

NAME

The title of the Epistle is taken from the name of the addressee, Titus, Paul's disciple and child in the faith.

AUTHOR

Laney:

Although the Pauline authorship of Titus has been rejected by liberal critics, both internal and external evidence indicates that the epistle is authentically Pauline. In 1:1 Paul claims to have authored the epistle, and the use of the first person in 1:5 and throughout the letter strengthens this claim. The person tone of the letter (1:4; 3:12,13,15) also points to the genuineness of Paul's claim to have authored the epistle. The teachings of the book lend additional support to Pauline authorship because they are doctrinally consistent with Paul's other writings and have his practical emphasis.

The church fathers add their support to the internal evidence of Pauline authorship. Clement of Rome (95 A.D.) and Ignatius (c. 110 A.D.) both demonstrate an acquaintance with the epistle. Tertullian (c. 200 A.D.) quotes from Titus 3:10,11 and writes that these are the words of Paul to Titus. The objections of the liberal critics to the Pauline authorship of Titus are far outweighed by the abundance of internal and external evidence attesting to its authenticity.

DATE

Laney:

The date of the epistle depends on one's arrangement of the biographical material on the life of Paul between his release from his first imprisonment (Spring 62 A.D.) and his death (Spring 68 A.D.). The testimony of Eusebius (c. 263-339 - Bishop of Caesarea) is that the epistle was written late, in 67 A.D. or 68 A.D.

The epistle was probably written after Paul's return from Spain in the spring of 66 A.D. On his return he visited Crete and ministered there during the early summer of 66 A.D. He may have then journeyed on to Asia Minor to visit Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20 and Troas (2 Timothy 4:13). He probably wrote Titus concerning his responsibilities before traveling to Nicopolis where he spent the winter (Titus 3:12).

The epistle is probably to be dated in the summer of 66 A.D. or somewhere between 66 A.D. and 67 A.D.

THEME

Halley (page 44): *"The Churches of Crete"*

Laney: *"The Need for Consistency Between Confession and Conduct."*

Mitchell (sort of): *"Make What You Believe Look Good By The Way You Act"*

Key Word (Nelson's): Conduct Manual For Church Living - This brief letter focuses on Titus' role and responsibility in the organization and supervision of the churches in Crete (1:5-9). It was written to strengthen and exhort Titus to firmly exercise his authority as an apostolic representative to churches that need to be put in order.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you." (Titus 1:5).

"The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people." (Titus 3:8).

Key Chapter: 2 - Summarized in Titus 2 are the key commands to be obeyed which insure godly relationships within the church.

The epistle is written to encourage Titus to keep on speaking sound doctrine (2:1) which will issue in godly character and conduct (1:16). The epistle sets forth the relationship between good works and sound doctrine. A believer's character and conduct must be consistent with his confession. The epistle gives written authorization from Paul as a basis and guidance for Titus to combat false teachers and opposition. Paul also gives Titus information about his future plans for him (3:12).

Mitchell:

Two significant purposes emerge:

1. To assist Titus in establishing the churches

This assistance came by way of the practical instructions contained in this letter as well as providing written authorization from Paul. The letter then served as Titus' badge of authority as he moved among the churches.

2. To encourage Titus in establishing the churches

Crete was a rough culture. The people had a bad reputation (1:12). There was need of sharp rebuke. It would take courage and the young man needed encouragement in this difficult task.

Outline:

- I. Introduction 1:1-4
- II. The Rulers of The Church 1:5-16
The administration for sound doctrine
- III. The Rules for The Church 2:1-3:11
The proclamation of sound doctrine
- IV. Conclusion 3:12-15

RECIPIENTS

Laney:

The addressee of the epistle is Titus, Paul's *"true child in a common faith"* (1:4). This designation would indicate that Titus was one of Paul's converts. Titus was a Greek Christian (Galatians 2:3) and one of Paul's travel companions (Galatians 2:1) as well as being Paul's assistant in Christian work (Titus 1:5). Paul considered Titus his partner and fellow-worker in the cause of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:23).

Chronologically, the first reference to Titus is found in Galatians 2:1-3. Galatians 2:1-10 records the acknowledgement of Paul's gospel of grace by the apostles in Jerusalem during Paul's famine relief visit (Acts 11:29,30) in the autumn of 47 A.D. On that visit, Titus - a Greek Gentile - accompanied Paul and Barnabas. Evidently, Paul took him along as a test case for Gentile salvation apart from circumcision. The fact that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised confirmed the believer's liberty and freedom from the Law (Galatians 2:3,9).

The Person of Titus:

Mitchell:

All we have are thirteen scattered references to the man Titus. Yet from these emerge a picture of one who was one of Paul's most trusted and valuable lieutenants.

Nothing is known of his early history. He was a Gentile and probably a convert of Paul (1:5). He evidently accompanied Paul during the awkward and difficult time at the Jerusalem conference during the conflict over the Gentiles relationship to the law. Perhaps Titus served as a Gentile object lesson. He became a key person to Paul. One whom Paul could entrust with delicate and difficult problems. Twice he was sent to the troublesome church at Corinth to mediate problems. A third, and possibly the toughest assignment was to Crete (2 Corinthians 7:6-14; 8:16-20).

From his assignments we can possibly infer that he was a man with the strength of mind, toughness of fiber to handle difficult situations. He evidently had the gift of practical administration. There is never the slightest hint of great oratorical ability; he was evidently one of those reliable, practical guys that are too nice to have around. The kind of a fellow who can bring order out of chaos.

Indications are that Titus was aggressive and resourceful, not shy and retiring like Timothy. Titus was a leader; Timothy a follower. Yet God could and did use both. This should encourage all of us.

Historical Setting:

Laney:

Paul's first visit to the island of Crete was on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:7,8). Had Paul's suggestion been taken the ship would have wintered at Fair Havens near Lasea on the southern shore of the island. Perhaps disappointed that he had not had the opportunity to evangelize the island during the winter of 59/60 A.D., Paul took the opportunity to visit Crete on his return voyage from Spain (summer 66 A.D.). Paul and Titus ministered together on Crete having a very successful ministry there. Titus was left on Crete, after Paul's departure, that he might set the church in order and appoint elders in every city (1:5). Titus served on Crete apparently in the same capacity as Timothy at Ephesus functioning as Paul's representative.

The island of Crete (156 miles long, 7-30 miles wide) forms the southern boundary of the Aegean Sea. The center of the island is formed by a mountain chain rising to the height of 8,193 feet (Mount Ida) which is fringed by lower valleys along the coast. There are no large rivers, but at least two good harbors are available for shipping (Acts 27:8,12). Jews from Crete were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:11) and may have carried back the message of Christianity and begun spreading the gospel on the island. Mount Ida was famous in Greek legend as the birthplace of Zeus. The culture and history of Crete was filled with myth and legend (c.f. Titus 1:14). The character and philosophy of the Cretans is illustrated in the line of the Cretan poet Epimenides (600 B.C.) which Paul quotes, "*Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*" (Titus 1:12).

Other ancient writers also attest to similar facts concerning the Cretan character.

The immediate occasion for writing was that Paul had left Titus on Crete to set in order what remained and to appoint elders in every city (1:5). Titus was facing a difficult assignment and Paul wrote to encourage and exhort him concerning how to deal with the problem. Titus needed Paul's wise instruction on how to deal with disorderly teachers (1:10,11) and what qualifications must be required of an elder (1:5-9). Titus also needed instruction on how to deal with the incipient Gnostic heresy (1:16; 3:9) and Judaizing influence (1:14; 1:10) evidenced among the Cretans. It seems that Apollos and Zenas were going to Crete (3:13), whether by chance or by request, and Paul took this occasion to write Titus.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

Mitchell:

Peculiarities of Epistle:

2. This is the last letter of Paul while he was a free man. The next letter chronologically is 2 Timothy and Paul is clearly in jail again.
2. This is a very short letter. It contains only 700 Greek words. Only Philemon is shorter (as a Pauline epistle)
3. Yet for a short letter it contains a remarkably long introduction (four verses). Only Romans and Galatians have longer introductions.
4. In spite of its brevity it is a letter of great doctrinal statements. Luther had this to say about this epistle: *"A short letter and yet such a quintessence of Christian doctrine and composed in such a masterly manner that it contains all that is needful for Christian knowledge and life."*

Titus gives us further instruction on church leadership, dealing with false teaching and opposition within the church, and the relationship between sound doctrine and personal conduct.

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Robert H. Gundry, Ph.D., *A Survey Of The New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1970

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS - [especially those of Dr. J. Carl Laney]), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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