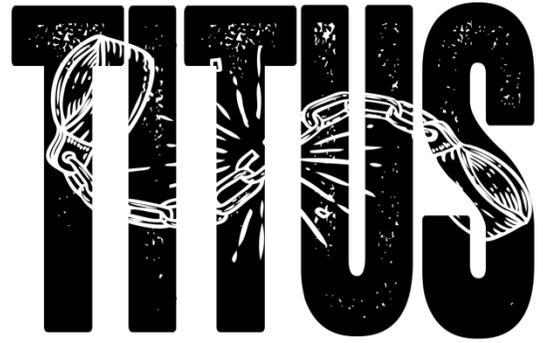


August 25, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

SET FREE. BY GRACE. FOR GOOD.

Titus Overview



This year we are going to be in the Book of Titus. The reason we are in Titus is because we need to be reminded why God has placed our families in the neighborhoods He has. We need to be reminded why our kids have the teachers and classmates they do this year. We need to be reminded why we have the family and friends we do. We need to be reminded why God has placed our church in this valley at this time.

What's our purpose? What's our plan? The Book of Titus answers these questions. Titus proclaims what we need to proclaim in the depths of our hearts every waking moment: Jesus came to set us free by grace for good. He came to set our friends, family and neighbors free by grace for good. We have been called to be agents of His transformation. We aren't running for the hills. We aren't adopting the bankrupt worldview of this world. We are plowing forward proclaiming Jesus by the power of grace and the Holy Spirit.

Outline of Titus

Opening Greeting (1:1-4)

Titus' Job (1:5-16)

- Appoint new leaders (vs. 5-9). These new elders must be different than Cretan culture.
 - Mature husbands/fathers
 - Known for integrity, self-control and generosity
 - Able to teach the Gospel and correct error
- Confront false teachers (vs. 10-16)
 - Ethnically Jewish Cretan Christians demanding circumcision and Torah observance.
 - False teachers are motivated by money and claim to know God, but their lives deny Him.
 - Epimenides: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

Purpose of Grace is to transform families (2:1-10)

- Older men (vs. 2), older women (vs. 3), younger women (vs. 4-5), younger men (vs. 5-8), slaves (vs. 9-10)

Grace of God has appeared, transforms and enables the good (2:11-15)

New life under grace (3:1-15)

- Ideal citizens (vs. 1-2), where we came from (vs. 3)
- Our new, grace, Spirit empowered identity (vs. 4-8)
- Avoid foolish controversies and divisive people (vs. 9-11)
- Reinforcements are coming (vs. 12-15)

Titus, the young pastor

Titus was written by the Apostle Paul (1:1) to a young pastor (1:4), a pastor in training who was left to solidify the young churches on the island of Crete (1:5). It's called a pastoral epistle because it was written to a pastor as opposed to the whole church like Philippians and Ephesians.

Titus is referred to 12 times in the New Testament, but there is a very interesting story about young Titus at the beginning of Galatians. Fourteen years after Paul's conversion and commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles, to bring the grace of God to the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas and a young partner named Titus return to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem were Judaizers who wanted the Gentile converts to follow the Mosaic

Law via circumcision, dietary laws, etc. When Titus, the uncircumcised Gentile arrived in Jerusalem, the Judaizers immediately demanded that Titus be circumcised (Gal. 2:4), but Paul would not allow this to happen. Titus became a symbol of the free offer of salvation and grace to us savage, uncivilized, uncircumcised Gentles.

Titus goes on to be this incredibly valuable partner and pastor for Paul. He undertook several difficult assignments in Corinth as Paul's representative, including both the collection (8:6) and the responsibility of dealing with the tense situation that arose between Paul and the Corinthians (7:6-7, 13-15; 8:23; 12:18).

Titus is sent to Crete, because like the other churches, the false teachers crept in. Titus says the false teachers were interested in myths (1:14) and genealogies (3:9), focused on the Law (1:10, 14; 3:9), controversial and argumentative (1:10; 3:9), deceptive (1:10-13), immoral (1:15-16) and their focus was material gain (1:10). The false teachers were primarily but not exclusively Jewish (Titus 1:10).

Crete, the location

Crete is about the same in square miles as the big island of Hawaii. It's below and between Greece and Turkey. The island has very large mountains as high as 8,000 feet and because of this most of the population is on the northern shore. For about 130 years Crete had been occupied by Rome and ruled by a Roman governor. Paul quotes one of the Cretan poets, probably Epimenides, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (Tit. 1:12). All of the history books are filled with these disparaging comments about Cretans who have a reputation for lacking ethical principles, stealing and harboring robbers and pirates (Mounce, 398-99).

Zeus, the idol

According to Greek mythology, the greatest god, Zeus, was born on Crete. The king of the Titans, Cronus, learned that one of his children was fated to dethrone him, so he decided to swallow his children as soon as they were born. His wife Rhea spared the infant Zeus by substituting a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes for Cronus to swallow and hiding Zeus in a cave on Crete. After Zeus grew he revolted against the Titans and dethroned Cronus with the help of his brothers Hades and Poseidon. Zeus was regarded as the sender of thunder and lightning, rain, and winds, and his traditional weapon was the thunderbolt. Zeus had many affairs with goddesses, mortal women, and other beings. Zeus was also known as a liar, seducer and manipulator of the gods and mortals.

With this in mind, listen to the beginning of Titus, "From Paul, a slave of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in keeping with godliness,² in hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:1-2).

This is the message in Titus to the Cretans: the God revealed in Jesus is totally different than the Cretan gods. He is faithful and true as opposed to Zeus. Christ, not Zeus, has appeared among human and He didn't come to lie, seduce or manipulate, but He came to bring salvation, meaning and transformation leading to good works. It is Christ, not Zeus, who is the source of the present Christian existence and is the only hope of its completion.

For what good has Jesus set you free?

In this short book, the concept of doing "good", "good deeds" occurs ten times (1:8, 16; 2:3, 7, 10, 14; 3:1, 8, 14).

Two other key words are "grace" (1:4; 2:11; 3:7, 15) and "faith" (1:1, 4, 13; 2:10, 13; 3:15).

The "good" that God has destined for us doesn't come from legalistic traditions or human capacity; it is a work of God's grace through faith by the power of the Holy Spirit (2:11-5; 3:3-8).

"He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good." (Titus 2:14).