

Titus

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Although the traditional outline of N.T. books places Titus after II Timothy, we prefer to place them in the order Paul wrote them. Refer to the chronology in the introduction.

Who was Titus? Our knowledge is limited concerning this Gentile helper of Paul. He, as Timothy, is called "son" suggesting Paul had baptized him and/or trained him in his basic faith. It is strange that his name is not mentioned in Acts. Most suppose he was a close relative of the Gentile doctor Luke, author of Acts, who humbly plays down family achievements. He was the "test case" in the decision that Gentiles need not be circumcised before becoming Christians (cf. Acts 15 with Gal. 2:3ff). He was involved with the Corinthian work (II Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18). He appears somewhat older than Timothy (cf. I 4:12; 5:1; II 2:22; Tit. 2:15; 2:2, 6) and perhaps bolder as he is not "charged" by Paul as was Timothy (I Cor. 16:10; I 4:11, 5:21; II 1:7; 2:1; 4:1). Both were loved and trusted by Paul. Other than the letter to the slave owner Philemon, these are the only N.T. letters to individuals.

The church on the island of Crete appears new or immature (1:5) and one of the functions of Titus was to guide it in its growth. The church may have been planted by those present at Jerusalem during Pentecost

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(Acts 2:4), or by Paul during his brief stop-over on his way to Rome (Acts 27:8, 9), or by Paul during his inter-prison travels. Any of these would explain the immaturity of the church.

The main functions of Titus were to: appoint elders (1:6-9); guide the teaching (2:1-15); rebuke those dividing the church (3:1-15). At that time, Crete's inhabitants were a mixture of Roman officials, natives, and a considerable colony of Jewish merchants. Crete often supplied mercenaries for foreign armies and had a terrible reputation for money-greed and treachery. Please read these references to see how often Paul makes mention to their quarrelsome nature — 1:2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16; 2:3; 3:1, 2, 3, 10. A strong minded man like Titus was needed to work with these hot-headed people.

The same basic subjects appear in both I Timothy and Titus but are often treated a little bit differently due to the character of the people or of the man to whom Paul is writing. Christian principles are eternally true, but specific application of them differ with time and place.

Also note that while both of these young men dealt with perverters of the Gospel, those with whom Titus worked appear more Jewish (1:10, 14; 3:9).

A brief topical outline would be as follows. Practice Christianity: In the Church (chap. 1); In the Home (chap. 2); In the World (chap. 3).