.11-'the grace of God hath appeared'), this doctrine relates to a life that denies evil and practices today (vs. 12). This new life sees in the return of Christ the incentive

for godly conduct (vs.13-'looking for that blessed hope'); and also realizes the purpose of the atonement (vs. 14) is expressed in personal holiness and good works. This passage is one of the most concise summations in the entire N.T. of the relation of Gospel truth to life.

Concluding Charge 2:15 - This last verse concludes the section of instructions to various groups in the church (ch.2). Paul urges Titus to teach, exhort, and reprove, in accord with what the apostle had just revealed, with full authority since it was divine revelation; this is the call to the church to be “*the authority*” in teaching truth. Titus is not to let anyone intimidate him because the truth was at stake. The reference to “*all authority*”, along with the command to not disregard Titus, shows that Paul expects this instruction to be given clearly and with certainty by Titus. Titus was to aggressively encourage those who are doing well, rebuke those who need corrected, and do so without being intimidated by anyone.

Individual responsibility 3:1-2 – Paul exhorts Titus to 'teach these things' (a reference to 2:1-14) ‘with all authority’ (2:15). He then admonishes Titus to remind the believers in Crete churches of what their attitude should be toward rulers and authorities (because it was poor and improper). Paul describes “*gospel living*” to Titus with instructions on how to interact and live with unbelievers. His teaching is about behaviors and attitudes that are to “*adorn*” the gospel to make it attractive to others; this is a theme of his letter to Titus – the believer’s 'good works' are for the sake of the unbeliever.

Paul instructs Titus to remind the believers of their responsibilities to those who are in authority and to those they live with and around. As believers we are to...

1. Be submissive to all forms and levels of government rulers and authorities and their rule,
2. Be obedient to the rule of authority,

3. Be ready to do whatever is good,
4. Not slander any one,
5. Be peaceable (lit. non-fighting),
6. Be considerate and gentle toward everyone, and,
7. Show “perfect courtesy” (humility – others before self) to all men.

Believers are to be models of good citizenship (an influence for good in a community) because of the new life they have in Christ (Titus 2:2-14). This new life in Christ demonstrates Christ to all through courteous and gracious behavior. This lifestyle comes from understanding God’s grace; people who are willing to yield to authority in gentleness are following the example of Jesus.

Titus 3:3 – In Titus 2:11-14, Paul explains how his exhortations to godly living (Titus 2:2-10; 3:1-2) are based on the gospel. Now Paul reminds Titus and the believers in Crete of the way they used to be. Each characteristic Paul mentions in this verse contrasts with one he had exhorted his readers to adopt in Titus 2:2-10. Each believer (Paul included himself; *and it is a direct reference to us*) had been:

1. Foolish, not sensible;
2. Disobedient, not submissive;
3. Deceived, not enlightened;
4. Enslaved, not free and self-disciplined;
5. Malicious, not peaceable;
6. Envious, not considerate; and
7. Hateful, not loving.

If it were not for God’s grace, each believer would still be living in this sinful condition.

Question: What characteristics should a believer publicly demonstrate to others?

Titus 3:4-5 – Paul changes the focus of his instruction in verses 4 and 5. In verse 3 “man” is the actor and God is the recipient of man’s rejection; but in verses 4 and 5 “man” is the recipient and God is the

actor. The theme of these two verses is what “man” could not do (save himself from hell), God initiated for him (provided a way for salvation from hell).

The transformation of “man” being an enemy of God and doomed to hell (enslaved to sin and reaping the results of sin) to becoming a “man” who is redeemed from hell (purchased and saved from the penalty of sin) is not based on human effort but on God’s effort (He saves us, we do not save ourselves).

Paul begins to teach of this transformation (salvation) with a reference to the sending of Jesus Christ to die for all mankind, the Incarnation. That is the greatest revelation of God’s kindness and love for humankind. God took the initiative. God does not save people because they behave righteously but because He is merciful. It is important to note that the three words - “kindness”, “love”, and “mercy” – are all aspects of God’s grace.

The salvation God provides consists of spiritual rebirth within man that Paul likens to (1) washing off sin’s filth (John 3:3-8; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23) and (2) the renewal by God’s Holy Spirit (II Cor. 5:17). The (1) washing of regeneration and (2) renewal of the Holy Spirit is a divine action and initiative that saves us; it is not because of our works. The “washing” is not a reference to baptism but to spiritual cleansing; which is outwardly symbolized by baptism.

Paul did not mention human faith because his emphasis here was on God’s grace in providing salvation. Paul had come to tell men, not of the justice of God which would pursue them, but of the love of God which sought them.

Titus 3:6-7 – Paul’s focus on God’s grace begins in verse 5 and continues through verse 7; God pours out His Holy Spirit on believers richly whenever they experience conversion (cf. Rom. 5:5). It is God’s

grace that justifies (declares one just and imputes the righteousness of Christ to him/her) the believer. It is God's grace that makes the believer heirs (adopted children – Rms. 8:16-17) of eternal life.

In verses 5-7 Paul explains **what God did** (saving, washing, regenerating, renewing, justifying) for the believer; including the **basis** of God's action (His mercy), the **means** of God's action (the Holy Spirit), and the **purpose** of God's action (eternal life). Paul's whole emphasis is on the grace of God being extended to the believer. As a believer, we owe everything to God's grace.

Titus 3:8 - The "trustworthy saying" (also found in 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11) refers to what was written in verses 4-7. The first "these things" in 8a is supporting reference to what was written in verses 4-7. Titus was to speak about these great truths confidently; he was to "insist / affirm constantly" on "these things". The intended result of this instruction was to exhort individuals who have trusted God for salvation to practice good works (James 2:14-26).

The second "these things" Paul writes about in 8b refers to "good works" (which is to be a natural result of God's grace outlined in verses 5-7). This verse summarizes the point Paul makes throughout this epistle - good works are essentially "excellent" as well as "profitable" for the believer and all that interact with the believer. The basis of "good works" is God's grace. Salvation (which is by grace though faith – Eph. 2:8-9) brings about an observable ethical and practical change in one's life. Grace effects an ethical change, which is a change of moral principles of value (standards) that one follows to determine what is right or wrong conduct. Grace effects a practical change of actions or practices that pertain to ordinary activities; it is being mindful of results and the usefulness of one's actions or practices whether they are positive or negative. As a believer there should be a stark contrast from the way you were living in the past when compared to the way you are living today.

One of the best ways a local church can be a witness to the lost is through the good works of its members. Some have argued that a true believer in Jesus Christ will inevitably persevere in faith and in good works. If he or she does not, they contend, such a person was never really saved in the first place. Paul's strong exhortation for believers to maintain good works indicates that he believed it was possible for genuine believers not to maintain good works...but this is also a point that indicates that a genuine believer will do good works. A theme of Paul's letter to Titus is the role of grace in promoting good works among God's people (Titus 2:11—3:8). Paul was instructing Titus to promote good works because they go hand-in-hand with sound doctrine.

Titus' responsibility 3:9-11

3:9 – The reference to the usefulness of correct doctrine ("this is a faithful saying") in verse 8 sets up the contrast to the worthless values of the false teaching in verse 9. Paul warns Titus against becoming involved in senseless (foolish and useless) discussions and/or debates with the false teachers. Titus was instructed to "avoid" (turn away from) this worthless (useless) and unprofitable activity.

Paul identified the senseless discussions and teachings (1:10-14) that the false teachers were promoting.

1. Foolish disputes: Examples of foolish disputes that the Jewish commentaries have preserved are the following.
 - Should a Jew eat an egg laid on a festival day?
 - What sort of wick and oil should a Jew use for candles he burns on the Sabbath?
2. Genealogies: The genealogies were speculations about family origins and descendants of persons, which some taught had spiritual significance.

3. Contentions and strivings: The false teacher contended that a believer must be obedient to “the Mosaic law”, which was contrary to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

All of the above activities and teachings glorified “self” and were observable evidences of “self-will and self-centeredness”; which is evidenced by one being “unsubmissive and divisive”.

3:10-11 – Paul instructs Titus regarding his conduct toward the false teachers. If a false teacher creates a divisive and destructive influence in the church through his teachings, Titus was to confront him. He was to give such person two warnings; each warning was to confront the false teacher about his teaching error. Each warning was to be accompanied by a call to repentance. If the false teacher refused to change his ways after two warnings, Titus was to have nothing more to do with him; his was to be shunned and rejected.

A false teacher (also a reference to a “divisive person”) who refuses to repent and change after two warnings demonstrates and confirms that he is twisted by sin (warped) and is therefore self-condemned (bringing judgment on oneself though ungodly behavior). A rejection of a call to repentance is the basis for believers to have nothing to do with a divisive person, meaning they must be excluded from the body of believers.

The doctrinal teaching here is that anyone in the church (a body of believers) that is unsubmissive, self-willed and divisive should be expelled after two warnings. Two warnings are to be given, which follows the pattern for church discipline established by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17. The Word of God is clear about seeking the repentance of the unsubmissive, self-willed and divisive person, and it is equally clear that the refusal of a divisive person to receive rebuke and correction is evidence that such a person is not a believer in Christ and must be excluded from the body of believers in Christ. Therefore, Church leaders should not give the ministry of a false

teacher any platform in the church or allow a divisive person to remain in the church.

The significance of refuting false teaching is indicated by Paul's direct attack on the false teachers at the beginning of the letter (1:10ff.) and now at its conclusion (3:9-11). In Crete, the false teachers were teaching their followers to do works that 'deny' a true knowledge of God (1:16) and destroy the doctrinal unity of the church. In clear contrast, Paul's instruction to Titus (1:1-4; 2:11-15; 3:3-7) provides 'sound doctrine' to the believers that is to motivate them to do 'good works', which in turn makes the gospel 'attractive' to a lost world.

3:12 - Paul may have intended to send either Artemas or Tychicus to take Titus' place in Crete. Nothing is known about Artemas. Tychicus was a young man who accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4), he carried Paul's letter to Colosse (Col. 4:7), and possibly carried Paul's letter to Ephesus (Eph. 6:21). He was referred to by Paul as a “beloved brother and faithful minister” in Eph. 6:21, Col. 4:7, and II Tim 4:12.

Paul wanted Titus to join him for the coming winter in Nicapolis ("city of victory"), probably the one in Illyricum that lay on the Adriatic coast of western Greece opposite northern Italy, about 200 miles northwest of Athens. Paul had left Titus in Crete to get the churches properly established and rid of false teachers. Paul did not want Titus to remain there permanently.

3:13 - Zenas and Apollos were apparently in Crete with Titus as they may have carried Paul's letter to Titus. They now planned to leave Crete for other places of ministry. Zenas was either a converted Jewish lawyer who was an expert in the Mosaic Law, as the word "lawyer" (Gr. *nomikon*) means in the Gospels or a converted Gentile who was a Roman jurist. Apollos was a native of Alexandria, Egypt and had extensive education. He was an outstanding teacher of

Scripture, who was converted to Christ after being acquainted with the teaching of John the Baptist (Acts 18:24 – 9:1) He was a popular speaker and teacher (Acts 19:1, I Cor. 3:4-6). Paul urged Titus and the Cretan believers to help these two brothers in the Lord by ministering to their needs. Paul gives the believers in Crete the opportunity to put good works into practice by supporting Zenas and Apollos in providing for their need to allow them to travel. This speaks to the role of the local church in supporting missions.

3:14 – Having stressed good works throughout his letter to Titus, and having just called for assistance for Zenas and Apollos, Paul was presenting the churches of Crete the opportunity to zealously pursue good works by providing for the needs of others as they worked to further the Gospel. To accomplish this Paul encouraged the Cretans to be faithful in providing for their own regular financial responsibilities (necessary uses / daily necessities) so they would have the resources to help. The stereotype of Cretans, found in 1:12, evidently applied to some in the church. It appears that some of the believers were not providing for their own daily necessities, which would have made it very challenging to be a help to others.

Paul's challenge to engage in good works refers to normal wage-earning activities (occupations) rather than special needs or projects. Paul stressed the need for good works in order to be able to serve others. Industriousness (good works, hard work, serving others) would provide the believers with what they needed and provide enough to help others. In so doing they would not be unfruitful, but rather fruitful in good works.

3:15 - We do not know who was with Paul when he wrote this epistle or where he was when he wrote it, but obviously he was in the company of other Christians. Paul sent greetings to the faithful in Crete and closed with a benediction for them.

The phrase “those who love us in the faith” refers to the believers in Crete and obviously excludes the false teachers, who were the focus of the letter from Paul. The second "you" is plural in the Greek text; the plural means that the letter was expected to be read out publicly. Paul opened and closed his letter to Titus with references to faith and grace (1:4).

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