



Titus - Chapter Two

Summary of 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.

III. Titus 2:1-3:11 - Christian Living in Contrast to the False Teachers

Paul describes proper Christian living that is rooted in the Gospel, which is in direct contrast to the behaviour of the false teachers as recorded in Titus 1:10-16, but in conformity of what is required of true church leaders, refer to Titus 1:5-9. This is the primary concern of the letter for right doctrine leads to right behaviour.

This major section is composed of two parallel units: vv.1-15 and Titus 3:1-8, that describe right behaviour, root this behaviour in the Gospel, and close with a charge to Titus to teach these things with authority.

III.a. Titus 2:1-15 - Teach Sound Doctrine

As important as the mission mandate was to Paul, he would not do just anything to make the Gospel appealing to the unbeliever. The church must live within the world, which is fallen, and within cultures, which in various ways express this fallenness, but it must do so critically, measuring everything against the Word of God. This compares precisely with the other apostles when they had appeared

before the Sanhedrin many years earlier: <<**But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than any human authority'**>> (Acts 5:29).

Paul opens the section by providing Titus with instructions for five groups of people that would comprise the church, four of them by age and gender, and the fifth referring to servants or slaves.

Paul then returns to exhorting Titus to behave in a manner that was beyond reproach as he was acting as God's representative.

III.a.i. Titus 2:1-10 - Proper living by age and gender groups

Paul describes what accords with sound doctrine (v.1), i.e. the type of living that corresponds with the Gospel. Some argue that the behaviour commanded here is not universally required but is culturally bound to the 1st Century. They argue that the ground for this behaviour is to avoid offense. However, v.1 roots this behaviour not in cultural ideas but in sound doctrine itself.

Paul addresses the behaviour of the church according to typical groups within the family structure, with special attention to age and gender, i.e. older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and bondservants. While there are similarities in what is expected of each group, there are also clear distinctions.

Ultimately, Paul is concerned with the church's witness by ensuring they lived their lives according to God's will but in a way that maintained social stability.

¹ But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine.

Titus 2:1

But as for you indicates the sharp contrast that must exist between people, on one hand, whose deeds disprove their claim to faith: <<**They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions**>> (Titus 1:16a), and Titus, on the other hand, who must teach the people to live in a way that is consistent with sound doctrine: <<**Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear**>> (Ephesians 4:29), or that which will affirm rather than deny their claim to know and accept God. Every believer's lifestyle must be subjected to the test of biblical principles; the alternative is to allow their lives to be shaped and approved by a value system that is opposed to that of God. Paul starts by instructing the leader and the teacher what he must be like, before telling him what he should be instructing his church. It is important for leaders to ensure their own lives are in order and their own thinking straight before they instruct others!

Paul found it necessary to issue this instruction because the false teachers had clearly rejected the message and perverted the concept of a Christian way of life. Christian ethics and the Christian message are meant to be inseparably and harmoniously related.

² Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.

Titus 2:2

It is generally accepted that Paul's reference to older or younger people in the following verses refers to their actual age and not their time as disciples, for most people on Crete are assumed to be recent converts resulting from Paul's recent missionary visit.

In the ancient world, and indeed the modern one, experience, knowledge and even wisdom often come with age, although not exclusively so. People should never cease to try to learn and gain more experience; younger people should respect those with such experience, and older people need to realise that they do not have the monopoly on such things.

The overall picture of older men is of Christian dignity and vibrant faith. This age group is not 'old men', but those who are more mature, more experienced in life, and who perhaps have growing or grown families. Within the social structure of that time, older men were to be the models of dignity, respectability and wisdom. Paul knew that if this did not hold within the church as well, Christianity could not hope to compete, or indeed, survive in the world. At the same time, the language of this instruction suggests that the absence of respectability means divergence from the faith.

Temperate indicates that these men were to be characterised by the moderation and self-restraint in all aspects of their lives.

Serious refers to their attitude to their faith and its natural outworkings, rather than their personal demeanour.

Endurance is perhaps of particular importance to those who are coming nearer to the ends of their human lives, where it might be easy to become distracted by natural difficulties that accompany later life and the aging process. Paul issues a similar command to the church in Thessalonica that compares favourably with the triad of values given here as sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. To them he wrote: <<*We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*>> (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3), intimating that endurance is in the hope of Christ.

³ Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behaviour, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

Titus 2:3-5

Likewise links Paul's call for older women to display the same Christ-like characteristics as those expected in their men folk as community and household leaders, clearly indicating the important role that women were now to play in their expression of their new found faith and Christian respectability. The

Scriptures give many examples of godly women perhaps most notably: <<**Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity**>> (Acts 9:36), whereas Job's wife is portrayed as one who does not give good advice, even if this illustration was in extreme circumstances, for she had just lost her children: <<**Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die.'** But he said to her, 'You speak as any foolish woman would speak. Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips>> (Job 2:9-10).

The instruction to older women and young women is intertwined because part of the role of a Christian older woman is to teach the younger women, where Paul uses the Greek word *sōphronizō*, which means 'to give instruction in wise behaviour and good judgment'. In that generation, age was respected for it generally brought with it knowledge, wisdom and experience. This is still a quality to be recognised in many older women in the modern church, although the young should also be valued as equals.

The topics the older women are to pass on, i.e. teach what is good, are very practical and focused on the domestic sphere. The focus on domesticity does not, however, prohibit working outside the home: <<**She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all her household are clothed in crimson. She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the city gates, taking his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she supplies the merchant with sashes**>> (Proverbs 31:16-24), which indicates a wide range of activities that a woman could legitimately undertake that both reflect well on her household duties and provide fulfilment in her life.

However, here it does indicate that Paul expects wives to carry the primary responsibility for the day-to-day care of their homes and children. Women are of course the primary source of teaching for their children, as was the case for King Lemuel: <<**The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him**>> (Proverbs 31:1), and: <<**She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue**>> (Proverbs 31:26). Much of this proverb was recently quoted although it may be of value to read it in its entirety.

Paul pairs not to be slanderers or slaves to drink, for these were perhaps two characteristics of some women once their familial responsibilities had diminished. Speaking ill of others, whether they were inside the church or not, is a poor characteristic trait and breaks the commandment: <<**You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord**>> (Leviticus 19:18). The second part of the prohibition does not restrict drinking alcohol in moderation but speaks of those whose excess would either cause them to lose self-control or that might lead to addiction. Both are poor reflections on a life of faith.

Yet all this is to be done while being submissive to their husbands, i.e. supporting their husbands' leadership role in the family. This was the cultural norm and was taught in the NT Scriptures to be so, in order to promote and maintain social harmony: <<*Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour*>> (Ephesians 5:22-23), <<*Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord*>> (Colossians 3:18), and: <<*Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives*>> (1 Peter 3:1-2).

Although initially ordained by God: <<*To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you'*>> (Genesis 3:16), the submission of wives is not like the obedience children owe parents, nor does this text demand all women to submit to all men. For it states to their husbands, not to all husbands! Both genders are equally created in God's image and heirs together of eternal life: <<*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise*>> (Galatians 3:28-29). Their submission is in deference to the ultimate leadership of the husband for the health and harmonious working of the marriage relationship. Paul's concept of submission contained notions of the mutuality of respect and love, and thus clearly transcends the secular notion.

It is worthwhile bearing in mind the political opposition that existed to the early church. If issues such as equality of the sexes or abolition of slavery were implemented in the fledgling church, it is likely the church would have been dealt a crushing blow by the authorities. Maintaining social harmony, while not in any way diluting the power of the Gospel message, was not just a sensible option but an essential one.

While other instructions could be included, the focus here is on older women helping younger women learn about being godly wives and mothers. Paul clearly has in mind younger married women, who were normally the homemaker in that era. Unmarried women would normally have remained in their father's house until a husband was found for them, but would still have been under their mother's influence, so similar principals apply.

In each of vv. 5, 8 and 10, important statements are made concerning the desired result of Gospel living. Such living keeps Christians from providing any legitimate grounds for others to criticise the Gospel, i.e. so that the Word of God may not be discredited, but instead it should be raised up for what it is and represents: <<*Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*>> (Hebrews 4:12). More positively, such living highlights the attractiveness and relevance of the Gospel.

Reputation is very important here. Not just for the church but for the name of the God it serves. God's people had frequently brought disrepute to God's name in the OT: <<Now therefore, what am I doing here, says the Lord, seeing that my people are taken away without cause? Their rulers howl, says the Lord, and continually, all day long, my name is despised>> (Isaiah 52:5), and: <<For, as it is written, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you'>> (Romans 2:24). The theme of upholding and raising up the name of God through a proclamation of the faith by a Gospel-shaped life is key in the NT: <<But we urge you, beloved, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we directed you, so that you may behave properly towards outsiders and be dependent on no one>> (1 Thessalonians 4:10b-12), <<Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honour, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed>> (1 Timothy 6:1), and: <<Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge>> (1 Peter 2:11-12). In this world it seems that God is not so much judged for what he does but what it is his supporters do and do not do!

⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

Titus 2:6

The command for younger men is brief and to the point. Self-control over all aspects of their lives is in view here, much like the command from Paul to Timothy to be careful of youthful passions, even though he was probably more than 30 years old at the time: <<Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart>> (2 Timothy 2:22).

⁷ Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, ⁸ and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.

Titus 2:7-8

Show yourself. Paul has now turned his attention back to Titus who, as a minister of God, must display characteristics that are beyond reproach, living a life worthy of imitation by others in the church. The charge to Titus links in with that just given to the younger men and is similar in tone to a key instruction given to Timothy: <<Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters – with absolute purity>> (1 Timothy 5:1-2).

In all respects a model of good works means that everything that Titus and others in that age group do must reflect the God they serve and bring glory to him, not that he has to do good works in terms of routine ministry for his primary role is teaching. This, too, was something Paul had required of Timothy: <<Let no one

despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity>> (1 Timothy 4:12).

In your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured. Whereas humour in teaching can be appropriate and prove effective if it helps the congregation to understand and remember what is being said, teaching has to truly reflect the Gospel, being sincere and accurate, so that no one can dilute the Gospel by finding fault with its presentation or the quality of the teaching. Something that can be a problem in modern churches is where those not called to teach are given a platform to do so.

The call for sound speech here is clearly in opposition to the false teaching of the heretics that Titus was facing and who have been a feature throughout the church age, as warned of by Jesus: *<<Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves>> (Matthew 7:15), and: <<False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect>> (Mark 13:22), as well as others: <<If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch'? All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings>> (Colossians 2:20-22), <<But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves>> (2 Peter 2:1), and: <<Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones>> (Jude 8). They are, of course, not new for they plagued the people of God in OT times too: <<An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule as the prophets direct; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?>> (Jeremiah 5:30-31), <<Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not exposed your iniquity to restore your fortunes, but have seen oracles for you that are false and misleading>> (Lamentations 2:14), and: <<Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets>> (Luke 6:26).*

Any opponent will be put to shame. Sound and accurate Gospel proclamation automatically counters what those who oppose it have to say, for they cannot contradict the truth and they will have nothing evil to say of those who truly live according to Gospel requirements and thereby reflect the nature of Christ in their own demeanour, as well as their lifestyle choices and actions.

What Paul here commands to all four groups applies equally as well in context to the church in the 21st Century. Although times may have changed, standards of behaviour in the life styles of those within the church should remain as rigorous as Paul calls for, which is marital faithfulness in which each person honours, loves and remains true to their spouse, for those it applies to. For those who remain single the challenges have increased and the temptations have multiplied, with greater freedom, mobility and responsibility, combined with society's indifference to sexual behaviour. Yet God's will and requirements have not changed, nor will they. Purity and self-control must

continue to characterise the lifestyle of the single Christian.

Paul's concern is to protect the Gospel, to continue the evangelistic mission, while at the same time, encouraging and requiring a lifestyle that exemplifies God's will for humankind. Titus' own lifestyle and ministry must be exemplary. They must bear the marks of dedicated commitment to the genuine Christian faith. In this way, all basis for slander is removed and the way forward for the Gospel is opened. The modern disciple, whether called to lead or not, must follow this model, while also demonstrating that such a life style is both rewarding and fun to live, for Jesus has said: <<*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*>> (John 10:10).

⁹ Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to answer back, ¹⁰ not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Titus 2:9-10

Tell slaves. Paul now turns to the fifth and final social group in the church. Larger households and landowners would have had slaves, some of whom would have attended the church with their masters and some independently from them. The promise of freedom that came as part of the Gospel proclamation seems to have had the effect on some that they were free of earthly responsibilities but Paul says this is not so. They are to remain submissive to their masters, irrespective of whether they were believers or not.

It should be noted that to be both a servant of a human master and a servant of Christ is not contradictory to the teaching of Jesus when he stated: <<*No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth*>> (Luke 16:13), for he was clearly referring to serving both Kingdom and worldly passions.

Since slaves were part of the Hellenistic household, it is quite possible that the false teachers' disruption of Cretan households accounts for the kind of disrespectful behaviour among slaves implied by this set of instructions. Something similar had occurred in Ephesus, where it was claimed that the resurrection of all had occurred, with false proclamation that this released everyone from their earthly responsibilities, leading some to think they were released from service.

What is godly behaviour in the case of Christian slaves? Propriety in the master-slave relationship was clearly defined in the ancient world. While despotism and cruelty among masters were generally disdained, in practice the bulk of the load in maintaining a peaceful relationship was borne by the slave. The slave was to be obedient and respectful toward the master at all times. Paul did not dispute this arrangement. Rather, with his customary exhortation, he commanded slaves to be models of decency in their respective roles.

Submission, subordination or subjection were the traditional abbreviations for willing acceptance of the realities of the social institution of that time, with compliant, respectful behaviour expected within it: <<*Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh*>> (1 Peter 2:18). Obey is equivalent: <<*Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ*>> (Ephesians 6:5), and: <<*Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord*>> (Colossians 3:22). This meant complete recognition of the master's authority.

Paul called on them to work hard and to be honest, for this would reflect their Christian lifestyle, i.e. so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Saviour. In keeping with the overall thrust of the letter, this kind of living proves the Gospel, for all believers are instructed: <<*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven*>> (Matthew 5:16).

It is so easy for people to bring disrepute to the faith they profess by living a life that is hypocritical. It is reassuring to know that good discipleship can also lead to a life that reflects the goodness and hope that is to be found in God.

To give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to answer back probably applies primarily to those who served within their master's household and demonstrates the impression they are to have on those in the household, both slave and free.

In addition, there were those who were entrusted to operate within their master's financial or business activities. They are called not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, for faithlessness brings its own rewards: <<*And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?*>> (Luke 16:12). While that is a call for good witness in the specific cultural setting, it remains as much in evidence in modern society for those who are employed by someone else. By displaying an honest work ethic, reliability and care for the business of their employer, believers are showing their employers and others in the workplace what the Christian lifestyle should be like. Disciples are always going to be in the shop window for Christ.

God our Saviour sets up the description of this doctrine in vv.11-14. Note that Paul refers to both God the Father and God the Son as being the Saviour of his people in all three chapters of Titus. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul often relates to this. Since both are equally God there is no contradiction in terms here; which are in complete agreement with the OT Scriptures, for example: <<*They forgot God, their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt*>> (Psalm 106:21), and: <<*It will be a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; when they cry to the Lord because of oppressors, he will send them a saviour, and will defend and deliver them*>> (Isaiah 19:20).

III.a.ii. Titus 2:11-14 - Gospel basis

Paul gives the theological basis for the lifestyles he has described in vv.1-10. Christians should live this way because the grace of God that saves also instructs its recipients to live in a new way. One cannot truly claim to be a recipient of saving grace without also being a pupil of 'training grace'. This change in lifestyle is rooted in the atonement (v.14), and the expectation of Christ's return (v.13).

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,

Titus 2:11

For links the following reasoning with the declarations that have gone before.

The grace of God is the essence of God's covenant with humankind. It signifies God's unmerited love. The language here shows that the grace culminated or found full expression in a particular world-changing event - the sacrifice of God's only Son: <<*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life*>> (John 3:16), and: <<*In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins*>> (1 John 4:10).

Has appeared is a technical Greek term for the manifestation or epiphany of a god or hero, linking this clearly to the coming of the long awaited Messiah: <<*We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete*>> (1 John 1:1-4).

Bringing salvation to all people is sometimes misunderstood as meaning that all people will be saved, i.e. universalism. This is also how some people read: <<*This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*>> (1 Timothy 2:3-4). However, such a reading is not necessary here and flatly contradicts other Scripture, including Paul's comments in the same letter: <<*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*>> (1 Timothy 4:1). Jesus' teaching supports this: <<*As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*>> (Matthew 25:30), <<*Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"*>> (Matthew 25:41), <<*And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*>> (Matthew 25:46). It means, rather, that salvation has been offered to all people, including all ethnic groups, not just to some, as was originally believed in Jewish thinking especially. Refer also to comments made on 1 Timothy 2:3-4 in this series.

This event, too, brought hope. But the hope associated with God's grace, mercy and offer of eternal salvation, transcends any pagan notions of hope or deliverance from physical calamity. It is salvation from sin and sin's extensive, destructive results. Salvation is an adjective in the Greek sentence which describes something intrinsic to grace: God's grace is not simply beneficent in purpose; it means to truly and completely save.

This event is unique in another respect. In scope it is universal, reaching in some way to all people. This does not mean that everyone responds to the appearance of Christ, to Christ's birth, teaching and healing ministry, death and resurrection, with equal acceptance or true understanding.

¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,

Titus 2:12

Training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions indicates the purpose of the incarnation of Christ for he came to provide an education, Greek *paideia*, which implies a virtuous education. It was the provision of saving grace that teaches its recipients to say no to sin and yes to godliness. The Greeks had believed that teaching would lead to virtue, whereas Paul reveals that the teaching or training of Jesus actually leads to new life - an eternal hope.

In the present age applies, of course, to the post-resurrection, post-Pentecost era and will continue on until Christ's return (v.13), when he will call all to account, highlighting the seriousness of Paul's charge. It stresses that this godliness is to be lived out in the here and now. It also sets up the reference to the future return of Christ. Such certainty about the future enables constancy in the present: <<***Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation***>> (Isaiah 12:2).

This new life is the antithesis of the old life. Formerly the values of the world shaped life, but now a new set of values and goals define life in Christ: <<***When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life***>> (Romans 6:20-22), <<***Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all***>> (Romans 11:30-32), <<***they only heard it said, 'The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy'***>> (Galatians 1:23), <<***For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit***>> (Titus 3:3-4), <<***Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to***

you and to me>> (Philemon 11), and: <<Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy>> (1 Peter 2:10).

¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:13

The Greek for wait, *prosdechomai*, often carries a connotation of eagerness. Eagerly expecting the return of Christ, i.e. the manifestation of the glory, is the way grace trains Christians to renounce sin and live in a godly way as recently noted. Setting one's mind on the truth of Christ's return impels a person to holiness: *<<Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure>> (1 John 3:2-3).*

The blessed hope means Christ's Second Coming is a promise from God, which Paul calls the manifestation of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It may seem unclear whether Paul refers here to two persons of the Godhead, i.e. God the Father and Jesus Christ, or whether he describes Jesus as God and Saviour. The Greek grammar, however, is well reflected in this translation and indicates that Jesus is being identified as our great God and Saviour: *<<In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God>> (John 1:1), and: <<Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!''>> (John 20:28).*

There is debate whether the Greek should be translated as God and Saviour as referring to God the Father and Jesus as the Christ of God both being in view, or whether it is just glory of our great God being revealed in the manifestation of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which seems most likely here. Whichever is intended, this is one of several NT passages that affirms the deity of Jesus as both Christ and God the Son.

The glory of our great God is probably not to be taken as an adjective but rather as that which will appear. It picks up the theme of an ultimate manifestation of God's glory at the close of history: *<<Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders he will manifest his glory>> (Isaiah 24:23), and: <<Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken>> (Isaiah 40:5), which is confirmed in the NT: <<For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done>> (Matthew 16:27), and: <<when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marvelled at on that day among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed>> (2 Thessalonians 1:10).*

¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Titus 2:14

He it is who gave himself for us is a simple statement that grounds the sacrificial death of Christ as the once for all propitiation for the sins of mankind, offering the only route to salvation for all who would accept this free gift of grace: <<*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*>> (Mark 10:45 NIV), and: <<*It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification*>> (Romans 4:24b-25), which was a death that had to occur as it was preordained by God prior to the creation of the world: <<*You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know – this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law*>> (Acts 2:22-23). It was a death that was both representative and substitutionary. It is also unique, for it was not a martyr's death but substitutionary propitiation.

Paul anchors his call for godliness in the fact that one purpose of Jesus' death was to make his people holy. To forsake godliness is to despise or at least reject the sacrifice of Christ. Paul roots this in the OT with the phrase redeem us from all iniquity, which in Greek closely resembles the Septuagint rendering of: <<*It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities*>> (Psalm 130:8).

A people of his own possession translates an unusual Greek phrase *laon periousion*, with intentional echoes from the OT, especially: <<*Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites*>> (Exodus 19:5-6), <<*For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession*>> (Deuteronomy 7:6), <<*For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; it is you the Lord has chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession*>> (Deuteronomy 14:2), <<*For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession*>> (Psalm 135:4), and: <<*They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as parents spare their children who serve them*>> (Malachi 3:17). It has the sense of a much prized, treasured possession.

These people are to be zealous for good deeds, so again redemption is tied specifically to living in a godly manner. There is no room for claiming to be redeemed while providing no evidence of practical transformation: <<*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons*>>

believe – and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith without works is barren? Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’, and he was called the friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead>> (James 2:14-26). Although it must always be remembered that salvation is unmerited and is purely a free gift of God’s grace!

Although it was God the Father that gave the world his only Son, it was God as man that became both priest and offering who made the sacrifice both holy and effective. God loved the Son for his willingness to die in both obedience and submission: <<For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father>> (John 10:17-18), in order to obtain righteousness for mortal man: <<For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God>> (2 Corinthians 5:21). Although this remains a glorious mystery, it achieved more than words can say: <<For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified>> (Hebrews 10:14). Jesus the man came as the Christ of God, and died to purify as well as to forgive; to obtain grace; to heal the nature, as well as to free from guilt, shame and eternal condemnation. He gave himself for his church, to cleanse it. Those who accept the free gift of grace that cost them nothing need to understand that it cost Him everything! Their response should be to endeavour to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives.

Christ’s redemptive death, understood in this way, is without question the ultimate illustration of God’s grace. The act originated in God’s plan, was executed in behalf of undeserving people and accomplished their salvation. But the theme of Christian living that runs throughout Titus Chapter 2 suggests that Paul’s focal point in v.14 is on the purpose or result of this event, which the following clause summarises.

III.a.iii. Titus 2:15 - Summary command

After describing the Gospel, Paul returns to commanding Titus what he is required to do as was seen in vv.1-10. Paul’s thought turns briefly to remind Titus of his duty in relation to the doctrine of the Gospel.

¹⁵ Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you.

Titus 2:15

Declare these things translates the Greek *parakalei*, which means ‘pressed home

with deep sincerity'. Paul's instruction here is clear - Titus is required to speak out about the truth of the Gospel: <<**Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen**>> (1 Peter 4:11); for that will do more to undermine and repel the attacks of the false teachers than anything else, for the eyes of the world are always upon the church for a variety of reasons: <<**for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others**>> (2 Corinthians 8:21), and: <<**Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge**>> (1 Peter 2:12).

The references to all authority, and not allowing anyone to disregard Titus, i.e. let no one look down on you, shows that Paul expects this instruction to be given clearly and with certainty. As one chosen by God to serve the churches, the Christian teacher or leader has authority to carry out such a command. Titus, as the apostle's delegate, shared Paul's authority. The gravity and need of the situation required that the people recognise that this doctrine was to be accepted and responded to as God's instruction. These were not merely helpful suggestions, but divine commands.