

# TITUS

## Chapter 1a

### Introduction

"Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

That is, unless they were *Christian* Cretans. Then they were expected, according to Titus 2:12, to "deny ungodliness" and "live...godly" lives. Their *belief* in Christ was expected to influence their *behavior* as Cretans.

*Your* belief in Jesus Christ is expected to influence *your* behavior in *your* city! Paul's letter to Titus is about what you *believe* affecting how you *behave* as a Christian.

What you believe is called "the faith" in Titus:

Titus 1:1 ...the faith of God's elect...

Titus 1:13 ...that they may be sound in the faith...

Titus 3:15 ...Greet those who love us in the faith...

The phrase "the faith" puts your belief in Jesus into proper perspective. Christianity is not "a faith," not just another religion; it is "the faith," a relationship with Jesus Christ, with "God our Savior."

Just exactly how what you believe affects your behavior is the major theme of Titus. They were to deny ungodliness and live godly lives. The expression of their godly lives was to be in good works, a phrase repeated many times.

Titus was to be a *pattern* of good works:

Titus 2:7 in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works...

They were to have a *passion* for good works:

Titus 2:14 [Jesus] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

They were to *persevere* in good works:

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men...

Titus 3:14 ...And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

The faith you believe should result in godly behavior. Here in Chapter One you learn: #1 You Are The Elect Who Manifest The Faith In Godliness, #2 You Have Elders Who Model The Faith In Godliness, and #3 You Have Enemies Who Malign The Faith In Ungodliness.

It will take us at least two studies to learn these things! We will only get through the first point this morning...

#1 You Are The Elect Who Manifest The Faith In Godliness (v1-4)

The Apostle Paul and Titus had journeyed together to the Mediterranean island of Crete. There they proclaimed the Gospel. As Cretans responded in faith and were saved, small groups of believers had been formed throughout the island, meeting in private homes. As Paul moved on in his missionary journeyings, he left Titus behind to set the church in order.

Cretans had a terrible reputation in the Mediterranean world for ungodliness. God the Holy Spirit impressed Paul to especially stress godliness as the theme of his letter to Titus, and as the vision for the home churches on Crete. They were to manifest godliness in the midst of the notorious ungodliness of Crete.

As we study Titus we want to relate what we are learning to ourselves and to our church fellowship. Just as on Crete, God the Holy Spirit impresses us to stress certain themes and activities, and to suppress certain themes and activities. God knows the example that is most appropriate for the community of believers and for the communities in which we live. We need to follow His leading, not our own.

Our theme is first of all to follow God the Holy Spirit's leading as a Calvary Chapel fellowship. We are affiliated with a group of churches who ideally share a common emphasis in ministry. God raises up

Calvary Chapel's in those communities where He has determined that our style of ministry is needed.

What is a Calvary Chapel? What is our style of ministry? You catch the vision as you come, but perhaps I can enumerate a few things:

We are conservative in the Word:

We believe in all of the fundamental, orthodox doctrines of the evangelical Protestant church.

We are contemporary in our worship:

While there is a wide variety of musical styles and expressions of worship, we mostly utilize a contemporary style of worship.

We are charismatic in our walk:

We believe that all of the gifts of God the Holy Spirit are operating in the church today, but in an orderly, Scriptural manner.

We are committed to waiting for Jesus Christ's imminent return:

We await the pre-tribulation rapture of the church prior to the seven year Tribulation. It is characteristic of Calvary Chapel to emphasize the rapture and the personal, physical, pre-millennial return of Jesus.

Within this overall context of ministry, our fellowship is free to follow the particular leading of God the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, instructing us on how *He* wants to minister to the community of believers and, through you, to the larger communities of Kings County. His leading is different from church to church, and at different times within a church! Something that seems good may not be to God's glory. Something that was once useful may have run its course. The leading of God the Holy Spirit is what keeps the church a vibrant community of believers who can affect the larger communities you live within!

God's leading on Crete was to emphasize *godliness*...

Titus 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ...

"Bondservant" is the translation of a word that can mean "slave" or "voluntary servant." The word describes an interesting tension in the

Christian life. You are really a slave, redeemed by Jesus Christ. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20,

...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

You are a slave, but one that Jesus then sets free to serve Him voluntarily! It is your *voluntary* service He desires, as the expression of your love for Him.

His slavery led Paul into the voluntary service of "an apostle of Jesus Christ." The first century apostles, along with prophets, established the once for all foundation of the faith in Jesus Christ.

In your slavery to Jesus He has a calling for your life as well!

...according to the faith of God's elect...

"According to" means that the first goal of Paul's apostleship was "the faith of God's elect." His goal was to bring sinners to salvation.

"God's elect" are those who respond to the Gospel and are saved.

Paul had another goal. He was to bring sinners to salvation and then to instruct them as saints in how to live:

...and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness...

"The acknowledgment of the truth" is instruction in the truth which gives the saint knowledge of God and of what God has done for you. This increasing knowledge of God through His Word "accords with," or "leads to," *godliness*. Faith in Jesus and knowledge of the truth in His Word leads to godliness. Godliness will lead to visible manifestations of godly behavior, called "good works" throughout this letter.

Your "good works" do not save you! Paul was not afraid to talk about works, but he was careful to emphasize their proper place in your Christian life. In Chapter Three he says,

Titus 3:5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Paul is especially careful to make this point in this letter because one of the problems Titus faced was false teachers who were saying that faith *plus* works was necessary for salvation. That has never been true, nor will it ever be true! Salvation is by grace through faith, plus nothing.

In verses two and three of Chapter One Paul shows you that God's plan of salvation stretches from eternity past to eternity future and is all of grace with no place for works until *after* you are saved by grace through faith:

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began...  
Titus 1:3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching...

Before time or history or the human race began, God established a plan of salvation. "The hope of eternal life" is something "God, Who cannot lie promised before time began." In eternity past God made a way of salvation for mankind to spend eternity future with Him. That plan is manifested in time to the human race by the preaching of the Gospel.

The furthering of the Gospel is a stewardship God gives to his slaves in their voluntary service:

...which was committed to me ...

Paul's ministry was "committed" to him; it was God's, and Paul was simply a steward. The concept of a "steward" helps you further define what it means to be a "slave" in "voluntary service" to the Lord. It is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

You are faithful when you are obedient:

...according to the commandment of God our Savior.

Whatever your calling is, God instructs you in it through His Spirit inspired Word.

The One you serve in your stewardship and Whom you proclaim in your service is none other than God come in human flesh, "God our Savior."

Titus 1:4 To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

Titus had come to faith in Jesus through Paul's preaching and is affectionately referred to as Paul's "son in our common faith," or in the faith. Paul then disciplined Titus, taking him with him on missions trips and discovering ministry from him.

Titus' task on Crete was a difficult one. The Cretans were not easy to work with. Titus could be sure of God's supernatural resources - "grace, mercy, and peace." God's "grace" through the preaching of the Gospel was extending "mercy" towards the lost Cretans, and bringing them into the "peace" of reconciliation with God. God's "grace" at work in Titus would encourage him to show "mercy" towards the Cretans and to pursue "peace" with them.

God's elect on Crete were to manifest the faith in godliness. *You* are God's elect in Hanford, in Lemoore, in Armona, in Corcoran, who manifest the faith in godliness!

"God's elect" are all those who respond in faith to the Gospel and are born again by God the Holy Spirit.

Election is an important Bible doctrine, but one that causes sharp disagreement and unfortunate division among Christians. Evangelical believers who take seriously the Bible's teaching on election are divided over exactly when election occurs, and over exactly who are the elect. There are basically three viewpoints: 1 - Election is Unconditional; 2 - Election is Conditional; 3 - Election is Corporate.

Unconditional Election...

...is the belief that God, in eternity past before the foundation of the world, chose certain persons from out of all future humanity whom He would save. These people who God foreordained to salvation are the elect.

Election is seen to be unconditional in the sense that God's prior choice alone determines who definitely will *and* who definitely will not be saved by grace through faith for eternity.

Conditional Election...

...is the belief that God, in eternity past before the foundation of the world, looked forward into the future and chose those persons from out of all humanity whom He saw would respond in faith to the Gospel. These people whose decision God foreknew are the elect.

Election is seen to be conditional in the sense that anyone from all humanity who meets the gracious condition of faith in Jesus can and will be saved.

Corporate Election...

...is the belief that God, in eternity past before the foundation of the world, chose Jesus to be the Savior of the world, determining only that any person out of all humanity who would hear the Gospel and afterward respond in faith would be saved.

Election is seen to be corporate in the sense that no individual person is elect until *after* they respond in faith to the Gospel and are then joined to Jesus Christ's elect body of believers.

Each of these approaches has biblical support, and each has biblical difficulties. This is a historic debate, dating back to at least the fourth century A.D., and with no end in sight! I would caution you *not* to take a dogmatic position. Those who do inevitably come to certain unbiblical conclusions simply for the sake of defending and maintaining their doctrine.

How do I approach election? I look at the overall context of Scripture and at the immediate context of the verse.

The Overall Context Of Scripture

According to the overall context of Scripture I would say concerning election that "whosoever will" believe on Jesus is "chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world."

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a genuine offer of salvation to "whosoever will" believe.

Peter thought it was:

2 Peter 3:9 God "...is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

John thought it was a genuine offer to whosoever will believe:

1 John 2:2 "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Paul thought it was a genuine offer to whosoever will believe:

Romans 10:13 "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The early Church thought it was a genuine offer to whosoever will believe:

Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

Jesus thought it was a genuine offer to whosoever will believe:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Whatever God did in eternity past before the foundation of the world is not restricted to a certain group of people but is made available to all people everywhere. All humanity is commanded to repent and believe in Jesus. Each person is held personally responsible if they reject the Gospel. With the *responsibility* God gives the *ability* to receive or reject His offer of salvation by grace through faith.

Those who respond to the Gospel in personal faith can afterward be confident that their choice is the result of God having first chosen them!

Jesus gave us an important illustration in Revelation 3:20 -

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

Salvation is like a door in your heart. On your side there is a handle, over which are written the words "whosoever will." When you are drawn to Jesus Christ by God the Holy Spirit you can reach out with the empty hand of faith and open the door. As Jesus comes in He illuminates your heart so that you can see there for the first time, written over the door, the words "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world."

## The Immediate Context Of The Verse

In Titus the immediate context is not to teach the *doctrine* of election, but to encourage the *devotion* and *duty* of the elect!

You can read into the verse your own particular doctrine of election:

You could see *unconditional* election if you say that Paul's preaching was with a view towards reaching only those particular people on Crete who were elect in eternity past. The verse doesn't clearly teach this, but if you already believe it you will see it there.

You could see *conditional* election if you emphasize their personal decision to "acknowledge...the truth" when the Gospel was preached. The verse doesn't clearly teach this, but if you already believe it you will see it there.

You could see *corporate* election if you emphasize God's "promise before time began" to save any on Crete who would acknowledge the truth and therefore be joined to the elect. The verse doesn't clearly teach this, but if you already believe it you will see it there.

What you should rather see is the emphasis on those who are God's elect behaving as God's elect, in godliness! Paul wrote to Titus in order to encourage the devotion and duty of God's elect. Devotion to Jesus yields godliness, which should manifest itself in the dutiful performance of good works.

## Conclusion

Remember, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Salvation is not accomplished through good works, but salvation *is accompanied* by good works.

Your conduct as a Christian is a commentary about Jesus Christ. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3,

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart.

As we work through the letter we will identify the godliness and good works that should be characteristic of you as God's elect.