

Ladies, in this week's lesson we were introduced to Titus, Paul's partner and fellow helper, and we learned about the Island of Crete where Titus established order in the churches and ordained elders. We'll review what we have learned and close by covering our goals for this study. We'll begin with what we learned about the Island of Crete.

### 1. The Island of Crete

- A. Crete is a **Greek** Island and is **100** miles south of the Greek mainland (see map below)
- B. It is the **fifth** largest island in the Mediterranean Sea.
- C. It is **160** miles long and varies in width from 7 to 35 miles.
- D. The Island is mountainous and has a high mountain range crossing from west to east, making travel difficult. Travel would have been hard for Titus and Paul as they traveled to the churches.
  - a. There is little evidence that any Roman highway system previously existed.
- E. There were twenty (20) **cities** during the time Paul and Titus ministered there.
- F. Gortyn was the capital city and it was located near the center of the Island.
  - a. During the time when Paul established the churches on Crete, Gortyn had a population of **300,000**. It was a large city. There was also an early Christian community in Gortyn.
- G. The people of Crete included:
  - a. Veteran soldiers from the Roman legions who **retired** there.
  - b. **Traders** due to the commerce.
  - c. A sizeable **Jewish** community on Crete. We know from Acts 2:5-11 there were devout Jewish men from Crete who had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.
- H. Crete was a **developed** island, because it:
  - a. Minted its own coinage, and it had Roman baths and aqueducts, and amphitheatres.
  - b. Sadly, the amphitheater at Gortyn was the site of Christian persecution in 249 A.D. History records that 10 Christians were martyred there during a wild animal hunt held in the amphitheater.
- I. Crete was the center of Europe's first advanced civilization, the Minoans, from 2700 to 1420 BC.
- J. **Crete** was later incorporated into the Roman Empire.
  - a. Prior to this, Mark Antony gave the island to Cleopatra as a gift.
- K. **Paganism** was practiced by the Cretans. The two most practiced forms of pagan worship were:
  - a. Cult of Asclepius, a god of healing, along with the Egyptian cult of Isis and Serapis.

The Island of Crete is in the middle of the map (south of Corinth)



Now that we are familiar with the Island of Crete, where Paul left Titus to establish order in the churches, let's turn our attention onto Titus himself. We will review what we have learned about his background, his relationship with Paul, and how he was useful to Paul in his ministry.

## 2. Titus' Background.

- A. Titus was a Greek, reportedly from Antioch of Syria, which today is in **Turkey**. We know that Antioch of Syria was the place of the first Christian church and a home base for the apostle Paul. Perhaps Titus first heard Paul preach in Antioch.
- B. Titus was an educated man. Growing up he was a student of **Greek** philosophy and poetry. He was later useful to Paul as a secretary and interpreter for him.
- C. He was converted to Christianity by the Apostle Paul, probably early in Paul's ministry; however the Bible is **silent** on exactly when this occurred. Because Antioch of Syria was the home base for Paul, and Titus came from there, it is reasonable that Titus would have met Paul **early** in his ministry. Paul became his mentor after he was saved by Paul's gospel of grace. It's interesting to note that Titus is mentioned 13 times in Paul's epistles. Even though Titus is not mentioned by name in the book of **Acts**, we can conclude that he was included as one of the "certain other of them" by further information given in Galatians 2:1.

"When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles, and elders about this question" (Acts 15:2).

Galatians 2:1 gives further detail about who attended this meeting at Jerusalem:

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also" (Galatians 2:1).

- D. Church history states that Titus was the bishop of the Church at Gortyn, the capital city of **Crete**, and that he died there at the age of ninety-four of natural causes. Church history also claims that he returned to Crete following his work in Dalmatia. Scriptural support is found in 2Timothy 4:10 and Romans 15:19.

In 2Timothy 4:10 we learn from Paul that Titus had left to Dalmatia.

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crepens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (2Timothy 4:10).

In Romans 15:19 we learn that Paul had fully preached the gospel in Illyrium, which included Dalmatia. It appears Paul sent Titus there to minister to the churches that Paul had previously established.

"Though mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).

### 3. Paul' relationship with Titus.

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 1:4).

- A. Titus was his spiritual son in the faith because he had believed by faith in the gospel Paul gave him early in his ministry. Their relationship developed as Titus **served** with Paul, and as Paul relied on him to do the work of his ministry. They were bonded together by their mutual love and devotion to Christ so they were one in purpose.

"Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ" (2Corinthians 8:23).

- B. Titus was Paul's partner in his ministry. They were like-minded and focused upon sharing Paul's gospel and building up the churches. He may have asked for his counsel on matters. Paul would have shared **sensitive** issues about the churches with Titus, more than likely because Titus is the one Paul would have sent to set things in order!

In 2Corinthians 2:13 Paul writes when he couldn't find Titus that he: "had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus my brother...".

Later in 2Corinthians 7:5-7 Paul writes: "For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus".

- C. Titus was a close friend who gave Paul comfort and inspirited confidence. Paul was tired and weary. He had looked for Titus at Troas on his way to Macedonia and couldn't find him. When **Titus** arrived Paul was **comforted**.

### 4. Paul relied upon Titus to successfully handle the **tough** assignments. The following are four examples that show us how Titus was helpful to Paul in his ministry:

Titus was Paul's gentile representative to the Meeting at Jerusalem.

Paul sent Titus to handle the serious problems in the church at Corinth.

Titus took up a collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem from the churches.

Paul trusted him to establish order and ordain elders at the churches on Crete.

### Let's look at each one individually to see how Titus was helpful to Paul in his ministry.

- A. Titus was Paul's gentile representative to the Meeting at Jerusalem. Paul went to this meeting both by **divine** revelation, and by the Antioch church, to defend his gospel of **grace**. Judiazers from Jerusalem had been challenging Paul and Barnabas concerning his gospel. Let's review what the Judiazers believed and how it differed from Paul's gospel:

- a. These Judiazers were believers too; they believed Christ was their **Messiah**, but as Jews they still kept the **Law**. They trusted in the gospel Peter preached which was to believe Christ was the Messiah, and to keep the law and circumcision. This was the **Kingdom** gospel and it reflected Christ's earthly ministry to Israel. Their hope is Christ's Kingdom reign on Earth.
- b. However, when Israel's **religious** leaders rejected the last Kingdom offer in Acts 7, God temporarily set Israel aside.
- c. Following this, the **risen** Jesus appeared to Paul in Acts 9 and saved him. Jesus then gave Paul the gospel of grace, which did **not** require the Law. It is believing by faith alone in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as completely sufficient for salvation and that nothing else is needed. It is for both Jew and Gentile and is the gospel that saves us today.
- d. The Kingdom gospel and the Grace gospel are **different**. There was a transitional time in the book of Acts with Israel diminishing along with the Kingdom gospel, as Paul's gospel of grace was rising, until by the end of Acts when there was only Paul's gospel of grace.

As Paul's gentile representative to this extremely important meeting, it was imperative that Titus remain strong and not cave in to the pressure from the Judiazers to conform to the Law. We read about who attended this meeting with Paul in Galatians 2:1-3.

"And then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" (Galatians 2:1-3).

**Observations about Titus and his behavior at the Meeting at Jerusalem:**

Titus was not a fearful man. He was able to handle being a gentile (probably the only gentile present) amongst a group of strong **Jewish** leaders in the church at Jerusalem, who were putting pressure upon him to comply with the Law and be circumcised. His faith was strong and he **stood** his ground in face of strong opposition without being worn down.

No mention is made of Paul encouraging Titus in this matter. Paul wouldn't have taken him as his example if he had any doubts how **Titus** would response to the pressure. We need to remember that Paul and Barnabas would be **busy** giving testimony to others at this meeting, so they needed to be able to trust Titus to stand on his own two feet with the Jews. Which he did.

- B. Paul sent Titus to handle the serious problems in the church at Corinth. The Corinthians were carnal believers. They were worldly and **babes** in their faith. Titus appears to have been Paul's representative to Corinth.
  - a. Titus delivered Paul's letter to them about a believer's grave sin, and reported back to Paul the **effectiveness** of his letter. (2Corinthians 2:1-4, 7:5-15, 8:6-10)
  - b. Knowing the background of this letter shows the level of **trust** Paul had in Titus' abilities. The Corinthians had not dealt with a believer's sin of fornication with his father's wife. Titus delivered this letter and ministered to them after they learned of its contents, staying one year to help the church deal with the aftermath of this sin.

- c. This would have required Titus to be both firm yet **sensitive**, but strong enough to help them see what was wrong. They needed to understand that not only what the sinning believer did was wrong, but they had also sinned in the way they had responded to it.
- d. 2Corinthians 7:5-15 informs us that Titus had **good** news to give Paul concerning their response to his letter. This indicates how effective Titus was with the Corinthians. Paul wrote about this in his second letter to the Corinthians:

"For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more" (2Corinthians 7:5-7).

**Observations about Titus from how he handled the Corinthians:**

Paul knew Titus would be able to handle these serious problems with **grace** while remaining strong for the truth. That is why he sent him to Corinth. Titus would not be swayed by their excuses nor intimidated by any man. Titus ministered to them in such a way that they grew in their understanding of what the scriptures said about sexual sin and also how to handle a sinning believer within the church body. Because of this, they mourned over how what they had done.

- C. Titus took up a collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem from the churches. He was **trusted** with this responsibility as we learn from 1 & 2 Corinthians. (2Corinthians chapters 8 & 9; 1Corinthians 16:1-4)

"Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye" (1Corinthians 16:1).

But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality...And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ" (2Corinthians 8:14, 22-23).

- D. Titus was commissioned to "set in order" the things that were wanting among the believers on the island of Crete. He looked for believers who possessed spiritual standards suitable for Christian **leadership** and from among them ordain **elders** in every city.
  - a. Titus had good organizational skills. Paul knew he was a problem **solver** and could be trusted to **complete** the task.
  - b. Paul also trusted Titus' **people** skills since he would need to select believers suitable for Christian leadership as an elder.
  - c. Paul knew Titus could handle the Cretans who were well known as being liars. They were also known as **slow** bellies and evil **beasts**. This was no mild-mannered crowd that Titus was to straighten out! Titus could effectively handle a difficult crowd without compromising his Christian standards.

5. **What can we learn about Titus' character and personality from the Scriptures?** We've studied his background, his relationship with the Apostle Paul, and how he successfully handled the tough assignments given to him by Paul. His **behavior** in these areas shows us the following:

- A. Titus was a strong minded man, who was not fearful. We have seen this by how he handled the tough **assignments** given to him by Paul.
- B. Titus had an imposing presence, one which commanded respect and obedience from those he ministered to. They knew he couldn't be **fooled** or lied to, he would get straight to the truth and bring **order**.
- C. Titus had love for those he ministered to. They gave him joy! When he confronted them with their sin they responded to him by **obeying** the word of God. Their response caused his **love** for them to grow.

Referring to Titus, Paul writes:

"And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him" (2Corinthians 7:15).

And in Chapter 8 Paul writes: "But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you" (2Corinthians 8:16).

Again, in Chapter 7, Paul writes how Titus rejoices: "Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all" (2Corinthians 7:13).

6. **Paul's other "son in the faith" was Timothy. Both men were important to Paul and to his ministry.** If we look at their differences, and see how Paul **treated** each one differently, we can better understand each man and their usefulness to Paul in his ministry. For example, as mothers we see the differences in our children. We know their strengths and weaknesses and how each are helpful in different ways; it would be likewise for Paul with Titus and Timothy.

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 1:4).

"To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (2Timothy 1:2).

- A. **Both men were effective in the ministry for Paul.** In summary, we know the following about the ministry work performed by Timothy and Titus. From this we see that both were used by Paul in **big** ways for the work of the gospel of grace.
  - a. Timothy was sent by Paul to both Corinth and Philippi to **minister** to the churches there. (1Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19)
  - b. Timothy was the bishop of the church at **Ephesus**. (1Timothy 1:3 & church history)

- c. Timothy was **martyred** in Ephesus in 97 AD. He was stoned to death by pagans he had reproved for their idolatry. (church history)
- d. Titus was Paul's **Gentile** representative at the Meeting at Jerusalem. (Galatians 2:3)
- e. Titus handled serious problems at the **Corinthian** church. (2Cor 2:1-4, 7:5-15)
- f. Titus established order and ordained elders in the churches on **Crete**. (Titus 1:5)
- g. Titus was the **bishop** at the church of Gortyn, Crete, according to church history. He died there at age 94. Most accounts say of natural causes; a few say he was martyred.

**B. Timothy was more timid and more easily intimidated than Titus.** For example, the **persecution** Timothy was enduring in Ephesus had brought him to **tears** and Paul wrote to encourage him. Perhaps Timothy was more tender-hearted and the persecution was becoming more than he could bear. While this can be a weakness, it can also be a strength. Timothy may have been someone easy to go to for problems and help.

- a. From these Scriptures we learn that Timothy struggled with **fear** and was being worn down from the persecution. Paul consistently encouraged him, reminding him of his faith and the gift that he had. He reminded him that afflictions are part of sharing the gospel.

"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2Timothy 1:3-8).

- b. Paul tells the Corinthians to go easy on Timothy and don't do anything to hurt him.

"Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren" (1Corinthians 16:10-11).

**C. In summary:** **Recall** what we have learned about Titus; did we ever read where Paul reassured Titus about persecution or reminded him not to be fearful? We also never read where Paul ordered the Corinthians to go easy on Titus as he did with Timothy. This is NOT to say Titus was superior to Timothy, it's simply to point out their **differences**. **Both** men served equally as well just in different ways. They each had different strengths and weaknesses.

- a. **Paul demonstrated, how to lead men and women with different personalities and temperaments.** Paul is our **pattern**, our example to **follow**. As we studied the Scriptures about both men we saw how Paul treated each man differently. He knew what each man needed and how to encourage each to move forward for Christ. Paul understood that both men were equally important to his ministry for Christ.

Paul is our example to follow:

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1Timothy 1:16).

**7. As members of the Body of Christ we too understand that each member is different and each member is equally important. Each believer can be used by God for His purposes.**

Paul writes in 1Corinthians 12:18 about the body of Christ: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him".

In Romans 12:4-6 Paul writes "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..."

**A. As we follow Paul's example** in both appreciating the differences in each member of His Body, and loving them in a way that appreciates these differences, we come closer to achieving **unity**.

In Ephesians 4:3 Paul writes about unity: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling".

In 1Corinthians 12:25-27 Paul writes about the body of Christ: "That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular".

In closing, Titus himself isn't the **mystery** to us that he was before. We have learned much about him from his attendance with Paul and Barnabas at the Meeting at Jerusalem, and his ministry work with the Corinthians. He was a strong man who could do the tough jobs for Paul. We saw how he had a genuine love for the saints and was also a great comfort to Paul. Paul describes him as "mine own son in the common faith" and as his "partner and fellowhelper". From church history we discovered that he was the bishop of the church in Gortyn, Crete. As we have gotten to know Titus we have set the foundation to begin our study of the book of Titus. There is a lot to unpack in this small book of Titus! We begin in earnest next week in Lesson Two "Paul Describes His Authority" Titus 1:1-2.

**This is a good time to cover our goals for this study, which are on page 4 of the Study Introduction.**