

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS

March 22, 1984

I. The recipient of the epistle.

A. Background.

1. He is referred to 13X in the New Testament, but never in Acts (9X in 2Cor.).
2. By nationality he was a Greek (Gal.2:3) and converted to Christianity out of Heathenism under Paul, Ti.1:4.
3. The first mention of Titus is in regard to the Jerusalem Conference (49AD) where Paul presented him as an example of his gentile converts.
4. He used Titus as a test case at Jerusalem to demonstrate the validity of the true gospel, Gal.2:15.
5. Apparently, his home was Syrian Antioch, and he was saved under Barnabas and Saul during the great gentile conversion in Act.11:25,26.

B. Missionary work.

1. The record is silent until Paul's third missionary journey (spring 53 May 57).
2. It is at Ephesus (Sept. 53 May 56) that we first hear of him as one of Paul's assistants in connection with the difficult Corinthian situation.
3. Paul used Titus to initiate the Jerusalem offering among the Corinthians prior to the writing of 1Cor., 2Cor.8:6,10.
4. Following the writing of 1Cor., Paul sent Titus to Corinth to troubleshoot there and to report to Paul the effects of the letter on the Corinthians.
5. Failing to join up with Paul at Troas as planned, Titus met Paul in Macedonia with the news of the Corinthian response to 1Corinthians, 2Cor.2:12,13; 7:57.
6. Paul then wrote 2Cor. (Oct. 56) and dispatched it by the hand of Titus, Luke, and Silas, 1:19; 2Cor.8:16-24.
7. Some ten years later, we hear of Titus in connection with the mission work on the island of Crete (summer 66), Ti.1:5-16.
8. In Paul's letter to him, he asks him to join him at Nicopolis as soon as someone arrives on Crete to take his place, Ti.3:12.
9. He was with Paul in Rome during his second imprisonment.
10. But at the time of writing of 2Timothy, Titus had gone to Dalmatia, where we last hear of him, 2Tim.4:10.

C. Character.

1. His doctrinal integrity is evidenced by Ti.1:4 "*my true child according to a common faith.*"
2. His moral character as a spiritual leader is seen in 2Cor.12:18.
3. His reliability under pressure is seen by his Corinthian and Cretan assignments.
4. His overall spiritual worth is seen in Paul's statements about him, 2Cor.2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:16,23; Ti.1:4.

II. The churches on Crete.

A. Background:

1. Crete is the largest island in the Mediterranean (156 miles long and 30 miles wide at its broadest), situated due south of the Aegean Sea.
2. The inhabitants of Crete had a bad reputation a fact witnessed by Paul (1:12,13), Livy, Plutarch, Polybius, and Strabo.
3. Their propensity for falsehood was proverbial; the expression "to Cretize" was synonymous with "lying", and "to play the Cretan with a Cretan" meant to "out trick a trickster".
4. They were a lazy, intemperate (wine on the island was famous) turbulent people whose

morals were low.

B. Origin.

1. We have no record of how Christianity was first brought to the island.
2. In Act.2:11, we read of Jewish Cretans present on the day of Pentecost.
3. In the early summer of 66, Paul was in Crete with Titus (see chronology chart).
4. Paul, after observing the distressing conditions in the churches, went on to Asia Minor, leaving Titus on Crete.
5. These churches fell in the apostle's canon, yet he neither founded them nor personally taught them (the epistle contains not a single reference to what was taught or done on Crete).

C. Conditions.

1. The local churches mirrored the low moral standards of Cretan society.
2. The churches lacked organization, which Titus was to complete, 1:5.
3. The churches were infested with false teachers, mainly of Jewish persuasion, 1:10,14,16; 3:9.

III. The epistle itself.

A. Place and date.

1. Summer 66AD.
2. From Asia Minor, prior to his winter stay at Nicopolis, 3:12.
3. Zenas and Apollos delivered it, 3:13 (inferred).

B. Purpose.

1. Titus would have signed apostolic authorization for his work as he faced opposition, 1:11; 2:15b.
2. Secondly, the epistle contained written instructions on how to solve the problems there.
3. Finally, to inform Titus of personal matters, 3:12,13.

C. Characteristics.

1. Short and compact (less than 700 words).
2. Less personal than 1 Timothy, carrying a more official tone.
3. Emphasizes the adorning of doctrine in the witness of the life over learning Bible Doctrine, 2:10.
4. Contains some great doctrinal passages: 1:13; 2:11-14; 3:4-7.