



Summary of Titus

During the mid 60's AD Paul was engaged on a 4th missionary journey, the precise details of which are unrecorded. However, this letter allows us to surmise that he had visited the island of Crete, accompanied by Titus, where a number of new churches were planted.

When Paul moved back to the mainland, he wrote to Titus in Crete, with instructions of what tasks remained to be completed in Crete. These were primarily the establishment of a good leadership system in all the churches and to combat the false teaching that was evident on the island. Paul provides a list of the characteristics that are required for those who would be called to lead.

A key part of the instructions given to Titus was the need for him to preach the sound doctrine of the true Gospel. This is the only truth and the best means for combating the heresy of the false teaching.

Paul completes the letter by setting out the need for an appropriate Christian lifestyle, including building proper relationships within and outside of the church. Paul was to send additional resources to Titus, requiring that Titus also release some of his own team to return to Paul. Titus himself was to try to rejoin Paul, after the work was complete.

Paul ends with a benediction over Titus.

Chapter One

Paul opens the letter with a long flowing sentence, identifying his life's calling by God and acknowledging that this flows on into the recipient, Paul's co-worker and child in the faith, Titus. As is customary for Paul, he calls for God's grace and peace in his friend's life.

Paul had left Titus on the island of Crete in order that he should complete unfinished work that Paul had not been able to do in person. The primary duty for Titus was to establish a team of elders for each church that exists. To help him in this task, Paul provides a list of required personal characteristics and others that are not to be evident. Above all, leaders need to be beyond reproach in order to protect the churches' and God's reputation at all times.

As was the case in Ephesus, Crete was dogged by false teaching. Although Paul does not specify the exact nature of the heresy, he uses terms that indicate that the false teachers were either of Jewish origin, or perhaps he was alluding to the teaching reflecting some of the dogmatic elements that had so troubled the Jewish faith itself.

Chapter Two

With a series of concise statements, Paul calls on Titus to instruct the church congregations with sound Gospel-based doctrine, providing instructions for both mature and younger men and women, then completing the list with those who are in servitude, ensuring they obey their masters in all things. Paul reveals that coming to faith in Christ does not release the person from the social assignments they were in when they came to faith and that their obligations to family and masters remains as it was before.

Paul then grounds these instructions with theological reasoning and exhorts Titus to ensure he maintains his own personal standard of living to the highest possible level. All people who profess their faith in Christ are reminded that at all times, in all they do and say, they are a reflection of the God they claim to serve.

Chapter Three

Paul returns to the theme of good works that are the natural outworking of faith in Christ Jesus. The lifestyle of believers must be shaped by the Gospel, which calls for them to comply with the civil authorities providing that it does not negate their duties toward God. What Paul has to say in this chapter is not new, but reflects agreement with both his own earlier thinking and that of Peter. It also calls for an outworking of good deeds as a natural demonstration of faith.

Paul uses a technique of illustrating what life was like before Christ and the transformation that is brought about by his appearing. This act of salvation was borne out of the love that God has for humankind, the centrepiece of his created realm.

Paul addresses the issue of false teaching one final time, links it again with Jewish thinking, and restates the need to combat such false doctrine with true Gospel proclamation.

The letter comes to its conclusion with a call for Titus to join Paul on the mainland, providing information of who will be joining Titus in Crete and whom he should release from service. The letter has the standard greetings before Paul calls for the grace of God, not just on Titus' life but for all those on Crete.