

TITUS CLASS NOTES

Introduction

Titus, Paul's protégé, was given the daunting task of bringing order to the recently established churches of Crete. Titus would need to overcome the relative immaturity of the believers in Crete, certain negative cultural attitudes and practices, and the destructive influences of false teachers. To this end, Paul the Apostle writes to his "child" in the faith and encourages him to complete his task, providing inspired guidance to aid him in his work.

Authorship

Titus belongs to a group of epistles, along with 1–2 Timothy, commonly designated the Pastoral Epistles.¹ Until the nineteenth century, all the Pastorals were commonly attributed to Paul the Apostle. However since that time, scholarly opinion has shifted considerably and many interpreters today reject Paul as the author of the Pastorals. Instead, it is held that the Pastorals are second century pseudonymous writings.² Such scholarly opinion notwithstanding, there is good and sufficient reason to affirm the claim of the epistle itself to be written by Paul (see the discussion in the section on 1 Timothy).

Date

The date of the Pastorals is dependent on the issue of authorship. If one rejects Pauline authorship then a late first century or early second century date is usually suggested. However, if one holds Pauline authorship then the date would be sometime in the sixties since Paul apparently is martyred in the mid-to-late sixties A.D.³ Most likely, Paul wrote Titus after his release from his first Roman imprisonment (c. A.D. 61–62) and just prior to his re-arrest and final imprisonment (see the table below⁴). Thus, we suggest a date around A.D. 66.

	DATE	PLACE	TEXTS	EVENTS
A.D. 62	March 62	Rome		Apparent release from house arrest
	Spring/Autumn 62	Colossae	Philemon 1:22	Paul hopes to come to visit Philemon in

¹ This designation has been used of 1–2 Timothy and Titus since the eighteenth century.

² Critical scholarship typically accepts only seven Pauline epistles as authentic (Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians 1 Thessalonians, Philemon).

³ Church tradition has Paul martyred under Nero who committed suicide in A.D. 68. Thus, Paul would have been put to death sometime prior to this.

⁴ The dates for this table are dependent upon the work of Harold Hoehner.

				Colossae
	Spring/Autumn 62	Ephesus	1 Timothy 1:3	Paul leaves Timothy in Ephesus
	Late Summer 62 / Winter 62/63	Macedonia	1 Timothy 1:3	Paul in Macedonia
	Autumn 62	Macedonia	1 Timothy 1:1–3	Paul writes 1 Timothy
A.D. 64	Spring 63–Spring 64	Asia Minor	1 Timothy 3:15	Paul anticipates a possible delay
	Spring 64–Spring 66	Spain	Romans 15:24, 28	See 1 Clement 5:7, Muratorian Fragment
A.D. 66	Summer 66	Crete	Titus 1:5	Paul leaves Titus in Crete
	Summer/Autumn 66	Asia Minor	Titus 1:5	
	Summer 66	Macedonia and Achaia	Titus 3:12; 2 Timothy 4:20	Paul writes Titus
	Winter 66/67	Nicopolis	Titus 3:12	Paul wants Titus to come to Nicopolis
A.D. 67	Spring/Autumn 67	Macedonia/Greece	2 Tim 4:13, 20	Wants Timothy to come with cloak and parchments
	Autumn 67	Rome	2 Tim 1:16–17	Paul arrested and brought to Rome
	Autumn 67	Rome		Paul writes 2 Timothy
A.D. 68	Spring 68	Rome	Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> 2.25	Paul is put to death (beheaded) under Nero

Original Recipients

The Pastorals were written to Timothy and Titus, although the content in the epistles suggest that Paul expected the letters to be read to their respective churches. For Titus, the recipient is identified as Titus (Tit 1:4). Not much is known of Titus who appears solely in Paul's writings. He apparently was a Gentile (Gal 2:1–3) and was a trusted emissary and coworker of Paul's (cf. 2 Cor 2:13; 7:6, 13–14, 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; 2 Tim 4:10).

A COMPARISON OF TIMOTHY AND TITUS ⁵		
Similarities	Both were young and gifted Both were Paul's co-workers Both served in difficult church situations	
Differences	Timothy	Titus
	Half-Jewish	Gentile
	Circumcised by Paul	Uncircumcised
	Served at Corinth and Ephesus	Served at Corinth and Crete
	Nervous and yimid personality	Strong and stern personality
Prominent in Acts	Not mentioned in Acts	

Historical Setting

Titus was written to Titus when he was ministering in Crete (1:4–5). Paul apparently is writing from Macedonia (3:12; cf. 2 Tim 4:20) around the summer of A.D. 66. Apparently the church in Crete was relatively young since Titus was to set the church in order and to appoint elders (1:5).

Canonicity

Titus (and the other Pastoral Epistles) appears to have been readily accepted as canonical. The Pastorals were considered Pauline and they were quoted as authoritative by the early church fathers. Indeed, there are only a few instances in which the Pastorals are questioned (e.g., Marcian, Tatian). The church historian Eusebius apparently includes the Pastorals among the “fourteen epistles” of Paul (Ecclesiastical History, 3.3.4–7) and they are included in the Muratorian Canon.

Purpose

There are three basic reasons why Paul wrote to Titus.⁶ First, Paul wanted Titus to strengthen the structure of the church at Crete by appointing elders. Second, Paul wants Titus to address certain problems related to false teachings. Third, Paul wants to encourage Titus to instruct the believers in Crete about godly living. Concerning this last point, it is worth noting that, “The pastoral Epistles are primarily practical rather than theological. The emphasis lies rather on the defense of doctrine than on its explication or elaboration. The distinctively doctrinal passages comprise only a small part of the whole; Timothy and Titus had already been instructed.”⁷ Furthermore, as Mounce notes, “One suspects that much of the teaching was

⁵ Irving Lester Jensen, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Self-Study Guide* (Chicago: Moody, 1973), 55.

⁶ Mounce suggests that Paul also wanted to “encourage Zenas and Apollos, the carriers of the letter, on their way and to urge Titus to winter with Paul in Nicopolis when a replacement arrived.” This may be, but it does not appear to be a prominent purpose. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Lynn Allan Losie, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), lxi.

⁷ Ralph Earle, “1, 2 Timothy,” in *The Expositor's Biblical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 345.

intended for the church, not Titus, who already knew it, and as validation of Titus's authority (although this is not as pronounced as in 1 Timothy)."⁸

Contribution

The contribution of Titus is at least threefold. First, it provides two of the most sublime statements on the gospel in the New Testament (2:11–14; 3:4–7). Second, Titus provides helpful background to the character of Titus and the character of the early church in Crete. Third, Titus makes a significant contribution to the New Testament's teaching on church praxis. Luther states, "This is a short epistle, but a model of Christian doctrine, in which is comprehended in a masterful way all that is necessary for a Christian to know and to live."⁹ Although typical of Lutheran hyperbole, there is an element of truth in the Reformer's statement.

Literary Features and Structure

Titus follows a fairly common epistolary form. This epistle contains a salutation (1:1–4), a body (1:5–3:11), and a conclusion (3:12–15).

As far as the content is concerned, it is generally acknowledged that, the Pastorals in general, and Titus in particular includes pre-existing material. Indeed, E. E. Ellis has estimated that pre-existing material constitutes about forty-six percent of Titus.¹⁰ Many commentators have also noted the similarity in content between Titus with 1 Timothy, although the former is more concise and not as overtly personal.

Message

The message of Titus is, "Church order produces sound doctrine, which protects the church from error and good works, which protects the church's reputation in the world." References to "sound doctrine" occur in 1:9; 2:1 (cf. "sound faith," 1:13; 2:2) and "good works" can be found in 1:8, 16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14.

Basic Outline

- I. Paul introduces his epistle and expresses a word of greeting to Titus his "true child in a common faith" (1:1–4).
- II. Church order produces sound doctrine which protects the church from error (1:5–16).
- III. Church order produces good works which protects the church's reputation in the world (2:1–3:11).
- IV. Paul concludes his epistle with some final instructions and a blessing (3:12–15).

⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, lxi.

⁹ Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, *Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1960), 389.

¹⁰ E. Earls Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Rolf Rendtorff, Biblical Interpretation Series 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 116.

Exposition

- I. Paul introduces his epistle and expresses a word of greeting to Titus his “true child in a common faith” (1:1–4).**

- II. Church order produces sound doctrine which protects the church from error (1:5–16).**
 - A. Since church order produces sound doctrine, Paul commands Titus to appoint elders in Crete (1:5–9).
 - 1. Paul reminds Titus that he was left in Crete to appoint elders (1:5).
 - 2. Paul identifies the qualifications for church elders (1:6–9).

 - B. Titus needs to appoint elders because false teachers are threatening the church (1:10–16).
 - 1. Paul characterizes the false teachers (1:10–13a).
 - 2. Paul commands the reproof of false teachers (1:13b–14).
 - 3. Paul comments on the ruin of false teachers (1:15–16).

- III. Church order produces good works which protects the church’s reputation in the world (2:1–3:11).**
 - A. Since church order produces good works Paul exhorts Titus to teach and practice good works (2:1–15).
 - 1. Titus is to instruct the church in Crete (2:1).
 - 2. Titus is to instruct various groups within the church concerning good works (2:2–10).

HOUSEHOLD RULES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT		
Ephesians 5:21–6:9	Colossians 3:18–4:1	1 Peter 2:18–3:7
wives-husbands (5:22–33)	wives-husbands (3:18–19)	
children-fathers (6:1–4)	children-fathers (3:20–21)	slaves (2:18–25)
slaves-masters (6:5–9)	slaves-masters (3:22–4:1)	wives-husbands (3:1–7)

3. The basis for good works is God's gracious salvation (2:11–14).
 4. Titus is to exhort the church God-ordained authority (2:15).
- B. The reason that good works are to be taught and practiced is to protect the church's reputation in the world (3:1–11).
1. Christians are to be reminded to respect the government (3:1–2).
 2. Christians need to remember who they are in Christ (3:3–8).
 3. Christians should refuse to get involved in foolish controversies (3:9).
 4. Christians should reject divisive people (3:10–11).
- IV. Paul concludes his epistle with some final instructions and a blessing (3:12–15).**

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