

# TITUS

## Chapter One (Part Two)

### Introduction

Because you are precious to God, you are prey for the devil. One of his most favorite hunting grounds is *within* the fellowship of believers:

2 Peter 2:1-2 ...there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

Jude 1:3-4 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:28-30 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

The hunting takes place "among you," said Peter; it takes place as certain individuals "creep in unnoticed," said Jude; it takes place "from among yourselves," said Paul. Paul then used a graphic illustration: You are like a flock of sheep, God's flock, and the devil sends wolves in sheep's clothing among you to devour you.

The enemy is among you...But so are your Elders! Paul compared the Elders of the Church to shepherds who, in his illustration, would risk their lives to protect the flock from its savage enemies.

Your Elders and your Enemies are the subject of Titus 1:5-16.

#1 Recognize The Example Of The Elders Who Are Set In Place To Disciple You, and #2 Recognize The Example Of The Enemies Who Are Sent To Deceive You.

#1 Recognize The Example Of The Elders Who Are Set In Place To Disciple You (v5-9)

Paul and Titus had gone to the island of Crete and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. People in every city on the island responded and were saved. The believers were meeting in private homes in the various cities throughout the island. Paul had left Titus behind to "set in order" the fellowship of believers that had been established there. One of Titus' first priorities was to appoint elders in every city, men who met the qualifications listed in verses five through nine.

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you;

Titus actually had two tasks. The first was to "set in order the things that are lacking." We are not told what was lacking, or how it was to be set in order. That's because the task was a *dynamic* task that required depending on the leading of God the Holy Spirit.

Ministry *must* be dynamic, depending on the leading of God the Holy Spirit. Certain things should be common in every ministry. For example, every ministry should involve the worship of God and the Word of God. But within the common priorities of ministry there is a lot of room for unique styles and expressions of ministry.

Calvary Chapel of Hanford is not like your *last* Church, and it's not like your *next* Church! That is by God's dynamic design. The particulars of any ministry take on the characteristics of the gifts that God the Holy Spirit has sovereignly bestowed upon its servants.

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you;

Titus was to "appoint elders in every city." These same men are called "bishops" in verse seven. In Acts 20:28-30 Paul spoke of "shepherds" and "overseers." The Bible also mentions "pastor-teachers" and "deacons" as men who have leadership roles in the Church. How are we to understand the use of these various terms? Who are these men, and how do they function as the leadership of God's Church?

This the question of Church government. Historically there have been three forms of Church government: Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal.

Congregational Church government stresses the involvement of the whole congregation in the affairs and the administration of the Church.

Presbyterial Church government takes its name from the Greek word for "Elder," which is *presbuteros*. It stresses the equal authority of a group of Elders in the affairs and the administration of the Church.

Episcopal Church government takes its name from the Greek word for "bishop," which is *episkopos*. It stresses, to a greater or lesser degree, the authority of the pastor that God has raised-up to oversee the affairs and the administration of the Church.

Each form of Church government has biblical support, and each form has certain biblical difficulties. The proponents of each are ready to argue that their position is the only truly biblical one; but their opponents who hold one of the other viewpoints have their mind set as well!

What are we, then? We are a combination of all three!

We are *congregational* in the sense that we *do* solicit the whole congregation in certain affairs and administration of the Church. For example, before we ordain Elders or deacons we put the names out before the whole Church, soliciting everyone's input.

We are *presbyterial* in the sense that we *do* make a sincere effort to order the affairs and the administration of the Church by seeking a biblical consensus among the Elders.

We are *episcopal* in the sense that the pastor is an Elder who *does* hold a unique office for which he is especially called and, so long as he remains biblical, who *does* have final authority over the affairs and the administration of the Church.

Ideally we would have a pastor who is supported by and is accountable to the Elders, who are together sold-out to serving the congregation. Along the way, when the pastor and Elders need physical help with ministering to the congregation, they appoint

qualified men as deacons. Does this form of Church government work? *It does when all of the men are likeminded.*

There is a biblical basis for what I am saying in 1Timothy Chapter five. Since I have used that passage many times before when describing Church government, I'd like today to give you an *extra-biblical* basis for it as well, from a recognized historic Christian source outside of the Bible.

I've been reading the letters of Ignatius, who was the bishop of the Church at Antioch at around 100 A.D. On his way to be martyred at Rome Ignatius wrote seven letters to various New Testament Churches. While these are not Scripture and cannot be substituted for the teaching of the Scriptures, his comments give you a pretty good understanding of Church government at the end of the First Century - just a few years after the Church was established by the Apostles and prophets. In each of the letters he said something like the following, taken from his letter to the Church at Smyrna -

"I greet the bishop, so worthy of God, and the godly presbytery, and my fellow servants, the deacons, and all of you, individually and collectively..."<sup>1</sup>

To the Church at Philadelphia he wrote,

"...there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow servants..."<sup>2</sup>

Ignatius identified late First Century biblical Church government as something very much like what we have been describing. The "bishop" he spoke of was a reference to the man we would call the pastor; the "presbytery" were the men raised-up as Elders. The "deacons" were men who served the congregation's physical needs as directed by the pastor and the Elders. The key to the effectiveness of this Church government was a spiritual likemindedness among the pastor, the Elders, the deacons, and the congregation - a likemindedness which Ignatius described in this passage in his letter to the Church at Ephesus:

"Thus it is proper for you to act together in harmony with the mind of the bishop, as you are in fact doing. For your presbytery, which is worthy of its name and worthy of God, is attuned to the

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<sup>1</sup>Lightfoot & Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

bishop as strings to a lyre. Therefore in your unanimity and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. You must join this chorus, every one of you, so that by being harmonious in unanimity and taking your pitch from God you may sing in unison with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father..."<sup>3</sup>

Titus, a pastor, was to recognize the Elders God was raising-up within the house Churches of Crete. They would be those men who met the qualifications listed in verses five through nine.

In verses five and six you see the candidate for Elder among the family of believers *and* among his believing family.

You see him among the family of believers...

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you;

It is implied that the candidate for Elder be extremely involved in the fellowship and meetings of the Church. He is always among the family of believers, seeking opportunities to minister. He is chosen because he is *already* ministering - not in order to *begin* ministering!

You see him among his believing family...

Titus 1:6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

This verse describes his home life. He is said to be "blameless" here and again in verse seven. Rather than a repetition, what you are being told is that he must be "blameless" both at home *and* outside the home.

What does it mean to be "blameless" at home? The words that come next tell you! He is to be "blameless" concerning his relationship with his wife, *and* concerning the raising of his children. An Elder must have an exemplary marriage, and be a good example in raising his children. Regarding his children, they are to be brought up in the faith and are to be under control and obedient.

In verses seven through nine you see the candidate for Elder in the world and in the Word.

You see him in the world...

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,  
Titus 1:8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

He is to be "blameless," which means "above being truly reproached," by the world at large. This is important since, as a "steward of God," he is a representation to the world of onlookers of what a Christian should be!

He is to differ from the world in the following important ways:

"not self-willed" - He dies to himself to serve others.

"not quick-tempered" - One author said temper is such a wonderful quality that it is a shame to lose it!

"not given to wine" - While this doesn't completely prohibit drinking alcohol, it establishes that the Elder is someone who desires to be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

"not violent" - Obviously the Elder should not resort to physical violence. Just as well, he should not practice intimidation and other non-physical violence.

"not greedy for money" - An Elder should have the proper biblical perspective on the use of this world's wealth as a means for promoting the Gospel.

"hospitable" - He is to be a lover of strangers, desiring to meet their needs.

"a lover of what is good" - In our culture we would apply this to his leisure and recreation activities. He should have "good," that is, *proper*, entertainments and personal pursuits - ones that are consistent with a relationship with Jesus Christ.

"sober-minded" - This means he disciplines his mind so as to control his thoughts, words, and behaviors.

"just" - Someone who is just shows no partiality.

"holy" - He is set apart for God's service.

"self-controlled" - There are no glaring excesses in his life.

This is a profile of what the world should see when it sees a leader in God's Church - a person who, by his office, is an example of what it means to be a Christian. Thank God for the indwelling of His Holy Spirit to inspire these qualities!!

In verse nine, you see the Elder in the Word...

Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

The Elder is a *student* of God's Word - "he has been taught."

He is *steward* of God's Word - "holding fast."

He is a *servant* of God's Word - "that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

God gifts and then gives these men to His Church *for you!* They are your servants. True, they are over you as leaders - but only so they can be a support to you! It may seem contradictory, but the more you submit to them the more they are able to serve you. You read in Hebrews 13:17,

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

God has raised-up men over you in order to benefit you. Your submission to their proper and biblical use of authority is profitable for *you*.

There are other men, and women, who you have to recognize in the Church. They come across as spiritual, as leaders. They are not. These next verses expose them for who they really are - your enemies.

## #2 Recognize The Example Of The Enemies Who Are Sent To Deceive You (v10-16)

You see their manner in verse ten:

Titus 1:10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

It is their manner to be "insubordinate." You recognize them as insubordinate by paying close attention to their *speech*. "Idle talk" refers to their casual speech; "deceivers" refers to speech that is carefully calculated to corrupt. If you receive the subtle slander of their casual speech, they will grow bolder and begin to seek to corrupt you against the simplicity of the Gospel, and especially against the servants of the Gospel whom God has raised-up over you.

You see their method in verse eleven:

Titus 1:11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Their method is to infiltrate families or small groups within the Church. They gain your confidence and are then better able to corrupt you.

You see their motive in verse eleven:

Titus 1:11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Their motive is "dishonest gain." Dishonest gain can refer to money...It can *also* refer to others kinds of personal "gain," such as respect, reputation, and the like. In other words, these enemies use you for their own purposes - whether financial or personal.

You see their message in verse ten, and in verses eleven through fifteen:

Titus 1:10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

"Those of the circumcision" were those who believed that circumcision and the keeping of certain other ceremonial laws were necessary for salvation. They *added* something to the Gospel message. There are many who seek to add something to the Gospel even today...

Titus 1:12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

Titus 1:13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,

These verses describe them as given over to fleshly appetites. Their message sounds spiritual, but their lives are sensual.

Titus 1:14 not giving heed to Jewish fables...

Their message is laced with the sensational. "Jewish fables" is a reference to fanciful and unique reinterpretations of the Bible.

...and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

The "commandments of men who turn from the truth" are a mixing of secular thought with sacred Scripture. Today, a good example would be psychology.



Titus 1:15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

This verse describes legalism. The Jews believed certain foods and animals and persons and objects were defiled in and of themselves. By coming into contact with something defiled *you* became defiled - unfit for worship. Relationship with Jesus Christ abolishes these kinds of religious rituals. *Nothing* from outside you can defile you. Those who think so only prove that they are defiled from within, in their mind and conscience. It is not something impure that makes pure men impure; it is impure men who make every pure thing impure!

You see their model in verse sixteen:

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Their confession of faith in Jesus Christ is denied by their conduct in His Church. Their "walk" is not confirmed by their "works." Therefore Paul declares them "abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work" in the sight of God - regardless of how men might see them.

What should be done about these people? Listen to what Paul tells Titus:

Titus 1:9 ...by sound doctrine...exhort and convict those who contradict.

Titus 1:11 whose mouths must be stopped...

Titus 1:13 ...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,

Titus 3:10-11 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

The pastor and the Elders are to exhort such people from God's Word, seeking to convict them. While this is going on, they must also see to it that they do not go on spreading their doctrine and deception. If necessary they are to be rebuked a second time - again with a view towards winning them to the faith. After two such encounters, if they persist in their ungodly behavior,, they are to be publically rejected from the fellowship of believers.

Why be patient with such people? After all, a shepherd out in the fields doesn't try to domesticate the wolf; he kills it outright. In the

flock that is God's Church, Jesus uses the evil men and women seek to do in order to benefit His sheep! In 1Corinthians 11:19 you read,

1 Corinthians 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

It is inevitable that evil men and women will be among you. The paradox is that it is sometimes necessary for this to occur in order that "they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Trouble in the Church creates a situation in which true spiritual strength, wisdom, and leadership can become evident. The enemy only serves to expose and highlight those who are "approved." "Approved" is a word that means "to pass the test." The term was used of precious metals tried in fire and proved to be pure. In the midst of your enemies you are separated out as pure gold is from the dross.

## Conclusion

You have enemies; watch out for them. You have Elders; they watch out for you. If we are all diligent in our watching out, we will be less likely to become prey for the wolves within.