

The Letter to Titus:
An Exegetical and Devotional Commentary

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Contents

Introduction	1
1: Introductory Greetings to Titus (Titus 1:1-4).....	6
2: Instruction Concerning Elders in the Church (Titus 1:5-9).....	15
3: Instruction Concerning False Teachers in the Church (Titus 1:10-16)	27
4: Instruction Concerning Various Groups (Titus 2:1-10)	39
5: The Foundation, Means, and Motivation for Godly Behavior (Titus 2:11-15).....	53
6: Instruction to Live as Good Citizens in the World (Titus 3:1-8)	67
7: Final Instructions and Greetings to Titus (Titus 3:9-15).....	85

Introduction

Thoughts on the Pastoral Epistles¹

Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) have generally been called the "Pastoral Epistles." They were originally regarded as mere personal letters and were classified with Philemon, but because of their strong bearing on the life of the church, they gained the name the "Pastoral Epistles." Though addressed to individuals, these books are not limited to personal and private communications, but are somewhat official in character. Paul addressed them to Timothy and Titus to guide them in matters concerning the pastoral care of the church, which is the household of God (cf. 1 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:6-15 with 2 Tim. 2:2).

The term, "pastoral," is an 18th century designation that has stuck down through the years,² and though not entirely accurate, it is a somewhat appropriate description of these three letters. Further, due to the large portion of these epistles that deal with church order and discipline, the term "pastoral" is accurate. These epistles deal with church *polity*, *policies*, and *practice*, all of which are concerns vital to the health of the church. However, the term pastoral is inaccurate in the sense that Timothy and Titus were not pastors in the present-day sense of the term. So what were they?

First, these men were official representatives of the apostle Paul whom he dispatched to various churches at Ephesus and Crete. Once there, they functioned in an official capacity to deal with special situations and meet special needs. During the interim from the time of the apostles to the transition to elders and deacons, these men were sent by Paul as his apostolic representatives to repel and deal with certain conditions and people who were threatening to hurt the work and ministries of these churches.

Second, Timothy and Titus undoubtedly possessed the gifts needed for pastoral ministry and while there was an element of pastoral care in what they did, they were not elders or pastors who are given by the Lord to various churches for long-term ministries (1 Pet. 5:1f). Rather, as official delegates of Paul, they were sent to assist churches in establishing their ministries pastorally-speaking (cf. Tit. 1:5f).

All in all, in their content, these books are pastoral in nature and give directions for the care, conduct, order, ministry, and administration of assemblies of believers. This is true whether they deal with personal matters or the corporate ministry of the church. In summary, then, these books were designed by God to aid us in our pastoral responsibilities and in the organic development and guidance needed for the ministry of local churches.

In this regard there is an important observation that might be made. Of Paul's thirteen letters, these were the very last books he wrote. What is so significant about that? Since these books deal with church order, ministry, and organization, why were they not first? If you or I were doing this (especially today) we would probably first work to get the organization in good administrative order and then worry about the doctrine. So here are some suggestions to think about:

Suggestion 1. Of course, organization and order is important. The church is a spiritual body, an organism. Each believer is a member with special functions and tasks to carry out, but the primary need so essential to functioning as God has designed the church is right theology (teaching) and understanding of the Word, along with its personal application for Christ-like living. This provides us with the spiritual and moral foundation and motivation on which we base our methods, strategy, and administration. So, while our methods will often vary, they must never contradict the moral or spiritual principles of the Word of God which are in accord with godliness (see Tit. 1:1).

¹ Much of this introductory material, with some modification and additions, is taken from my study entitled, *Concise New Testament Survey*, The Biblical Studies Foundation, electronic media, www.Bible.org.

² Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1943), 253.

Giving, for instance, is a corporate and individual responsibility, but our giving and the collection of money must be done so that it does not violate biblical principles such as giving voluntarily rather than by methods that employ coercion or manipulation.

Suggestion 2. Organization, or better, the organic and unified growth of a church must be based on (1) right teaching—on teaching that is based on rightly handling the Word, i.e., God’s objective truth and (2) on the selection and function of those people who are qualified and spiritually right with God. When we try to run an organization based on tradition or background, we end up with an organization that is not only not biblical, but which will lack the spiritual fervor and capacity to function as God intends.

These books, then, deal with matters of church order or ecclesiology not hitherto addressed, but before God gave the church directions for church organization (or order as specific as those we find in the pastorals) He gave us Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Is this because organization is unimportant? No! It is because organization and administration are not primary. They are secondary. Further, it is because sound teaching and spirituality are what ultimately produce ministries that are effective according to God’s standards and that manifest the spirit and character of Christ in ministry and outreach.

Suggestion 3. Closely related to this is another concept. Some areas of ecclesiology are more difficult to determine than others. As a result, students of the Word have debated certain issues for years like the exact form of government or how we should select and appoint men to leadership. Is this selection to be carried out by the board of elders, by the congregation, or by both working together?

Since there is such a divergence of opinion does this mean we should give up on matters of church government? Of course not. We should carefully study these issues and seek biblical answers so we might come to conclusions based on our study of the facts of Scripture. But the point is, regardless of the type of church government (within certain limits, of course), **if** God’s Word is being consistently and accurately proclaimed with prayerful dependence on the Lord, and **if** the people take it to heart, a church will be alive, in vital touch with Christ, and effective in ministry for the Lord.

The Author

The Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles was not questioned in the early church and any arguments against their authenticity have come from the past century and a half. The various arguments against Paul as the author of these epistles is based entirely on internal and theoretical grounds. Ryrie has an excellent summary of the arguments against Pauline authorship with refutation. He writes:

Some have questioned whether Paul himself wrote these letters on the grounds that (1) Paul’s travels described in the pastorals do not fit anywhere into the historical account of the book of Acts, (2) the church organization described in them is that of the second century, and (3) the vocabulary and style are significantly different from that of the other Pauline letters. Those who hold to the Pauline authorship reply: (1) there is no compelling reason to believe that Acts contains the complete history of the life of Paul. Since his death is not recorded in Acts, he was apparently released from his first imprisonment in Rome, traveled over the empire for several years (perhaps even to Spain), was rearrested, imprisoned a second time in Rome, and martyred under Nero; (2) nothing in the church organization reflected in the pastorals requires a later date (see Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1); and (3) the question of authorship cannot be decided solely on the basis of vocabulary without considering how subject matter affects a writer’s choice of words. Vocabulary used to describe church organization, for instance, would be expected to be different from that used to teach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. There is no argument against Pauline authorship that does not have a reasonable answer. And, of course, the letters themselves claim to have been written by Paul.³

³ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1995), 1916.

Recipient

This epistle is addressed to Titus, and though he is never mentioned in Acts and though we know very little about him, the references to him in Paul's epistles (13 times) make it clear he was one of Paul's closest and most trusted fellow-workers in the gospel. When Paul left Antioch for Jerusalem to discuss the gospel of grace (Acts 15:1f) with the leaders there, he took Titus (a Gentile) with him (Gal 2:1-3) as an example of one accepted by grace without circumcision. This fact was used to vindicate Paul's stand on this issue (Gal 2:3-5). It also appears Titus worked with Paul at Ephesus during the third missionary journey. From there the apostle sent him to Corinth where he helped that church with its work and with the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (see 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-6; 8:6).

Date (A.D. 62-67)

A overview of the events pertinent to this epistle will help give some idea of a probable date for Titus, though the exact time is unknown. First, Paul was released from his house arrest in Rome (where we find him at the end of Acts). Perhaps because Paul was a Roman citizen and they could not prove the charges, his accusers did not choose to press charges against him before Caesar (see Acts 24-25; 28:30). In essence, then, their case was lost by default and Paul was freed. The apostle then visited Ephesus, where he left Timothy to supervise the church, and went on to Macedonia. From Macedonia (northern Greece), he wrote 1 Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3). He then visited Crete and left Titus to minister among the churches they had planted there. Then, either from Macedonia or Nicopolis, he wrote Titus instructing him to put in order the remaining matters in the churches of Crete. Following this, Paul went to Nicopolis in Achaia (southern Greece, Titus 3:12). Then, either from Macedonia or Nicopolis, Paul wrote the epistle to encourage Titus and instruct him. Afterwards, he visited Troas (2 Tim. 4:13) where he was then arrested, taken to Rome, imprisoned, and finally beheaded. It was from Rome, during this second imprisonment in the dungeon that he wrote 2 Timothy. These events took place from about A.D. 62-67.

Theme and Purpose

Several purposes are seen in this epistle. Paul wrote:

1. To instruct Titus about what he should do to correct the matters that were lacking in order to properly establish the churches in Crete.
2. To give Titus personal authorization in view of the opposition and dissenters Titus was facing (see 2:15; 3:1-15).
3. To give instruction concerning this opposition, to warn about false teachers, and give instructions concerning faith and conduct (1:5, 10-11; 2:1-8, 15; 3:1-11).
4. To express his plans to join Titus again in Nicopolis for the winter (3:12). Whether this meeting ever occurred, we do not know. Tradition has it that Titus later returned to Crete and there lived out the rest of his life.

The **theme** is to show how the grace of God that has appeared to us in the saving life and death of Christ instructs us to deny ungodliness and to live righteously and soberly as a people full of good works that are in keeping with the doctrine of God (1:1; 2:10-3:9).

Important issues discussed in the letter include qualifications for elders (1:5-9), instructions to various age groups (2:1-8), relationship to government (3:1-2), the relation of regeneration to human works and to the Spirit (3:5), and the role of grace in promoting good works among God's people (Titus 2:11-3:8).

Key Words

In this short epistle, the concept of "**good deeds**" occurs some six times (1:16; 27, 14; 3:5, 8, 14). Two other key words are "**grace**" (1:4; 2:11; 3:7, 15) and "**faith**" (1:1, 4, 13; 2:10, 13, and 3:15). Good deeds, however, are not to be the product of human ingenuity or legalistic religion, but the work of God's grace through faith in the power of God as manifested in Christ, the Savior.

Key Verses

1:5. The reason I left you in Crete was to set in order the remaining matters and to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

2:11-13. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. **2:12** It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **2:13** as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

3:3-7. For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. **3:4** But “when the kindness of God our Savior appeared and his love for mankind, **3:5** He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, **3:6** whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior. **3:7** And so, since we have been justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life.”

Key Chapters

Though each chapter has great importance, chapter 2 probably stands out as the key chapter for two reasons. First of all, Titus 2 has one of the strongest and clearest statements of the deity of Christ (2:13). Second, it is a key chapter because of its emphasis on relationships within the body of Christ, the church (2:1-10) and how a proper understanding and focus on both Christ’s first and second coming (the blessed hope) should impact the life of the church for godly living.

Christ as Seen in Titus

The apostle Paul consistently shows us how good works or the conduct of the Christian is vitally connected with the person and work of Christ, past, present, and future. Even in this very short, concise epistle both the deity (2:13) and redemptive work of the Savior (2:12) are vital elements and stand to the theme of good works like root to fruit. Christ is first personified as the grace of God that brings salvation, but whose very appearing instructs us to a life of godliness (vs. 11). Then, He is emphatically described as “our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (2:13-14).

The phrase “our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” is one of the christologically significant texts affected by the Granville Sharp rule. According to this rule, in the article-noun-kaiv-noun construction the second noun refers to the same person described by the first noun when (1) neither is impersonal; (2) neither is plural; (3) neither is a proper name.⁴

Then again in 3:4-7, the redemption that comes to us through Christ Jesus is again the point of focus and the foundation for transformed living (cf. 3:1-3 and vs. 8f).

Outline

1. Introductory Greetings to Titus (1:1-4)
2. Instructions Concerning Elders in the Church (1:5-9)
3. Instructions Concerning False Teachers in the Church (1:10-16)
4. Instructions Concerning Various Groups in the Church (2:1-15)
5. Instructions Concerning the Duties of Believers in the World (3:1-11)

⁴ From the footnote in the NET Bible, BSF web site CD, electronic media. For more discussion see Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 270-78, esp. 276.

6. Final Instructions and Greetings (3:12-15)

1: Introductory Greetings to Titus (Titus 1:1-4)

The Author (1:1-3)

1:1 From Paul,¹ a slave of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in keeping with godliness, **1:2** in hope of eternal life, that God who does not lie promised before the ages began. **1:3** But now in his own time he has made his message evident through the preaching I was entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior.²

His Name (vs. 1a), "Paul."

In keeping with the practice of the day, Paul opens the letter with his own name. "Paul," a Roman surname, means *little* and is the name he used in connection with his calling and ministry to the Gentiles. As such, it is used in all of Paul's epistles. His Hebrew name was "Saul." He undoubtedly used the name Paul because of his call to go to the Gentiles and because it expressed his attitude about who he was as a recipient of God's grace (see 1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Tim. 1:12-16).

His Position or Status (vs. 1b), "a slave of God."

"Slave" is the Greek *doulos*, often translated merely "servant," but this is far too mild for this Greek word. It really means a *bondservant* or *slave* and refers to one who completely surrenders himself to the will and authority of another. It was used of one who sells himself into slavery to serve another. But we must not think of this as an involuntary slavery to God. As a Jew, but one who now saw himself as redeemed from the slave market of sin through trust in Christ, Paul was thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament and may have had in mind the Old Testament regulation that governed slaves.

The early men of Israel had in their economic system set forth in the laws of Moses, regulations governing the man who got into debt. He became the property of his creditor, in very fact, his slave. But the slavery had a termination. When the seventh year rolled around, all of these slaves were liberated and could go forth once more as their own masters. Some of them, however, realized certain things about their own lack of ability to maintain themselves in the rugged economy of a cruel world. They remembered that when they had been their own freemen they had not eaten well, but that now, under kind masters, they were well-housed and well-fed. They looked toward their future freedom with some trepidation as they realized that they might soon be, once more, in a life of hunger and cold.

No doubt there were some who sought to escape the bondage of hard taskmasters, but there were others who knew the kindness and love of their master's heart. The Law provided a way for them to remain as slaves to their kind masters. Such a one could go to his owner and tell him that he desired to remain a slave. He would then be taken to the tabernacle where the priest would lead him to the doorpost and bored a hole in the lobe

¹ *Grk* "Paul." The word "from" is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied by the translators of the NET Bible to indicate the sender of the letter.

² Unless otherwise noted, New Testament Scripture quotations are from the The NET Bible® (New English Translation®). Copyright ©1998 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C.

of his ear with an awl. From that time on he was the slave of his master. Wherever he walked, his ear proclaimed the character of his master.³

However, we must not think of this as the loss of freedom, but as an expression that demonstrates true freedom and the capacity to be all that God has created us to be. This is evident here and in other places where the apostle used similar statements.⁴ There is a definite design to the order of these words, “a slave and an apostle.” As Barnhouse aptly put it:

The secret of Paul’s greatness is indicated in the order of these two words. He was first a bondsman, utterly surrendered to the Lord, and then he was a sent one...thus he was willing to follow the Word of God and be not only the bondsman of Jesus Christ but the apostle to the Gentiles.⁵

Obedience to Paul’s calling or commission was an outgrowth of his voluntary submission to the Lordship of the Savior. For instance, three passages in Acts give the account of Paul’s conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-22; 22:3-16; 26:9-11). In the events that quickly followed his conversion, he is told that he is to be a chosen vessel to take the gospel to the Gentiles, but it is quite evident from these accounts that he not only came to trust in Christ, having seen the risen Lord, but he immediately saw himself as a bondsman of Christ. In Acts 22:10 we are told that the first words out of his mouth were, “Lord, what shall I do.” Then, in recounting the events of his conversion and commission by the Lord Jesus to King Agrippa, Paul said,

26:19 “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was **not disobedient** to the heavenly vision, **26:20** but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance (Acts 26:19-20, emphasis mine).

This is a clear illustration that the issue of our ability to be and do what God has called us to by way of our gifts, abilities, and opportunities is related to voluntarily living as bondsmen of God. Our problem is we too often want to call the shots; we want God to approve our choices. Let it be said that true freedom is not the ability to do as we please, but the ability to do as we ought by the grace and enablement of God. “No one ever becomes a successful servant of God until he chooses to make God’s will his own will. Paul’s will was not crushed but he imbibed the will of his Master as his own. Do we profess to be servants of God yet continue to insist on carrying out our own will for our lives?”⁶ Do we present our list to God for what we would like to do for life and ministry or for what we think is best for us and then ask Him to seal that with His approval? Living and serving as slaves of God naturally applies to every possible area of life—personal life, family, church, vocation, recreation, leisure, civic responsibilities, ministry, etc. As bondsmen who have been bought by the redemptive work of Christ, we belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). This means we are to be totally dependent on the Lord Jesus for both His supply and our calling and responsibilities in the world. This naturally leads to Paul’s next statement.

His Office (vs. 1c), “and apostle of Jesus Christ.”

As believers in Christ, God has “delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14). We are not, therefore, of this world, but we have been left in this world as ambassadors and representatives of the Lord Jesus (John 17:15-19; 2 Cor. 5:20). For this the Lord Jesus has gifted each of us (1 Pet. 4:10) and as He has gifted us, so He has called. What He has gifted us to do He has called us to do and vice versa. Thus, the apostle immediately identified his calling and the primary place where he was to exercise his service as a bondsman. He is “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” By the designation, “a slave of God,” he pointed to his

³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Man’s Ruin, Romans 1:1-32, God’s Wrath, Romans 2-3:20* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1952, 1953), Vol. 1, 8-9.

⁴ The term “slave of God” occurs only here in Paul. He does, however, use “servant of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1).

⁵ Barnhouse, 13.

⁶ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1957), 17.

personal relationship to God, but here he pointed to his official responsibility within the body of Christ according to the will of God (see Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1 and 12:4-5).

The term “apostle,” the Greek *apostolos*, means “a sent one.” It came to be used of a delegate or messenger sent on a mission with authoritative credentials as the personal representative of another. As an illustration, it was used of an admiral of a fleet sent out by the king on special assignment. As used in the New Testament, it had both a broad or general use, much like our term “missionary” or “messenger” (cf. Acts 14:14; Phil. 2:25; 1 Thess. 2:7; and 2 Cor. 8:23), and a more technical or special use as used of the 12 apostles and Paul (Matt. 10:2; Acts 1:2, 26; 2:37; Rom. 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor. 1:1; 15:7-9; Tit. 1:1; Acts 15:2, 4, 6).

“An apostle of Jesus Christ” marks Paul’s official rank among God’s servants. “And” (*de*) does not equate but adds an additional fact: “and further.” He is Jesus Christ’s “apostle,” having been called, equipped, and sent forth as his authoritative messenger. “Apostle” is here used in the narrow sense to denote the apostolic office.⁷

While we do not all have the same gifts (see 1 Cor. 12:29f), in placing every believer into the body of Christ, God has gifted each one with different gifts for the mutual edification of the body of Christ and for the glory of God (1 Cor. 12:4f; 14:12, 26; 10:31). Building on the truth that we are to live as voluntary slaves of God, our need is to discern the gifts and the place of ministry to which the Master has called us and to use our gifts accordingly (see Rom. 12:3ff; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

His Mission (vs. 1d), “to further the faith of God’s chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in keeping with godliness.”

The words “to further” is the NET Bible’s rendering of the preposition *kata*. Used with the accusative case as here and in three other places in these first four verses, *kata* may be used of (1) the *norm* or *standard* by which something is done, “according to, in accordance with”; (2) of the *goal* or *purpose*, “for the purpose of, for, to”; or (3) of *reference* or *respect*, “with reference to, with respect to.” Scholars understand this differently with some arguing for number 1 and others for number 2 or 3.⁸ Several things suggest that *kata* is best understood here in the sense of purpose as suggested in the following translations: The NET Bible (“to further the faith”), the NASB (“for the faith of those”), the NRSV (“for the sake of the faith”) and the NIV (“for the faith”). Understanding *kata* in this sense is in keeping with the ministry and mission of an apostle to preach and teach the gospel (1 Tim. 2:7), to build up the body of Christ, and establish churches sound in the faith (1 Cor. 12:19; Eph. 4:11f; Rom. 14:19; 15:20f; 1 Tim. 1:6, 10; 2 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 2, 8). It is also in keeping with the need of God’s people to know the truth of the Word. In other words, as an apostle, Paul’s mission was to further or promote the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth.

Some understand “the faith” here to refer to the body of revealed truth believed by Christians. *Kata* is thus taken to refer to the norm that governed Paul’s ministry as an apostle. As Wiersbe explains, “Paul’s

⁷ Frank E. Gaebelin, General Editor, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992), 426.

⁸ D. Edmond Hiebert’s remarks in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* is an illustration of this. “For the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth” further describes his apostolic office. “For” renders the preposition *kata*, the first of four occurrences in the salutation (vv. 1 [twice], 3, 4). Its local meaning is “down,” and with the accusative case (so in all four occurrences), it means “down along, according to, in harmony with,” and marks the standard of measurement. By usage it can mean goal or purpose, “for the purpose of, to further,” thus denoting that Paul’s mission was to promote Christian faith and knowledge. This is the view of the above rendering which, however, cannot be given to all four occurrences. The translation “according to” which fits all four of them in the salutation, means that his apostleship is in full accord with the faith and knowledge that God’s elect have received. His apostleship is not regulated by their faith (cf. Gal 1:11-17) but is wholly in accord with it. The Cretan Christians needed to evaluate their faith by that fact (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament*, 426-427).

ministry was governed by the Word of God.”⁹ This is certainly true, but this is probably not the point of the passage. Though “the faith” may commonly refer to the body of revealed truth (1 Tim. 1:19; 3:7; 4:1, 6; 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:18; Jude 3), this is not the probable meaning here for the following reasons. Generally, when “the faith,” refers to the body of revealed truth, *pistis*, the Greek word for faith, has the article (*hē pistis*), but it is absent here in the Greek text.¹⁰ Second, the fact that “faith” is connected with “God’s chosen ones”¹¹ along with the immediate addition of “the knowledge of the truth” suggests that it is personal faith that is in view, a faith, however, that is nurtured and developed by a knowledge of the truth. Sound doctrine or the truth is an important focus in all the Pastoral Epistles and Titus is no exception.

In the New Testament, “God’s chosen ones” (or “God’s elect”) consistently refers to those who have responded to God’s call through the gospel message rather than to those whom God intends to select for salvation. In most, if not all cases in the New Testament, “chosen ones” or the “elect” is practically a synonym for believers. The *eklektōi* are persons who are not only the objects of God’s election, but are in fact those who have already entered into and realized the state of reconciliation.¹² But why does the apostle use the term elect?

The expression embodies a true balance between the divine initiative and the human response. Although surrounded with mystery, the biblical teaching on election is for believers and is intended as a practical truth. It assures faithful, struggling believers that their salvation is all of God from beginning to end.

Christian faith is linked with “knowledge of the truth,” the full apprehension of “truth,” the inner realization of divine reality as revealed in the gospel. Faith is a heart response to the truth of the gospel, but it must also possess the mind. God never intended his people to remain intellectually ignorant of the truth of the gospel.¹³

Paul’s mission as an apostle is also the mission and purpose of the church today. Our need is to promote the growth and development of mature faith in God’s chosen ones (a reference to believers) through growth in the knowledge of the truth. Thus, after thanking God for the faith and love of the Colossian Christians, Paul prayed for their continued growth in the knowledge of God’s will which is naturally found in His infallible and inerrant Word, His Truth.

1:9 For this reason we also, from the day we heard, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **1:10** so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects (Col. 1:9-10).

If this was the concern for the apostle, should such a concern be any less true for us? Though we are gifted differently and have different functions in the body of Christ, we should all be committed to promoting and supporting the in-depth exposition and application of God’s truth for a growing and

⁹ By referring to “the Word of God,” Wiersbe’s explanation suggests he is taking “the faith of God’s elect” to refer to the body of revealed truth. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1997), electronic media. This is also the view of *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, New Testament*, edited by Everett F. Harrison (Moody Press, Chicago, 1962), electronic media.

¹⁰ Since there is no need for the article to be used to make the object of a preposition definite (Dan B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics* [Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1996] 247), it might be argued that the presence of *kata* with *pistis* could still refer to “the faith” as the body of revealed truth, but the other points mentioned above argue for a different meaning here.

¹¹ In the clause, “the faith of God’s chosen ones” or “the elect of God” (*pistin eklektōn theou*), “the elect of God” should probably be understood as a possessive genitive, i.e., the faith belonging to the elect.”

¹² Hermann Cremer, *Biblio-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 405.

¹³ *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 427.

doctrinally-sound church. Unfortunately, the sound exposition of God's Word is often as rare as oxygen at thirty thousand feet.

However, lest one think the apostle was promoting biblical knowledge for the sake of knowing Bible facts alone, the apostle added the very important phrase, "that is in keeping with godliness." For the second time we meet the preposition *kata* followed by a noun in the accusative case. As mentioned above, it may point to the *standard* that is to govern something or to the *aim* or *purpose*. Again, it is probably best to understand this as pointing us to the aim of God's truth. We might translate it, "which makes godliness its aim." The aim of the Word is to promote godliness in God's people.

"Godliness" is an important concept in this letter, just as it was in 1 Timothy, even though the actual word is used only once. But the repetition of "good works" emphasizes the point (Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 5, 8, 14). The truth of the Gospel changes a life from ungodliness (Titus 2:12) to holy living....¹⁴

His Motivation and Confidence (vs. 2), "in hope of eternal life, that God who does not lie promised before the ages began."

"In" is the preposition *epi* used with "hope" (*elpidi*) in the dative case. As such, it points us to the cause or basis on which something rests. But to what does "in hope of eternal life" refer? To Paul's apostleship and ministry, or to "that is in keeping with godliness," or to all of the above? Some commentators and translations¹⁵ restrict it to the immediately preceding clause, i.e., to the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth..., others relate it only to Paul's apostleship, and some to both Paul's apostleship and to furthering faith and knowledge. Though, "in the hope of eternal life" immediately follows "faith and knowledge," all that Paul has said, ultimately all that is said in verse 1, rests on the hope of eternal life. His ministry and apostleship in the interest of the faith of God's chosen ones and their knowledge of the truth that also promotes godliness rests on the hope of eternal life.¹⁶

"Hope" here is not some nebulous wishing for something, just hoping that it will come true. "Hope" is the Greek *elpis* which refers to a confident expectation and anticipation. It is a confident expectation because it rests on the promise of a God who not only does not lie, but cannot because of His perfect and holy character. Further, "eternal life" is not simply something believers will someday possess, but that which they **already possess** through trusting in the Savior. John 3:36 promises us that "The one who believes in the Son has (i.e., possesses) eternal life." Eternal life is a life with eternal ramifications that are not only future, but is to so encompass our daily existence that it becomes a controlling and directing force. It is in this sense that Paul could speak of doing good deeds and of being good stewards of material possessions as a means of laying up heavenly treasure, and by doing so lay hold of "eternal life" or "life that is truly life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Our need is to take hold of our eternal life and live in the light of its significance and meaning both for time and eternity.

In discussing the issue of eternal rewards and Christ's promise to the disciples in Matthew 19:28-29, Lutzer gives this helpful explanation that is pertinent here in relation to living in the light of the eternal life we possess as Christians.

Obviously eternal life is a gift given to those who believe on Christ, but the expression "inherit eternal life" apparently refers to an additional acquisition, something more than simply arriving in heaven. It refers to a richer experience of being appointed by Christ to be in charge of the affairs of the cosmos as a ruler or judge. Salvation is guaranteed to those who accept Christ by faith; rewards are not. Entering heaven is one thing; having a

¹⁴ Wiersbe, electronic media.

¹⁵ The NIV's translation clearly relates it to faith and knowledge by the translation, "a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life."

¹⁶ William Hendriksen, *A Commentary on I & II Timothy and Titus* (The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1957), 340.

possession there is quite another. One is the result of faith; the other, the reward for faith plus obedience.¹⁷

The apostle doesn't want us to miss the significance of eternal life in Christ, so he punctuated the issue with this striking sentence, "which God who does not lie promised before the ages began." There are two points the apostle makes here: the veracity of God and the eternal nature of His promises. As to the veracity of God, the sentence is very emphatic. Literally, "the without deceit God." The positive is stressed by using the negative. The adjective used is *apseudēs*, "free from all deceit or falsehood" and so "truthful, trustworthy." It is used only here and only of God in the New Testament. How awesome: our eternal life rests on the veracity of a God who simply cannot lie. His promises are sure and He is faithful to perform them.

But Paul goes on to show that this eternal life promised was not a last-minute decision that God scrambled to come up with after man's fall into sin as recorded in Genesis 3. This promise stretches back into eternity past. This means it has the seal and certainty of the eternal wisdom of God.

His Function and Responsibility (vs. 3), "But now in his own time he has made his message evident through the preaching I was entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior."

It was eternal life that God promised in eternity past, but with verse 3, Paul makes a subtle but important change in the subject of the verb. It was not eternal life that is declared to be made evident, but that God Himself has made His **message** evident—the message that promises eternal life in the person of His Son. This is now the emphasis.

While salvation was purposed and settled in eternity past with the Lamb being slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), the proclamation of this message was made known in God's own time according to His own purposes (see Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:11f; 3:4f). In the Old Testament there was the anticipation of this salvation message through the prophets and in the pictures of the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices all of which spoke of Christ (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47), but now, with the coming of Christ and the witness of His life, death, and resurrection (Luke 24:48), the message has not only been made evident by these historical events, but it must now be made known to the world.

With the words, "he has made his message evident through the preaching I was entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior," the apostle shows us three important truths:

First, God's method of making His message evident is preaching. "Preaching" is the Greek *kērugma*, "that which is cried by a herald, a proclamation... In the New Testament... a proclamation, message, preaching (i.e., the substance as distinct from the act which would be expressed by *kēruxis*)." ¹⁸ In Greek, nouns ending in *ma* are generally passive in contrast to nouns ending in *sis* so that the emphasis is on the result of action. Of course, use is the determining factor and the apostle seems to have the activity of announcement or proclamation in view here, ¹⁹ but we must not lose sight of the fact that it is the message proclaimed that is all important (for the use of *kērugma* see 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:4; 2 Tim. 4:17). The message is to be made evident through its proclamation. It's the issue Paul describes in Romans 10.

10:14 How are they to call on one they have not believed in? And how are they to believe in one they have not heard of? And how are they to hear without someone preaching to them? **10:15** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "*How timely is the arrival of those who proclaim the good news*" (Rom. 10:14-15).

¹⁷ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Your Eternal Reward* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1998), 54.

¹⁸ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, 1973), 246.

¹⁹ This is evident by the preceding term "his message" (Greek *ton logon*) followed by the preposition *en* with *kērugma* in the dative case pointing to means or agency, a message made evident by preaching or proclamation.

Second, Paul viewed this message and its proclamation as a treasure with which he was entrusted. “Entrusted” is the verb *pisteuō*, “to believe, entrust.” Here, it is in the passive voice meaning “to be entrusted with something” (i.e., the privilege and responsibility to proclaim the message). The concept of proclaiming the message as a trust is a truth the apostle speaks of on several occasions with regard to himself and to Timothy.

- To Timothy he wrote, “O Timothy, protect what has been entrusted to you” (1 Tim. 6:20). The term used here is the noun *parathēkē*, “a deposit entrusted to another.” In the New Testament, it is always used with the verb *phyllassō*, “guard, protect,” and it is always used in connection with our spiritual heritage or the message of the Word of God (see also 2 Tim. 1:14).
- In 2 Timothy 1:12, using the same Greek term, Paul refers to what has been entrusted to him, “...and I am convinced that he is able to protect until that day what has been entrusted to me.”²⁰

Here in Titus, the apostle becomes an example to Titus, to the Cretans, and to us. The message of the Savior is a deposit given to us for safekeeping, but it is not to be hidden in a safe-deposit box, but proclaimed and shared with others.

Third, announcing the message stems from a command of our Savior God that Paul and all believers are to obey. Paul says it is “according to an authoritative command.” For the third time, Paul used *kata*, only here it refers to the standard or norm which may also become the reason or cause for what is done.²¹ Paul has in mind the charge given to him after his conversion on the road to Damascus. There he was appointed to take the message of Christ to the Gentile world.

This God given trust to proclaim the message is not a take-it-or-leave-it matter for the Christian; it was not an option for Paul nor is it to be an option for us. The Great Commission to make disciples is a trust given by the Savior to all believers through the disciples. May we not forget that it is according to God’s command, one that has application to all of us.

Significantly, Paul identifies God as “our Savior God.” This designation is one of the marks of the Pastoral Epistles, occurring twice in 1 Timothy and three times in Titus (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Tit. 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; but see also 1 Tim. 4:10 and Jude 25). What an awesome title of God—a Savior God. Does this not stress the very nature and heart of God? He is One who is concerned with man’s salvation—salvation from sin’s penalty, power, and ultimately, from its presence.

The Recipient (1:4a)

“To Titus, my genuine son in a common faith.”

Though this epistle was ultimately designed for a larger audience, it was written to Titus who, like Timothy, was Paul’s apostolic representative. Both were to carry on the work that Paul would have done had he been there. Though the letter is rather short, Paul’s greeting in verses 1-4 is longer than in most of his letters with the exception of Romans, especially as he has described himself in verses 1-3. Titus, as an associate of Paul, knew all of the above information, but Paul included it for the sake of the Christians at Crete and any others who might read this epistle. As Lenski put it:

...Crete was a new field, and although Paul had just been there and had left Titus there (v. 3), although the people knew him, their knowledge was imperfect, and thus Paul tells them at length who he is. Everything depends on who that man really is for whom Titus

²⁰ *What has been entrusted to me* (Grk “my entrustment,” meaning either (1) “what I have entrusted to him” [his life, destiny, etc.] or (2) “what he has entrusted to me” [the truth of the gospel]). The parallel with v. 14 and use of similar words in the pastorals (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14; 2:2) argue for the latter sense. *The NET Bible* (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press) 1998, electronic media.

²¹ Walter Bauer, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), electronic media.

is acting in Crete. Here is Paul's own written statement regarding who he is. Whoever refuses to heed Titus thereby refuses to heed the apostle himself.²²

Thus, the preceding information about Paul and instructions that follow are not new to Titus, but Paul so identified himself in verses 1-3 and addressed the letter to Titus as a way to help him in his ministry in Crete with the Cretans.

Though we do not know the time, place, or the circumstances of Titus' conversion, Paul literally called him "my genuine son according to a common faith." "According" is again the preposition *kata*. In this context, it points to the standard or cause. Paul and Titus had a father/son relationship because of their common faith, naturally, a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Common" is *koinos* and refers to what is held in common with others. By using this term, the apostle reminds us of that which we hold in common with all believers, a personal faith in the Savior which binds us together as a spiritual family regardless of nationality or status or even doctrine as important as that is to the Christian community. All who have trusted in the Lord Jesus stand to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and in some cases as spiritual fathers and children to one another. It is this common faith that provides the basis for harmony and communion and, in keeping with that, "Titus is to apply these instructions, all of which have only one purpose, namely to aid the concord of the common faith."²³

Evidently, Paul had led Titus to Christ. Titus was Paul's spiritual child because Paul had been the instrument God had used to bring him to the Savior. "Child" (the Greek *teknon*), "that which is begotten, born" (cf. Gal. 4:19) and so *child* of either sex. Where the context suggests, *child* or *son* may also suggest a mentor/protégé relationship. *Teknon* was used of a spiritual child in relation to his master, apostle, or teacher (see 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; 1 Cor. 4:14).²⁴

Not only had Paul led Titus to Christ, but he had undoubtedly developed a mentoring relationship with him to further his spiritual growth and service for the Savior. New believers in Christ desperately need good spiritual pediatrics and follow-up that will take them from mere babes in Christ to growing and fruitful believers. This naturally includes being a model to the student or disciple. There is far too much winning and leaving rather than winning, modeling, and training.

The Greeting (1:4b)

"Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior!"

With this characteristic greeting, the apostle not only wishes the blessings of God's grace and peace on Titus, but he reminds us of their source—from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. As in all his epistolary greetings, this teaches us there can be neither grace nor peace without a personal relationship with God the Father, but that essential to a relationship with God as one's heavenly Father is a relationship with Christ Jesus because He is the Savior. The pronoun "our" stresses the need of personal faith and points to the common relationship all believers have together. He is *our Savior*.

Further, Paul never changes the order of these blessings; it is first grace, the unmerited favor of God that is so completely personalized and epitomized in the Christ (see 2:11f), and then peace.²⁵ Peace in all

²² R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1964), 888.

²³ Lenski, 894.

²⁴ Bauer, Gingrich, and Danker, electronic media.

²⁵ For more on Paul's characteristic greeting of "grace and peace," see the author's discussion in verse 1 of the study *1 Thessalonians: A Devotional and Exegetical Commentary* and the Addendum in that same study on the nature of grace and peace. See also the study, *Grace: Why It's So Amazing and Awesome*. These studies are available on our web site at <http://www.bible.org>.

the various ways it is portrayed in the New Testament comes only after one has responded by faith to the grace of God as revealed in Christ.

2:
Instruction
Concerning Elders in the Church
(Titus 1:5-9)

Obligations in Crete
(1:5)

1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was to set in order the remaining matters and to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

Verse 5 points us to the historical background for this letter. Paul and Titus had previously visited the Island of Crete and had not only preached the gospel, but had evidently been successful in establishing house churches in the various cities. Naturally, the Christians there needed biblical mentoring in the faith as babes in Christ, so Paul, being compelled to ministry elsewhere, left Titus to accomplish this vital task. All Christians need to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus (2 Pet. 3:18), but it was especially needed because of the moral conditions that formed the background of these Cretan believers.

Crete is the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean and is located an almost equal distance from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Crete actually comprises an area of 3,200 square miles and is elongated in form—160 miles E to W and 6 to 35 miles from N to S.¹ A high state of civilization once flourished there. “During the 2nd mil. B.C. Crete was the center of the famous Minoan civilization.”² However, by New Testament times the moral condition of its inhabitants was tragic. “Their ferocity and fraud were widely attested; their falsehood was proverbial; the wine of Crete was famous, and drunkenness prevailed.”³

In keeping with the purpose of Paul’s own ministry as a bondsman and an apostle, he immediately took up the primary mission he had for Titus. As his representative and fellow bondsman, Titus was to continue the work of preaching the Word in order to promote the faith of God’s chosen ones and their knowledge of the truth (vs. 1). This mission for Titus is developed from 1:5 through 3:11 through a number of varying instructions, all of which come under the heading of “setting matters in order.”

“The reason I left you in Crete” might also be translated “for this purpose I left you in Crete.”⁴ This points Titus and all other readers to the purpose of the epistle and its instructions. Paul was not simply reminding Titus of his mission, but was enforcing that mission by putting a stamp of apostolic authority on the ministry of Titus among all the Christians at Crete.

“To set in order the remaining matters” describes all Titus would be doing by fulfilling the instructions that would follow throughout the letter. “The remaining matters” is literally, “the things lacking” or “the things in need” or “the defects.”⁵ James used this verb in James 1:5 when he wrote, “if anyone lacks or is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of God.”

¹ Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1975), electronic media.

² Pfeiffer, *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, electronic media.

³ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1957), 29.

⁴ “For this reason” translates the Greek *toutou charin*. *Charin* may point to the goal or purpose as well as the reason (Walter Bauer, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), electronic media).

⁵ The verb is *leipō*, **transitive**, “to leave, leave behind,” or **intransitive**, “to be lacking, be in need, defective, or insufficient.”

But what is meant by “to set in order”? This is the verb *epidiorthoō*. It means “to set right, to correct in addition,” i.e., to what has already been done, and occurs only here in the New Testament. The apostle undoubtedly chose this word because it so accurately expressed what was needed, a continuation of the mentoring and growth process that Paul and Titus began while Paul was present. Titus was to continue this work because to leave them as they were would be like giving birth to a child, carrying for it a while, and then abandoning it by leaving it on someone’s doorstep. The choice of this term indicates that the work to be done among the churches was not *reformation* but the continual process of *formation*⁶ or *transformation*. Titus was responsible to carry out the mandate of promoting the process of edification as described in Ephesians 4:11-16. He was to promote the building up the body **quantitatively** (training and motivation for evangelism), **qualitatively** (spiritual growth of believers) and **organically** (the development of leaders and the use of the spiritual gifts of all those in the churches).

While the churches in Crete were deficient in a number of areas, the next statement, “and to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you,” describes the first and most basic deficiency that needed to be dealt with, namely, the appointment of elders. This is very revealing and instructive. It shows us that a local church or congregation of believers is defective if it lacks qualified elders. The obvious reason is because God has chosen this office (elders) and their function (oversight) for the shepherding care of the flock in order to continue the process of spiritual growth. “Elders” (*presbuteros*) is the official designation of those who are to lead the local congregation of believers. It is synonymous with “overseers” (*episkopos*). The term ‘elder’ stresses the dignity of the office while ‘overseer’ stresses the function, but both terms refer to the same office. This is evident from this passage as well as Acts 20 where both terms are used of the same people. In Acts 20:17 Paul sends for those who are called the “elders of the church,” but then in verse 28 they are identified as “overseers” who were to “shepherd” (pastor) the church at Ephesus.

However, certain questions remain that are not answered here. Was Titus to appoint elders himself or was he to do this with the help of the people who knew the possible candidates better than Titus? Probably the latter. “This commission in Crete did not give Titus dictatorial power to appoint ministers. Rather, as Paul and Barnabas ordained elders (Acts 14:23) who had been chosen by the people, so Titus was to do, keeping in mind the proper qualifications.”⁷

Another question is how many elders were to be appointed in each church? Only the fact of a plurality is clear. A plurality of elders were to be appointed rather than just one elder for each church. While we cannot say for sure, it would seem logical that there was not more than one house church in each town. This supports the idea of a plurality of leadership in each house church. While nothing is mentioned about an exact number to be chosen (cf. Acts 6), it is certain only those who were qualified were to be appointed.

In the introductory greeting (vss. 1-4), Paul stamped his apostolic authority on this letter to Titus but now he reinforces it with the words, “as I directed you.” “Directed” is a Greek term that carries a note of authority to it.⁸ Acting on the fact of Paul’s authoritative instruction, Titus was now responsible to carry out those instructions in the churches of Crete. These instructions or the directives given by Paul involved the appointment of elders, but this also included the qualifications that follow in verses 6-9. The point is that churches are often ready to appoint leaders, but they may be negligent and careless about appointing men who are truly qualified according to God’s standards.

This would particularly be a problem at Crete because of the moral conditions that prevailed and so Paul’s authority (the equivalent of God’s Word for us today) was especially needed in this regard (cf. Tit. 2:15). The way our society has so rapidly degenerated in the last twenty or so years, meeting these

⁶ Gordan D. Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Mass., 1984, 1988), 172.

⁷ Everett F. Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, New Testament* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1962), electronic media.

⁸ The verb is *diatassō*, “to give orders or instructions, command, arrange, ordain, direct.” For its authoritative element and use in the New Testament, compare Matthew 11:1; Luke 3:13; 17:9-10; Acts 7:44; 1 Corinthians 7:17; 9:14.

qualification is equally important for the Christian church today. Also, the fact that none were appointed while Paul was present suggests that none were ready for leadership at that time. They needed further mentoring to prepare men spiritually for leadership. This is also desperately needed today. Churches need a plan for training men for leadership in the church.

Those men who are to serve in the office of elder must be so qualified that the flock will be willing and benefited by following their leadership. The qualities listed below and also in 1 Timothy 3 are marks of spiritual maturity. They stand as evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word in a man's life. Not only do they ensure his ability to carry out the functions of the office, but they may also be marks of God's selection of that man for this office (Acts 20:28).

In the final analysis, only the Holy Spirit should appoint a man to this office. The responsibility of the flock and the individual himself is to **recognize God's selection**. This means the office of elder is to be an emergent leadership, one that naturally arises through the work of God; elders are not simply leaders elected or appointed by men. This is why evaluations based on the following qualifications are so important.

Qualifications for Elders (1:6-9)

1:6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who cannot be charged with dissipation or rebellion. **1:7** For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God's work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain. **1:8** Instead he must be hospitable, devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled. **1:9** He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it.

Paul's list of the qualifications can be divided into four easy categories: a general qualification, domestic qualifications, personal qualifications, and doctrinal qualifications. Literally, the list is begun abruptly with "if anyone is blameless,..." The particle "if" does not imply doubt, but assumes there will be those who are so qualified, but the idea is that only these can be appointed. It might even be put into the form of a question. "Is anyone blameless? Then let him be appointed."

General Qualification (1:6a)

"**Is anyone blameless?**" "Blameless," the Greek *anenkletos*, is literally, "without indictment or accusation, unchargeable." He is one who has nothing that can be brought against him. This word stands at the head of the list as the general or broad quality that covers the whole of an elder's life. Those qualifications that follow give the many details which will test his blamelessness. This is a different word from that used in 1 Timothy 3:2,⁹ but it is a synonym and speaks to the same issue.

Thus, as a summary statement for all that follows in the list of qualifications, Paul says an elder is to be a man who is *irreproachable* or *above reproach* (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7). His lifestyle is such that no one can legitimately accuse him of conduct which is not befitting a mature believer and one who is a steward of God (vs. 7). However, this does not mean he is perfect or without room for improvement in any one of the areas that follow. Why? Because no one is perfect (Phil. 3:10-14; Ps. 143:2). Generally speaking, an elder is to be a model of Christian maturity and the qualities of these passages (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) are MARKS OF MATURITY which should characterize the qualified man. Note that these qualities may also be seen from the standpoint of a man's fundamental relationships of life—to God, His Word, self, family, others including the outside world, and to things.

Domestic Qualifications (1:6b)

1. "Is he the husband of one wife?" This begins Paul's explanation of what it means to be blameless. Literally, "Is he a one-woman man?" In other words, is he one who is faithful to his **one** wife? There is no question that this is an extremely difficult sentence and one that is fraught with emotional responses

⁹ In 1 Timothy 3:2, Paul uses *anepilēptos*, "not able to be taken hold of, irreproachable."

because of the various preconditioned understandings of this verse, notably, the long-standing tradition that it means married only once. Regardless of how one understands this somewhat vague statement, the fact that the apostle enumerates it as the first qualification following the general requirement of “above reproach” or “blameless” in both 1 Timothy 3 and here in Titus highlights a vital truth. A man’s marriage and his home life as a whole reveal a great deal about his character and his ability to lead the flock of God as the apostle explains in 1 Timothy 3:5, “but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary (BKC) has a good overview of some of the various positions taken on this clause and some that may go beyond Paul’s original intent.

Husband of but one wife, literally, a “one-woman man.” This ambiguous but important phrase is subject to several interpretations. The question is, how stringent a standard was Paul erecting for overseers? Virtually all commentators agree that this phrase prohibits both polygamy and promiscuity, which are unthinkable for spiritual leaders in the church. Many Bible students say the words a “one-woman man” are saying that the affections of an elder must be centered exclusively on his wife. Many others hold, however, that the phrase further prohibits any who have been divorced and remarried from becoming overseers. The reasoning behind this view is usually that divorce represents a failure in the home, so that even though a man may be forgiven for any sin involved, he remains permanently disqualified for leadership in the congregation (cf. vv. 4-5; 1 Cor. 9:24-27).¹⁰

Then, the *BKC* discusses the stricter interpretations that seem to go beyond Paul’s intending meaning.

The most strict interpretation and the one common among the earliest commentators (second and third centuries) includes each of the above but extends the prohibition to *any* second marriage, even by widowers. Their argument is that in the first century second marriages were generally viewed as evidence of self-indulgence. Though Paul honored marriage, he also valued the spiritual benefits of celibacy (1 Cor. 7:37-38) even for those who had lost a mate (1 Tim. 5:3-14). Thus he considered celibacy a worthy goal for those who possessed the self-control to remain unmarried. According to this strict view Paul considered a widower’s second marriage, though by no means improper, to be evidence of a lack of the kind of self-control required of an overseer, in much the same way that a similar lack disqualified a widow from eligibility for the list of widows (5:9).¹¹

In all, there are four major positions that deserve consideration.

First, some believe this qualification requires that overseers be married. While it is true that some false teachers were forbidding marriage in favor of celibacy (1 Tim. 4:3) and Paul urged younger widows to remarry (1 Tim. 5:14), such is not the focus of the text. The emphasis is on *one*, and not on having a wife. Both Paul and Timothy were unmarried and in 1 Corinthians 7:25-28 Paul points out the advantage of being single in relation to ministry. In keeping with the culture of the day where most were married, Paul is simply saying that if married, a man must be a *one*-woman man.

Second, this requirement prohibits polygamy. Naturally, being a one-woman man would prohibit polygamy, but was this Paul’s intent? While this rightly stresses the concept of *one*, polygamy was a rare feature of even the pagan societies of that day. “Polygamy was generally regarded as abhorrent and did not need to be mentioned in such a list.”¹²

¹⁰ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983, 1985), electronic media.

¹¹ Walvoord & Zuck, electronic media.

¹² Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, series ed., Grant R. Osborne, consulting ed., D. Stuart Briscoe, Haddon Robinson (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1994), 84.

Third, this requirement prohibits a second marriage regardless of the reason whether death or divorce. But does such a prohibition fit with Paul's emphasis or intent here? Paul's emphasis in this passage is not prohibitive but positive, which seems to point to a different nuance or tone in this context. This and all the qualities that follow stress the character of an elder, not his marital status. Further, if the phrase means married only once, regardless of the reason, even in the case of the death of the spouse, then this is the only qualification in the list that is an absolute. All the other qualifications are somewhat relative since no man is 100% perfect in fulfilling these qualifications. Even the most mature and godly man is going to fall short to some degree in any of these areas. Who, for instance, is perfectly *temperate* in all areas of his life? I see a lot of elders, deacons, and even well-known preachers who are thirty, forty, fifty pounds over weight because they are not temperate in their eating habits and disciplined in exercise. Yet, churches never think twice about selecting such a person to the office of elder or deacon. What about *uncontentious*? I have seen even the most gentle man become somewhat contentious at times under some situations. The point is, the requirements here are qualities that should be generally evident to a large degree in a man as evidences of mature spiritual character. Finally, if Paul meant to make it clear that he meant married only once in a lifetime, then something like "having one wife only" (*escōn mias gunaikos monēs*) would have made the issue a lot clearer and removed any ambiguity.

Fourth, this qualification is a positive requirement for faithfulness in marriage. If the qualification in question means "a one-woman man,"¹³ one who has shown and demonstrated constant faithfulness and who has eyes only for his wife, then this too falls in line with the other qualifications from the standpoint of those qualities for which there will always room for growth. But if it is taken in the absolute sense of "married only once," then it stands alone as the only absolute qualification listed. Maybe that's okay, but this is something that should be considered when wrestling with this passage.

It follows that within Paul's holistic outlook, which brings together personal and domestic qualities, it is far more likely that he would stress fidelity in marriage. So the point of the phrase is probably not how often one can be married, nor precisely what constitutes a legitimate marriage (that the marriage of the candidate is legitimate is assumed), but rather how one conducts oneself in one's marriage.¹⁴

Glasscock has an excellent summary of the primary point and focus of this debated sentence.

As one considers the many facets of the arguments related to the phrase "one-woman man," it must be admitted that there is no simple absolute answer. One may *assume* Paul meant to prohibit divorced and remarried men from serving as elders, but one should honestly admit that Paul did not *say* "he cannot have been previously married" or "he cannot have been divorced." What he did say is that he *must be* a one-wife husband or a one-woman type of man. Paul was clearly concerned with one's character when a man is being considered for this high office; Paul was not calling into review such a person's preconversion life.

If God forgives sin and cleanses and restores lost sinners, if a believer is made new in Christ, then is this not what the church should stand for? This writer knows that emotions

¹³ Literally, the Greek has, "a man of one wife" (*mias gunaikos anēr*). "Of one wife" (*mias gunaikos*) are genitives which describe "man" (*anēr*). It is best to understand them as attributive genitives, that is, as genitives that describe an innate quality to the noun "man." As Wallace explains, "It is similar to a simple adjective in its semantic force, though more emphatic: it 'expresses quality like an adjective indeed, but with more sharpness and distinctness' (Robertson, *Grammar*, 496). The category is very common in the NT, largely due to the Semitic mindset of most of its authors" (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics—Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1996], electronic media). Such genitives usually follow the noun, but when they precede it, as here, there is an emphasis on quality (cf. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Broadman Press, Nashville, 1934], 496). This is even more evidence for this qualitative use of the genitives here. Thus, the translation, "a one-woman man," captures the point nicely.

¹⁴ Towner, 85.

run high on this issue and there is no desire to stir up hard feelings with those who may differ with the views presented here. It is only hoped that each reader will be challenged to consider prayerfully the facts of this phrase, *mia" gunaikoV" a[ndra*.¹⁵

2. “With faithful children who cannot be charged with dissipation or rebellion.” There are two issues that confront us here: the meaning of “faithful” (should it be understood as “believing”?) and the length of time elders are held accountable for the behavior of their children (only while at home or even when they become adults?).

“Faithful” is *pista* from *pistos*, which may have a passive meaning (“trustworthy, faithful, dependable”) and an active meaning (“believing, trusting”). So is Paul saying elders must have children who believe or who are faithful? Two things suggest the latter. First, the parallel with 1 Timothy 3:4 (“keeping his children in control”) and the clause that immediately follows (“who cannot be charged with dissipation...”) argue for the meaning of “faithful.” Thus, their children must not be chargeable as guilty of “dissipation,” which refers to a wild, self-indulgent, and wasteful manner of life. Nor must they be guilty of “rebellion,” wherein they refuse to submit to parental authority. A man’s inability to train and govern his children naturally brings into question his ability to train and lead the flock of God.

Further, while parents can keep their children under control through loving discipline and may prayerfully seek to bring them to Christ, becoming believers is, in the final analysis, something only the Spirit of God can do. Though parents can have the greatest influence and impact in leading their children to Christ, they cannot force their children to believe. This is a matter for the Spirit of God.

But for how long are elders to be held responsible? “Having children” seems to view sons and daughters in relation to an elder’s household and, therefore, still under his roof as dependents.

The instruction, therefore, restricts the elder’s accountability to children who are not yet adults.... Nevertheless, it is reasonable to think that the attitudes and behavior of children still within the household provide an indication of the faithfulness of an elder in parenting. But while this formative influence is meant to prepare children for godly adult lives, it does not constitute a guarantee such that elders ought to be made responsible for the directions that their grown children might choose to take.¹⁶

The Proverb (22:6), “train up a child in his way he should go and when he is old, he will not turn from it,” gives us a universal and general principle of life that will normally occur when parents apply themselves to the spiritual development of their children, but it is not a guarantee that children will always turn out as desired. Some children will occasionally refuse the best of parental leadership and will turn from their godly heritage later in life.¹⁷ Therefore, if it is known that a man applied himself diligently to bringing up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, what one of his children does after leaving home should not become a reason to keep him from leadership or a reason to remove him from this role.

¹⁵ Ed Glasscock, “The Husband of One Wife Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Theological Seminary), Vol. 140, #559, July 83, 256-257.

¹⁶ Towner, 227.

¹⁷ The universal moral statements of proverbial literature do not present moral absolutes that always occur under all conditions. For instance, they may be limited to: only a certain tendency of some thing(s) to produce a certain effect (e.g., Prov. 15:1, “a gentle answer turns away wrath”—though there are times when it may have no effect on wicked men). Or, they may only tell what generally or often takes place without making it an irreversible rule for any and all conditions. Proverbs 22:6 falls into this category (see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* [Moody Press, Chicago, 1985], 199-200).

Personal Qualifications (1:7-8)

1:7 For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God's work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain. **1:8** Instead he must be hospitable, devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled.

Three interesting observations should be noted here. First, before the list of qualifications are continued, verse 7 inserts a sentence that serves both as an explanation for what has preceded and for what follows. Literally, "for it is necessary that the overseer be blameless." The apostle inserts the verb *dei*, "it is necessary, one must" to introduce this explanation. "*Dei*" denotes logical necessity or a moral restraint that arises from a divine appointment. Thus, the apostle adds, "as one entrusted (literally, "as a steward of God") with God's work." "Entrusted" is *oikonomos*, which refers to one who has been entrusted with the management of a household. "The word emphasizes the commitment of a task to someone and the responsibility involved. It is a metaphor drawn from contemporary life and pictures the manager of a household or estate."¹⁸ The word strongly portrays the ideas of appointment and accountability and privilege as one who dispenses God's goods and blessings to others (see 1 Cor. 4:1).

The second observation is the switch from the term *elder* to that of *overseer*. "Overseer" is *episkopos*, "a superintendent, guardian, overseer." Clearly, the apostle is talking about the same office, but now moves to this term because it stresses the work or function of elders.¹⁹ While there is dignity and honor in the office of elder as appointed leaders of God's flock (1 Pet. 5:2), the focus is on their work of oversight for which certain qualities of maturity are vital to one's ability to be an effective steward.

The third observation is how the personal qualifications fall into the negative, what the elder must not do, and the positive, what he should be doing. The Christian life under the power of the Holy Spirit is not simply a matter of negatives, but of the positive—fruitful ministry to others.

The Negative Qualifications (1:7)

1:7 For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God's work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain.

1. "Not arrogant." "Arrogant" is *authadēs*, from *autos*, "self" and *hēdomai*, "enjoy oneself, take one's pleasure." Our word *hedonism* comes from this Greek word. So, *authadēs* came to mean "self-pleasing, self-willed, obstinate in one's own opinion," and thus "arrogant, refusing to listen to others." Clearly, the key idea of this word is "self-centeredness." It profiles a man who, in his desire to please himself for whatever reason (poor self-concept, fear of rejection, personal agendas, etc.), becomes his own authority. This kind of person can neutralize the unity and effectiveness of a board of elders.

Have you ever met a person who always has to have his own way? Whether it is a family matter, a church matter, or a business matter? This kind of person is seldom willing to give up his own desires for the sake of the group. And when he does succumb, he does so grudgingly. "Okay," he says, "but it is not the best way to do it, or the best place to go, or the best idea." "...In short, a self-willed man builds the world around himself. He is self-centered and wants to "do as he pleases" (Beck).²⁰

2. "Not prone to anger." "Prone to anger" is *orgilos*, "quick tempered, inclined to anger." This word appears only here in the New Testament though its cognates, the noun *orgē* and the verb *orgizō*, occur often. This issue here is not the presence of anger for there are times when we ought to be angry (Eph. 4:26). Rather, this is describing the man who has a "short fuse" and it is a condition that is certainly related

¹⁸ Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Cleon Rogers (Regency Reference Library, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976, 1980), 651-652.

¹⁹ For more on the office of elders, see the author's study, *A Biblical Philosophy of Ministry* and Bob Deffinbaugh's series, *The Measure of a New Testament Church* and *What Is a New Testament Church*. All these may be found in the Theology / Ecclesiology section of the web site at <http://www.bible.org>.

²⁰ Gene A. Getz, *The Measure of A Man* (Regal Books, Glendale California, 1974), 92.

to being also self-willed. When is anger sinful? It is sinful when it occurs for the wrong reasons, when it rises too quickly, and when it explodes in uncontrollable behavior. We are not simply to count to ten and then let it fly. A man who is prone to anger is a walking time bomb just waiting to explode.

3. “Not a drunkard.” “A drunkard” is *paroinos*, “addicted to wine, given to drink, a heavy drinker.” It is derived from *para*, “along side” and *oinos*, “wine.” It refers to one who sits long at his wine and becomes intoxicated and under its control rather than that of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18). This is not the place due to time and space to deal with the issue of whether or not Christians should drink alcoholic beverages, but a few observations are in order. First, Paul does not forbid the use of wine or teach total abstinence. He even told Timothy to take a little wine for health reasons (1 Tim. 5:23). But second, in other places he warns about the misuse of a believer’s freedom in such matters. In other words, there are times when it is good not to eat meat or drink wine, or do anything that might cause another believer to stumble (Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 8:9-13). There are times when other principles demand that believers forgo their liberty like the laws of love, self control, and profitability (see 1 Cor. 6:23; 10:23f; Rom. 13:9-10; 14:15, 19, 21; 15:1f). Third, when Scripture speaks on the issue of drinking wine or strong drink, it often comes in the form of a warning (see Prov. 20:1; 23:19-21, 29-30; Isa. 5:22; Rom. 13:13; Eph. 5:18). Finally, being addicted to wine is just one of the many escape mechanisms people use to deal with their problems or their unhappiness or pain.

19 Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way. 20 Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags (Prov. 23:20, NASB).

Commenting on this verse, Gene Getz writes:

You see, overeating is just as sinful as overdrinking. This is probably the great American sin—including many Christians. In fact, some Christians who would never take a drop of wine overeat with every degree of regularity. In this case, who is sinning?

A Christian is to do nothing that would harm his body or make himself an ineffective instrument for Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Whether it is drink, food, tobacco, money, or just plain laziness, in no way is a Christian to allow himself to be controlled. Thus Paul says, “Whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).²¹

4. “Not violent.” “Violent” is *plēktēs*, “a striker, fighter” from *plēssō*, “to strike, smite.” It refers to one who is quick with his fists or prone to strike an opponent, or to one who is prone to violence. This term looks at anger which is totally out of control and goes beyond verbal abuse to physical abuse. Paul uses this term here and in the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 immediately after “not addicted to wine.” There is a natural and obvious connection, but why would the apostle have to mention such a negative issue for Christians for whom such is so obviously out of character? The answer lies in the reality of life and of the fact many Christians are people who are saved out of pagan cultures whose lifestyle is totally contrary to Christ-like behavior. Further, spiritual growth and transformation usually require time. Old habits of thinking and acting and responding to life often die hard. Thus, Scripture calls upon the Christian to put off the old way of life and to put on the new (Eph. 4:17ff; Col. 3:1-14). For two biblical illustrations compare Moses (Ex. 32:19; Acts 7:20-29) and Peter (John 18:1-27).

5. “Not greedy for gain.” The Greek term here is *aischrokerdēs* from *aschros*, “base, shameful,” and *kerdos*, “gain.” *Aischrokerdēs* means “greedy or fond of dishonest gain” or simply “greedy for gain.” With reference to the false teachers, it would mean adopting a form of teaching for the purpose of material gain. In general, it would refer to engaging in any kind of business that would discredit the name of Christ or having false priorities that put personal business ahead of the kingdom of God (see Matt. 6:19-33). In 1 Timothy 3, Paul teaches us that elders, as examples for others, are “to be free from the love of money.” Making money and having money is not evil; it is the love of it that leads to trouble and plunges

²¹ Getz, 87.

people into all kinds of ruin and destruction “for it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil...” (see 1 Tim. 6:9-10). Men who love money are always more concerned for laying up treasures on earth than in laying up treasures in heaven and in working for the kingdom of God.

The Positive Qualifications (1:8)

8 Instead he must be hospitable, devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled.

Immediately after the negative qualifications, Paul moves to six positive qualities needed in the life of an elder/overseer. As mentioned, the Christian life is never just a matter of the negative or of putting off patterns of living. In fact, essential to effectively putting off the negative is positive replacement, of putting on that which is nothing less the character of the Lord Jesus which enables us to make no provision for the flesh and its appetites (see Rom. 13:14).

1. “Hospitable.” “Hospitable” is *philoxenos*, literally, “loving strangers, hospitable.” This quality of Christian behavior is mentioned in Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2 (*philoxenia*) and in 1 Timothy 3:2; here, and 1 Peter 4:9. As the Greek words suggest and the context of Romans 12:9-13 and 1 Peter 4:8-9 demonstrate, showing hospitality is not just a Christian responsibility, but an act of Christian love. The elder/overseer is one who willingly opens his home to the needy whether strangers or members of the body of Christ.

... The conditions of the times made such hospitality on the part of Christians very important. Believers in their travels could not resort to the homes of heathen or to public inns without being exposed to insult and danger. It was important that fellow believers offer them hospitality on their way. It was further necessary because Christians were often persecuted and rendered homeless....²²

Cultures vary and societies change, but there are always ample needs and opportunity for the body of Christ to demonstrate hospitality.

2. “Devoted to what is good.” The Greek term here is *philagathos*, “loving what is good.” Elders are to be those who are “devoted to that which is good or beneficial, whether in men, deeds, or things.”²³ Again we see how the motif of good works in this epistle manifests itself. The motivation and means for desiring and doing good come from the Scripture and from the ministry of the Spirit through spiritual growth.

3. “Sensible.” “Sensible” is *sōphrōn*, “of sound mind, sane, sensible, thoughtful,” or “self-controlled, sober-minded.” In view of the sixth quality, “self-control,” Paul undoubtedly had in mind the idea of being thoughtful or sensible in a manner that is in keeping with the truth of Scripture. Soundness of mind or sound-mind thinking comes from knowing and living in the light of the Word of God. This affects values, attitudes, pursuits, and brings self-control through the Spirit.

4. “Upright.” “Upright” and the word that follows, “devout,” should probably be linked or viewed together much like fruit to the root. “Upright” is the *dikaïos*, “just, right, righteous,” but as used in the New Testament, especially of behavior that corresponds to God’s standards of what is right in all dealings of life, especially with people. It is used variously and the context must determine the exact use. It may refer to one who is justified by faith (Rom. 1:17), but it often, as here, refers to practical righteousness or upright behavior. An elder/overseer must be one whose conduct conforms to the righteous directives of God’s truth.

5. “Devout.” This is *hosios*, “devout, pious, holy, pleasing to God.” It is a rare word occurring only eight times in the New Testament, five of which are quotations. It means unpolluted and this is best demonstrated in 1 Timothy 2:8, “lifting up *holy* hands without anger or dispute.” “Without anger and dispute” modify “holy hands.” What are holy hands? They are hands that have not been polluted by anger

²² Hiebert, 34.

²³ Hiebert, 35.

and dispute. Thus, when used of the believer, *hosios* seems to refer to progressive and personal holiness or sanctification through intimate fellowship with God. As such, it forms the root of the previous word. Godliness (or right relations and intimacy with God) is always the true source of righteousness or upright behavior.

6. “Self-controlled.” This is *enkratēs* from *kratos*, “power, strength, might.” Thus, *enkratēs* means “strong, powerful” and then “master of” and finally “self-controlled, exercising self-control or mastery over oneself.” It refers to the strength needed to hold the passions in restraint. This is one of the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit and is to be the result of the Spirit-controlled walk. In essence, then, self-control is really the self-life under the control of the Holy Spirit and fortified through a Word filled life as the next section will demonstrate.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (the noun *enkrateia* from *enkratēs*). Against such things there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23)

Doctrinal Qualifications (1:9)

The Responsibility

9a He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught (or holding firmly to).

While many translations translate this sentence as a command (NET, NIV, NRSV), others follow the more literal translation with something like “holding fast the faithful word” (NASB, KJV, NKJV, ASV). “Holding fast” is a present middle participle *antechomenon* of the verb *antechō*, “to hold against,” or “to withstand.” In the middle voice, as here, “to hold firmly to, cleave to.” In classical Greek, the middle meant “to hold out against.”²⁴ While the participle may function independently as an imperative as translated by the NET Bible and the NIV, it could be dependent and related in sense to the verb of verse seven, “the overseer *must be*,” and the negative and positive responsibilities expressed in verses 7 and 8. If this is correct, then it not only points to another responsibility, but one that becomes part of the means or the atmosphere that is so vital to meeting the previous requirements.

In view of the false teachers mentioned in verse 10 and the basically hostile world in which the believer lives, there may be a faint idea of “holding out against something hostile or opposing in the use of the verb *antechō*.”²⁵ Further, the use of the middle voice here emphasizes the subject’s personal participation or involvement in holding fast to the faithful message as one who stands as a protector of the sheep against the wolves that would ravage them (see Acts 20:28-29).

But what is meant by “to hold fast”? It means to *study, know, live by* the Bible as God’s faithful message to His people and *to defend* it against the many attacks that have and will be waged against the Bible as God’s special revelation to man.

What the elder is to cling to is described in a two-fold way. It is (1) “the faithful message or word” (2) “as it has been taught.” “Faithful” means reliable, trustworthy. But literally, to demonstrate the emphasis of the Greek, the text reads, “the, according to the teaching, faithful message.” “According to the teaching” is a clear reference to the apostolic tradition of doctrine handed down to the church, now in the completed canon of Scripture. The text, however, stresses that for the message to be faithful or reliable, it must be according to the apostolic tradition of the faith (cf. Jude 1:3-4 and 2 Thess. 3:6 with Col. 2:8). The point is clear: elder/overseers must be men of the Book as the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.

The Reason or Purpose

²⁴ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1973), 40.

²⁵ Fritz Rienecker, 652.

9b ...so that he will be able (1) to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and (2) correct those who speak against it.

While holding fast to the Word provides an atmosphere that is vital to being faithful to the needed qualifications, Paul now points us to the reason. As overseers, elders must be able to perform two duties, both of which come through a strong working knowledge of the Word. Literally, the Greek says, “both to exhort ... and to refute.” The word “both” highlights the fact that elders need the ability for both duties described here.

1. “To give exhortation in such healthy teaching.” First, he is to be able “to give exhortation.” “Exhortation” is *parakaleō*, “to encourage, exhort, comfort.” Depending on the context, this frequent New Testament word may have a *prospective* appeal in the sense of “obey, respond,” or *retrospective* appeal in the sense of “comfort, encourage.” Christians need both. The emphasis here is that exhorting to a particular line of conduct in keeping with the Word. “In such healthy teaching” points us to the sphere in which the exhortation is to occur. “Healthy” is *hugiainō*, “to be healthy, sound.” It is used of physical health (cf. Luke 5:31), but it is used over and over again in the pastorals of sound doctrine or words of the faith (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Tit. 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2, 8). This description stands in stark contrast to the sickly and degenerate teaching of the false teachers.

2. “And correct those who speak against it.” “Correct” is *elenchō*, “to bring to the light, expose,” or “to convince, convict,” or “reprove, rebuke.” “It is so to rebuke another, with such effectual wielding of the victorious arms of the truth, as to bring him, if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction, of sin.”²⁶

He must “refute” them by exposing their error and trying to convince them that they are wrong. Christian truth needs not only defense against attacks, but also clear exposition. Effective presentation of the truth is a powerful antidote to error.²⁷

“Who speak against it” calls attention to the reality that there are always those to speak against and stand opposed to the sound teaching of Scripture. The church needs leaders who are able not only to teach, but to defend the truth of Scripture against the onslaughts against it. Too often, we have surrendered by default. Too often, Christians simply know neither what they believe nor why they believe it. The apostle Peter tells us to be “ready to make a defense²⁸ to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Speaking of the relativity of our day and how religion has been divorced from the facts of evidence, Erwin Lutzer warns us with the following insightful words.

Obviously, dark days lie ahead for the believing church since Christianity is no longer providing the consensus for our society. The freedoms Christianity brought to us are being destroyed before our eyes. We are living at a time when humanistic thinking is coming to its natural conclusions in morals, education, and law. If we are to withstand the onslaught, we must be convinced in our own minds that we have a message from God, a sure word that “shines in a dark place.” As Francis Schaeffer told us, only a strong view of Scripture can withstand the powerful pressure of relativistic thinking.

Many of us were born into a culture where the Bible was at least respected, if not believed and practiced. Even those who did accept the Bible acknowledged that whether the Bible was the Word of God mattered, because truth mattered. Truth, it was believed,

²⁶ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (James Clarke & Co., London, 1961 ed.), 12-13.

²⁷ Frank E. Gaebelien, General Editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, New Testament* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992), electronic media.

²⁸ “Defense” is *apologia*, a word from which we get our term, “apologetics.” It means “a verbal reply or defense.”

was not something that arises within us, but rather something that has to be discovered by rational debate and evidence.

Today, all of this is lost. Almost no one asks whether a belief is true; the question is whether it is “meaningful to me.” Thus, we have a blizzard of conflicting claims, and millions of people have no desire to sort the true from the false, facts from fiction. We have gone from the belief that everyone has a right to his own opinion, to the absurd notion that every opinion is equally “right.” Spirituality is a private matter; beliefs are accepted or rejected to suit one’s fancy.

When the Bible, which is rooted in the soil of history and logic, is either rejected or reinterpreted to fit any belief, everyone is on his own to guess at the answer for ultimate questions. Since there is no umpire to judge various belief systems, the game of life is played with every participant creating his own rules. As a result, the Christian church is floundering, looking for an answer to today’s spiritual and moral malaise. When we tell people we must return to the Bible, we often are pitied, looked upon as sincere but naive souls whom time has passed by.²⁹

The thinking that all is relative and whatever seems right to you is okay, which is so much a part of the New Age nonsense of our day, is the kind of sick doctrine the church and its leaders must be able to refute with sound doctrine while resting in the sovereign work and convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and remembering that our faith rests on solid and demonstrable historical evidence.

²⁹ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1998), 10-11. This excellent book by Lutzer is the kind of book believers, especially leaders, need to be reading and studying. Here are some other excellent books along this line: Josh McDowell’s *Answers to Tough Questions Skeptics Ask About the Christian Faith* (Living Books, Tyndale, Wheaton), *Evidence That Demands A Verdict, Historical Evidences for the Christian Faith*, Revised Edition (Here’s Life Publishers, San Bernardino), Cliffe Knechtle, *Give Me an Answer That Satisfies My Heart & Mind, Answers to Your Tough Questions About Christianity* (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1986), and Lee Strobel’s *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1998).

3:
Instruction Concerning
False Teachers in the Church
(Titus 1:10-16)

The Portrait or
Disposition of the False Teachers
(1:10)

1:10 For there are many rebellious people, idle-talkers, and deceivers, especially those with Jewish connections,

This section is introduced with “for,” which gives the reason why elders with the doctrinal qualifications described in verse 9 are needed. Furthermore, this section elaborates on those “who speak against” or stand opposed to the truth. The presence of false teachers (always a problem for the church in any age and place) requires leaders who have the ability to expound and defend the faith. This also reminds us that exposing false teachers is a task that belongs to the leadership of the church as the shepherds who are to protect the sheep from the wolves who come in sheep’s clothing (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28f). Protection against such is done, of course, through sound biblical exposition. Unfortunately today, too often church leaders are too involved with administrative duties and in seeking to keep the flock entertained.

Heresy, of course, involves the teaching of false doctrine, but false teaching always extends itself into the behavior of its adherents. It will always have a negative impact on the lifestyle of those infected “for as a person thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). As these false teachers stand in opposition to the truth, so they will lead lives that are “detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed” (1:16).

Were these false teachers unsaved? Were they those who had never trusted in Christ as their Savior? Paul does not directly answer that question, but because they are described as rebellious, as deceivers, and as detestable, it is often assumed they are unbelievers, and it may very well be that some were, but not necessarily, at least not all of them. To assume that is to miss the application this passage can have to believers who fall away from grace into some form of legalism and then seek to impose that on the body of Christ. This a problem that the church has faced from the beginning as evidenced in Acts 15, Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews.

Finally, how are such recognized? What are the clues we should look for? This will be delineated in the portrait that follows.

They are “many”

“For there are many rebellious people.” We are often lulled into sleep because we are so unsuspecting. The apostle firmly tells us that there are “many” who stand opposed to the truth (vss. 9, 14). The problem we face is no small matter for there are numerous opponents to the grace of God in Christ.

They are “rebellious”

“Rebellious” is *anupotaktos*, “not subject to authority or rule” and so “undisciplined, rebellious.” The ultimate authority for any teacher is the Word of God as represented by the apostolic teaching passed down from the Lord Jesus (cf. John 16:12-16 with Tit. 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-2; 2 Thess. 3:6). Here is truly one of the tell-tale signs of a false teacher, namely, a rebellious spirit of independence from the truth of Scripture as the final authority. They often possess a defiant attitude toward the authority of God’s Word or to the

authority of God’s servants. As Wiersbe points out, “Beware of teachers who will not put themselves under authority.”¹ This refusal to submit to God’s Word is even more evident from the next description.

They are “idle talkers”

“Idle or empty talkers” is the Greek *mataiologos* from *mataios*, “empty, idle, futile, powerless” and *legō*, “to speak.” Paul uses a similar word, *mataiologia*, “idle or empty talk, fruitless discussion” in 1 Timothy 1:6 of the false teachers discussed there. When anyone rejects or stands opposed to the grace message of God’s truth as it is revealed in Christ and as it is found for us in the canon of Scripture, their words will of necessity be without power, just futile discussions that cannot lead to the spiritual deliverance God gives us in Christ. This is why it is so absolutely necessary that we have elder/overseers who hold fast to the faithful message in accord with the apostolic tradition of Scripture. It is this and this alone that has the power to change lives. Their empty talk dealt with (1) fictitious tales or legends added to Old Testament history—tales about Adam, Moses, Elijah, and other Old Testament saints, and with (2) legalistic and ascetic rules that are futile for dealing with the flesh (cf. Col. 2:16-23).

They are “deceivers”

“And deceivers” takes us to the product of their “empty talk.” “Deceivers” is *phrenapatēs*, “self-deceiving, a deceiver.” It is from *phrēn*, “mind” and *apatē*, “deceit, deceitfulness.” The false teachers are those who craftily (cf. Eph. 4:14) deceive the minds of others as well as themselves (cf. 2 Tim. 3:13). Though they were empty talkers, they were undoubtedly quite articulate and impressive, but what they said was empty because it had no biblical content or substance.

When you “boiled it down,” it was just so much hot air. Furthermore, they excelled in *talking*, not in *doing*. They could tell others what to do, but they did not do it themselves. Note especially Titus 1:16. The great tragedy was that they *deceived* people by their false doctrines. They claimed to be teaching truth, but they were peddlers of error. Because they themselves were deceived by Satan, they deceived others, “teaching things they ought not to teach” (Titus 1:11, NIV)²

They are those “with Jewish connections”

“Especially those with Jewish connections” gives us a clue as to the identity and the nature of the false teachers troubling the Cretan churches. This not only points us to one of the sources of the false teaching being promoted, but to its nature as a legal system of works which sought to add something to the grace work of God in Christ. Literally, the text says, “especially those of the circumcision” (*peritomē*). This noun is found 36 times, 31 of which are in Paul’s epistles. It can mean: the right of circumcision itself (John 7:22), the fact of being circumcised (Phil. 3:5), or it may be a synonym for the Jews and even for Jewish Christians because they practiced circumcision as a religious rite (e.g. Acts 10:45; 11:2; Gal. 2:9-13; Tit. 1:10).

The word statistics given above show that the word-group is important chiefly in the Pauline epistles and Acts, where it illustrates the tension between Paul and the circumcision party. In the early Christian communities there was a tension between *hoi ek peritomēs pistoi*, the believers from among the circumcised, i.e. the Jewish Christians (Acts 10:45; cf. Acts 11:2; Rom. 3:30; Gal. 2:12; Col. 4:11; Tit. 1:10), and *hoi legomenoi akrobystia*, those called uncircumcision, i.e. the Gentile Christians (Eph. 2:11; cf. Acts 11:3; Rom. 4:10; 1 Cor. 7:18). These two groups, associated respectively with Peter and Paul, constantly clashed, because the Jewish Christians insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation: “Unless you are circumcised according to the

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1997), electronic media.

² Wiersbe, electronic media.

custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1; cf. Acts 15:5, where circumcision and the keeping of the Law are linked).³

Paul’s use of the term circumcision to refer to the Jews calls attention to the kind of issues that were at the heart of the false teaching facing the Cretans—some form of Judaistic religious works added to faith in Christ for salvation and or sanctification in addition to Jewish myths which will be discussed below (see Tit. 1:14; 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4).

What is it that we bring to God when we come to Him for the salvation He offers us in Christ? Only our sin—period!! There is nothing, absolutely nothing else that we can bring to attain salvation in the sense of eternal life or of capacity to be changed. As Lutzer expresses so well:

To the person who says, I want to do something about my broken relationship with God,” grace says, “if you really understood the issues you wouldn’t talk that way. God did something about your broken relationship with Him, and the only thing you can do is to humble yourself and accept it!”

Let me be clear. When you come to Christ, you do not come to give, you come to receive. You do not come to try your best, you come to trust. You do not come just to be helped, but to be rescued. You do not come to be made better (although that does happen), you come to be made alive!

Augustus Toplady had it right:

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die!

You do not come to Christ to make a promise; you come to depend on His promise. It is the faithfulness of God and not your own that gives the gift of grace.⁴

The Practices or Deeds of the False Teachers (1:11-12)

1:11 who must be silenced because they mislead whole families by teaching for dishonest gain what ought not to be taught. **1:12** A certain one of them, in fact, one of their own prophets, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”

The Must Regarding the False Teachers, “they must be silenced”

“Who must be silenced” points us to the responsibility for both Titus and the elders of any congregation of believers. Just as there is the moral necessity for elders to be men who hold firmly to the faithful message (1:9), so there is the moral necessity for these men to silence the false teachers. “Silenced” is a rare word, *epistomē*, “to bridle” and then metaphorically, “to stop the mouth, to silence.”⁵ There are at least two responsibilities here: “The offenders must be refused opportunity to spread their teachings in the

³ H. C. Hahn, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1986), electronic media.

⁴ Erwin W. Lutzer, *How You Can Be Sure That You Will Spend Eternity With God* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1996), 45-46.

⁵ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1973), 174.

churches; the term also includes silencing them by a logical refutation of their views, making further dissemination impossible.”⁶

“Because they mislead whole families by teaching for dishonest gain what ought not to be taught” points us the nature of their seductive activity and why they must be silenced. In this we have more clues as to their identity. Here we see **the motive**, “dishonest gain,” **the method** “teaching what ought not be taught” (false doctrine), and **the multiple result**, “they mislead whole families.”

The Motive of the False Teachers, “dishonest gain”

We have a saying or quip in this country that is often used when there is some question about the legitimacy of a particular pursuit or activity because of financial motives. It’s “follow the money!” While money is not the root of all evil, the love of money is. One of the crucial character qualities and a mark of identification for a true shepherd of God’s people is purity of motives not only regarding money (cf. 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7 and 1 Pet. 5:2), but for all forms of self-centered agendas—position, power, praise, possessions, etc. (see 1 Thess. 2:1ff). This has always been an evil that has threatened godly leadership whether political or spiritual.

2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? 3 “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat *sheep* without feeding the flock”’” (Ezek. 34:2-3).

While the shepherds in the above passage refer to the rulers, the principle is the same.

Israel’s leaders did not serve their **flock**. Their first error was to put their own interests above those of the people (vv. 2-3). **Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves!** Israel’s kings had added to their wealth at the expense of the common people. They viewed **the flock** as a source of wealth to be exploited rather than a trust to be protected.⁷

Significantly, Paul not only viewed ministry as a trust from God to be guarded with great care, but exhorted others to follow his example (see 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 9:17; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:7). Teachers of the Word have a right to be paid a fare wage for their ministry, but they must be careful of their motives (see 1 Cor. 9:4ff; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). The motive must be the glory of God, love for God and loving ministry to people.

The Method of the False Teachers, “teaching what ought not be taught”

Their idle talk was undoubtedly presented under the guise of teachings that were important for the spiritual well being of the various homes or house churches where they sought a following. But their teachings consisted of things that must not be taught, i.e., tales and legalistic rules that were not in accord with the sound teaching of Scripture. They undoubtedly made the claim they were teaching Scripture, but it was way off the mark. It is clearly amazing what some people think they are getting out of the Scripture! They come to the Bible and then spiritualize it, take verses totally out of context, and import their own ideas on the text. In essence, they reject the clear explanations found in the Bible itself of what the truth consists of.

Dr. David Cooper used to say, “When the plain sense of Scripture makes good sense, seek no other sense.” There is no need to find “deeper meanings” to the plain teachings

⁶ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament*, Frank E. Gaebelain, General Editor (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992), electronic media.

⁷ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983, 1985), electronic media.

of the Word of God. Such an approach to the Bible enables a “student” to find anything he is looking for!⁸

This reminds us that we must always be like the Bereans who searched the Word daily to see if what was being taught was in accord with the Scripture. Regarding these, Luke wrote: “These Jews were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica; for they eagerly received the message, examining the scriptures carefully every day to see if these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, along with quite a few prominent Greek women and men” (Acts 17:11-12).

False teachers always either misuse the Bible (as taking verses out of context) or add to it (some rule or religious duty done for merit) or take away from it (like denying the sufficiency of Christ).

The Multiple Results of the False Teachers, “they mislead whole families”

Because of the brevity of the statement, it is uncertain whether the term “families” refer to house churches or to some of the families in the church. If it is a reference to house churches, it would refer to the disastrous influence of the false teachers who were given the opportunity to teach (cf. the warning of 2 John 7-11). If the reference is to various families, then it could refer to the effect of the false teaching as it was carried home and into the family circle and promoted by the fathers as the head of the household. The Greek word for “families” is the plural of *oikos*, “house, household, family.” It often refers to a family which may include the servants. This statement, however, may also refer to the doctrine of these false teachers which was challenging the biblical concepts regarding the household or the family. “To judge by 2:1-10, their teaching may have spawned a disregard for the accepted patterns of behavior in the various social relationships. Either way, the word *whole* here suggest that the influence of this doctrine was thorough...”⁹ “Mislead” is a rare word, *anatrepō*, “to overturn, upset, ruin, destroy.” The stress is on the disastrous effects on the families or households.

The Manner of Life of the False Teachers, “always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons,”

With the statement, “A certain one of them, in fact, one of their own prophets, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons,’” the apostle calls on one of Crete’s former and ancient religious teachers to expose their true character and manner of life.

These Cretan false teachers were all the more dangerous because of the known nature of the people on whom they preyed. As evidence, Paul quoted a line from Epimenides (6th-5th century B.C.), who was held in honor on Crete as a poet, prophet, and religious reformer. The NIV rendering, “one of their own prophets,” implies that Crete boasted a number of such prophets, a point not raised by Paul. The original, “A certain one of them, their own prophet,” stresses that the quoted verdict came from one who had intimate knowledge of his own people and was esteemed by them as a “prophet.” Paul was willing to accept this evaluation in order to underline the authority of his own judgment. The quotation establishes the picture without exposing Paul to the charge of being anti-Cretan. It put the Cretans on the horns of a dilemma. They must either admit the truthfulness of his verdict concerning them or deny the charge and brand their own prophet a liar.¹⁰

In ancient times, “to play the Cretan” meant “to lie” or to Cretanize (*krētizein*) was “to lie.” In the next verse the apostle will affirm that this statement about the Cretan populace is true, which reminds us of an important truth. Without the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, societies and cultures tend to perpetuate their fallen character. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), a French traveler, historian, and politician toured America to see what made it tick and, based on his observations, he became convinced that the source of America’s greatness lay in pulpits ablaze with righteousness. “He credited much of America’s remarkable

⁸ Wiersbe, electronic media.

⁹ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, Grant R. Osborne, series ed., The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1994), 230.

¹⁰ Hiebert, electronic media.

success to its religious nature; it was later called a nation with ‘the soul of a church.’”¹¹ Today, we have largely lost that character because we are turning further and further away from the God of the Bible. One of the devastating products of modernity is that the beliefs, ideals and traditions that once inspired, disciplined, and restrained Americans—things that have been central to the character of American democracy—are losing their compelling power to shape or direct our culture as it once did.

Paul’s statement, using one of their own prophets as evidence, was a stinging indictment! Here was a group of people, much as we see in America today, who basically lived for their own appetites. And the adjectives used here are striking. These false teachers were not just “liars,” but “*always* liars”; not just “beasts,” but “*evil* beasts”; not just “gluttons,” but “*lazy* gluttons.” As Wiersbe points out, “They were celebrities, not servants. They ‘lived it up’ at the expense of their followers, and (true to human nature), *their followers loved it!*”¹² Is this not a telling picture of what we see happening today and often even in the name of Christianity.

The Reprimand and Denunciation of the False Teachers (1:13-16)

Their Reprimand (1:13-14)

1:13 Such testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply that they may be healthy in the faith **1:14** and not pay attention to Jewish myths and commands of people who reject the truth.

“This testimony is true” declares that the prophecy of Epimenides was fulfilled in the attitudes and behavior of the false teachers. Note the correspondence between Paul’s indictment of these who were promoting religious lies, *rebellious, idle talkers, deceivers* (vs. 10), and the three-part saying by the Cretan prophet: *liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons* (vs. 11).

“For this reason,” i.e., because of what they really are, “rebuke them sharply.” “Rebuke” is the verb *elenchō* used in verse 9, “*correct* those who speak against it.” The emphasis in this word is that of an exposure that convicts and hopefully convinces. But because of the serious nature of false teaching and the character (or the lack thereof) of the false teachers, it is to be done “sharply.” This is *apotomōs*, an adverb meaning “abruptly, curtly,” and hence, “sharply, severely, or rigorously” (cf. 2 Cor. 13:10). It is derived from a verb that meant “to cut off,” which is suggestive. But since the goal is that they may be healthy or sound in the faith, the thrust here is *rigorously*.¹³ This is not to be taken lightly and rigorous steps are to be taken to address the false teachers or those being taken in by their teaching in order to cut off their influence.

Generally, “them” is taken as a direct reference to the false teachers. They would obviously be dealt with whenever they sought to gain a hearing in the church, but it seems clear that the action demanded would also include those church members who were known to be receptive to the claims of the false teachers. Primary reference to the endangered church members seems clear from the contemplated results of the action commanded.¹⁴

¹¹ Charles Colson with Ellen Santili Vaughn, *Kingdoms in Conflict* (a Copublication of William Morrow / Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1987), 47.

¹² Wiersbe, electronic media.

¹³ Walter Bauer, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), electronic media.

¹⁴ Hiebert, electronic media.

“That they may be healthy in the faith and not pay attention to Jewish myths and commands of people who reject the truth” points to a twofold purpose, but the second purpose also describes something of the source and nature of the false teaching.

The first purpose (vs. 13) is that *they may be healthy in the faith*. “The faith” refers to the body of apostolic truth or the body of revealed truth that we now find complete in the Bible. That “they may be healthy” is the same verb used in verse 9, “healthy or sound teaching.” It is used again in 2:1-2. The tense of the verb is a continuous present pointing to the need for constant spiritual health. “Healthy” naturally refers to that which is in accord with God’s revealed Word or the faith that is free from the contaminates and toxic beliefs of the world and false teachers. “Hence, to be ‘sound in the faith’ (Tit. 2:2) means to hold the received apostolic doctrine as normative and binding.”¹⁵ Spiritual health is always impaired when anyone seeks to feed their soul on unhealthy or diseased doctrine, regardless of the source. Being sound in the faith is the primary goal and that which becomes the root for changed and godly lives.

The second purpose (vs. 14) points to that which is essential to being healthy or sound in the faith, (1) refusing to pay any attention to Jewish myths and (2) commands of people. “Refusing to pay attention” is in the present tense which calls for this as a continuous pattern of life.

“Jewish myths” were legends or fictitious tales added to Old Testament history—tales about Adam, Moses, Elijah, and other Old Testament saints that were characteristic of the false teachers in Ephesus and Crete. Many of these tales were found in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings of Judaism. For parallels compare 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; and 2 Timothy 4:4.

The “commands of people who reject the truth” refer to the various legalistic and ascetic rules that people try to add to the gospel of grace and our liberty in Christ. But let’s remember, these legalistic rules or commands of men are futile for dealing with man’s sin and the flesh (cf. Col. 2:16-23). “These commands were evidently Jewish-Gnostic ritual observances that the false teachers sought to make binding on Christians” (cf. 1 Tim 4:3-6).¹⁶

But more precisely, what were these commands of men? In some cases they were Old Testament regulations that were no longer valid for the Christian with the coming of Christ, like circumcision or observing the Passover. In other cases they could be New Testament practices like baptism or the Lord’s supper, but presented as a means of salvation or sanctification rather than as pictures and testimonies of the work of Christ and a result of His grace operating within the heart of the believer. But they could also include a host of things that were to be done or not to be done in order to gain God’s favor—things not spelled out in Scripture. Many groups have their lists of do’s and don’ts—especially the don’ts—the nasty nine or the dirty dozen pushed by rigid, grim-faced, exacting, kill-joy legalists.

Let’s also note that the apostle links the fact of the commands to the rejection of the truth. “Who reject the truth” is an attributive participle that describes the kind of people who, rejecting the truth of grace and Christian liberty, seek to force rules and regulations on others for either salvation or sanctification or both. “Reject” is a very picturesque term, *apostrephō*, “to turn away from” or “turn one’s back on,” and so “to reject, repudiate.” Further, it is in the middle voice which stresses the subject’s personal involvement or participation in the action. As such, this term carries the idea of turning one’s back on the truth which, of course, is the message of grace. Grace is a message that is difficult for man as a whole to accept, but especially for the religious-minded person who thinks in terms of working for salvation or sanctification.¹⁷

Their Denunciation (1:15-16)

1:15 All is pure to those who are pure. But to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and conscience are corrupted. **1:16** They profess to

¹⁵ D. Müller, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1986), electronic edition, STEP Files, 1999.

¹⁶ Hiebert, electronic media.

¹⁷ See the author’s study, *Grace, Why It’s So Awesome and Amazing* on this web site at <http://www.bible.org/docs/splife/sptoc.htm>.

know God but with their deeds they deny him, since they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed.

In view of the Jewish and perhaps even Gnostic influence and the mention of “commands of people,” these false teachers were assuredly seeking to load the people down (cf. Matt. 23:4; Luke 11:46) with religious and ascetic rules that concerned food or drink, matters of a feast, a new moon, or Sabbath days (Col. 2:16-23; 1 Tim. 4:1-5). As a result, like the Pharisees, they were externalists who, with their excessive concerns over outer circumstance and appearance, sought to conform and judge others on the basis of their own external do’s and don’ts. This was an outgrowth of Pharisaic or Judaistic influence.

...The Pharisees multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to such an extent, upon the pretense of maintaining it intact, that the whole life of Israel was hemmed in and burdened on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the law was almost, if not wholly, lost sight of.¹⁸

“All is pure to those who are pure” is a maxim that shows Paul’s perspective, which, as an apostle of Christ, was that of the Lord Jesus.

There is nothing outside of a person that is able to make him unclean by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that makes him unclean” (Mark 7:15).

He said, “What comes out of a person makes him unclean. **7:21** For from within, out of the human heart, comes evil ideas, immorality, theft, murder, **7:22** adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. **7:23** All these evils come from within and make a person unclean” (Mark 7:20-23).

But the devastating indictment is seen in the next statement, “but to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and conscience are corrupted.” The real problem was what was on the inside, “both their mind (their thinking, viewpoints, attitudes) and conscience (their standards and norms, their view of what was right and wrong) were corrupted.” “Corrupted” is the perfect tense of *miainō*, “to stain, defile, pollute.” The perfect tense focuses on an abiding state as a result of past choices. When a person either rejects the truth of salvation by grace as an unbeliever or, because of other forces (pressure from Judaizers or legalists or one’s past background, etc.), seeks to add works into the picture for sanctification or to maintain salvation, their mind or their thinking processes become defiled, polluted. This naturally also impacts the conscience, which influences faith and actions, and it becomes defiled as well.

Paul refers to the conscience six time in the pastorals (1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:15). But what exactly is the conscience? “Conscience” is *suneidēsis*, “consciousness, be conscious of” or “moral consciousness, conscience, have a conscience about something.” It is, in essence, a court of appeal, the place of our standards and norms, our sense of right and wrong as to doctrine and behavior. It is our place of moral awareness, but it is useless if it is not a good and cleansed conscience. Thus, in 1 Timothy the apostle teaches us that the goal of our instruction (referring to the communication of sound teaching) is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a non-hypocritical faith. So what is a good conscience?

“Good” is the Greek *agathos*. It is used of that which is good in the sense of beneficial in its results and actions (Matt. 7:11; Eph. 4:29; Rom. 8:28); of what is fit, capable, and useful as well as what is morally right or wholesome. A good conscience is first of all one that is morally fit and right, but also fit or capable of functioning properly. It is the opposite of a conscience that has been seared and callused (cf. 1 Tim. 4:2) or defiled by a belief system of dead works (cf. Heb. 9:14). A good conscience, the opposite of one that is defiled or seared, is:

¹⁸ Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Talking Bible Dictionary*, ed., R. K. Harrison, contrib. ed., Howard F. Vos & Cyril J. Barber (Moody Press, Chicago), electronic media.

1. A conscience with a biblical set of standards and norms or concepts of right and wrong, one that has been cleansed from dead works (ceremonial rules and human commandments) and ordered according to the grace principles of the Word (cf. Heb. 5:14; 9:14).
2. A conscience that is sensitive and functioning correctly versus a conscience that has been callused or made insensitive either by dead works (touch not, eat not, etc.) or by being ignored (cf. 1 Tim. 4:2).
3. A conscience that is cleared of guilt through keeping short accounts with God, i.e., by the immediate confession of sin, which clears the conscience (cf. Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9).
4. An active conscience that judges and approves only those thoughts, goals, motives, words, and deeds of the heart which are in harmony with the principles of grace and the great goal of biblical instruction, namely, love, good works or Christ-like service and character.

Thus, Titus 1:15 demonstrates that true purity lies not in observing external rites and regulations, but in the inner purity of a heart that has been cleansed and regenerated through personal trust in the person and work of Christ as a finished and complete provision for our salvation (cf. Heb. 9:13-14). It is this that leads to moral rightness and character of life and the capacity to discern what is truly good and evil (Heb. 5:14). Thus, the heretics' obsession with external purity grew out of a failure to rest in the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ. By this they cut themselves off from the One who could cleanse and empower them to live the Christ-exchanged life.

With verse 16, Paul gives the clincher and virtually sums up the matter as it related to these false teachers.

Their Profession: "They profess to know God." The apostle makes this somewhat emphatic by the word order. Literally, "God, they profess to know." As previously mentioned, this does not mean that the false teachers were necessarily unbelievers. One of the problems facing the church from the beginning was that those who had come to Christ, later sought to add the rules and regulations of Judaism to the message of grace. This was the problem Paul was dealing with in the book of Galatians (cf. 3:1f; 5:1-2, 6, 11; 6:15) and which faced the early church (Acts 10:45; 15:1f, especially note vs. 5).

Thus, to "profess to know God" could mean simply to know Him as Savior (cf. 1 Thess. 1:8), but it could also be a profession to know him in a deeper and more intimate way through observing the rules and regulations they were seeking to impose on others. The Greek term used here for "to know" is *oida*, which can mean "to be (intimately) acquainted with, to stand in close relation to" (cf. Matt. 26:72, 74; John 7:28).¹⁹ Though the word *ginoskō*, "to know, recognize, perceive," is used, this concept is clearly in view in the Savior's reply to Philip. Jesus was not questioning whether Philip knew Jesus at all or as his Savior. Instead, he was questioning the depth of his knowledge of the Lord.

Things have not changed. We see the same thing today. Some claim a deeper level of experience or knowledge of God because they keep certain taboos or because they speak in tongues, insisting that anyone who wants to be truly spiritual must do the same.

Their Practice: "But with their deeds they deny him." "Deny" is *arneomai*, "to refuse, disregard, disown, repudiate." But denial can manifest itself in various ways. It may mean the opposite of acknowledging something like denying that Jesus is the incarnate Christ (1 John 2:22) or it can apply to the failure of a believer to care for his own, a behavior that is inconsistent with those who are walking in fellowship with the Savior (1 Tim. 5:8).

Generally,... *arneomai* means to fall back from a previous relationship with him into unfaithfulness. This is the meaning of the denial of Peter (Mk. 14:30, 68, 70). The opposite to this denial is "to hold fast" (Rev. 2:13), or "to be faithful" (2:10). Used absolutely, *arneomai* can mean to abandon fellowship with the Lord (2 Tim. 2:12).²⁰

¹⁹ Bauer, Gingrich, and Danker, electronic media.

²⁰ H. G. Link, E. Tiedtke, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1986), electronic edition, STEP Files, 1999.

In other words, the false teacher, if truly saved, has slipped back into works or legalism and has fallen from the grace way of life or the previous grace relationship he had had with the Lord when he first accepted Christ.

When a believer lives in the light, power, and freedom of God's grace, he or she has the power to deny ungodliness as a part of his or her life (cf. Tit. 2:12). But to turn one's back on grace will, in some degree, lead to a life that denies Him by deeds that give little or no evidence of fellowship or of a Spirit-empowered walk with God. An important truth of the New Testament is that one of the results of turning our backs on the concept of grace—even as believers—is that it leaves us under the control of the flesh or our life-dominating patterns. This is stressed by Paul in Colossians 2:23 and Galatians 5:1-5. In other words, adding any system of works for salvation or sanctification means the benefits of our new position in Christ are rendered inoperative as long as such a spirit of legalism exists. It amounts to a revision of the gospel which means we have fallen from the grace way of life into the futility of a life lived under the power of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:1-5 with 16-26).

So how did they deny Him? This is explained in the following words that point to their true condition. Falling from grace into legalism is a horrible thing because of what it does, not only to the person who has so fallen, but because of what it does to God's glorious message of grace and to others. Thus, in describing their condition, Paul has some very strong words.

Their Condition: "Since they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed." With these words the apostle shows us the true nature of legalism by showing us just how ugly and useless legalism makes a person. This clause describes how the legalists denied God though they professed to know Him intimately and were able to lead others to know Him intimately.

"Detestable" is *bdeluktos*, "abominable, detestable." It carries the idea of "disgusting." It occurs only here in the New Testament though *bdelugma*, "abomination, detestable," occurs six times. The apostle used such a strong word to help us see God's perspective toward teachers who turn away from grace into legalism and who teach others to do the same. They are detestable because they are killers on the loose.

There are killers on the loose today. The problem is that you can't tell by looking. They don't wear little buttons that give away their identity, nor do they carry signs warning everybody to stay away. On the contrary, a lot of them carry Bibles and appear to be clean-living, nice-looking, law-abiding citizens. Most of them spend a lot of time in churches, some in places of religious leadership. Many are so respected in the community, their neighbors would never guess they are living next door to killers.

They kill freedom, spontaneity, and creativity; they kill joy as well as productivity. They kill with their words and their pens and their looks. They kill with their attitudes far more often than with their behavior. There is hardly a church or Christian organization or Christian school or missionary group or media ministry where such danger does not lurk. The amazing thing is that they get away with it, day in and day out, without being confronted or exposed. Strangely, the same ministries that would not tolerate heresy for ten minutes will step aside and allow these killers all the space they need to maneuver and manipulate others in the most insidious manner imaginable. Their judgmental spirits remain unjudged. Their bullying tactics continue unchecked. And their narrow-mindedness is either explained away or quickly defended. The bondage that results would be criminal were it not so subtle and wrapped in such spiritual-sounding garb.

This day—this very moment—millions are living their lives in shame, fear, and intimidation who would be free, productive individuals.... They are victimized, existing as if living on death row instead of enjoying the beauty and fresh air of the abundant life Christ modeled and made possible for all of His followers to claim.

That whole package, in a word, is *grace*. That's what is being assaulted so continually, so violently...²¹

Such, in unbelievers and believers alike, is truly detestable. No wonder the apostle emphatically states, "For this reason rebuke them sharply that they may be healthy in the faith."

"Disobedient" is *apeithēs*. The term refers to a disobedience that is the result of a lack of trust or a failure to be persuaded.²² Failure to trust or rest in the person and work of Christ as Savior as an unbeliever or to rest in the sufficiency of death and resurrected life as a Christian leads to disobedience to the will of God. In the context, *apeithēs* points to the problem of hypocrisy. They denied Him by their hypocrisy. They preached one thing, but privately did another, As a result, they denied God by not living consistently and in accord with the truth of grace. Amazingly, Peter is an illustration of this.

2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he had clearly done wrong. **2:12** For until certain people came from James, he had been eating with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he stopped doing this and separated himself because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision party. **2:13** And the rest of the Jews also joined with him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray with them **by their hypocrisy**. **2:14** But when I saw that they were **not behaving consistently with the truth of the gospel**, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "If you, although you are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you try to force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (Gal. 2:11-14, emphasis mine)

Ralph Keiper has given an illuminating paraphrase of Paul's rebuke of Peter:

"Peter, I smell ham on your breath. You forgot your Certs. There was a time when you wouldn't eat ham as a part of your hope of salvation. Then after you trusted Christ, it didn't matter if you ate ham. But now when the no-ham eaters have come from Jerusalem you have gone back to your kosher ways. But the smell of ham still lingers on your breath. You are most inconsistent. You are compelling Gentile believers to observe Jewish law which can never justify anyone.... Peter, by returning to the law, you undercut strength for godly living."²³

"And unfit for any good deed" points us to the fruit, the result of what happens when people turn their backs on the truth of grace and the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ, not only for salvation or eternal life, but for sanctification or the experience of a Christ-exchanged life. "Unfit" is *adokimos*, "rejected, not standing the test," and then "unqualified, worthless, unfit." It is the *a* negative of *dokimos*, "approved or accepted" having passed the test. It was "used as a technical term for genuine, current coinage, but also applied to persons enjoying general esteem." Thus, *adokimos* was used in some very interesting ways:

This word is used to describe a counterfeit coin which is below standard weight. It is used to describe a cowardly soldier who fails in the testing hour of battle. It is used of a rejected candidate for office, a man whom the citizens regarded as useless and of no value. It is used of a stone which the builders rejected. If a stone had a flaw in it, it was

²¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Grace Awakening* (Word Publishing, Dallas-London-Vancouver-Melbourne, 1990), 3-4.

²² In all other passages, where *apeithēs*, the noun *apeitheia* (disobedience) and the vb. *apeitheō* (be disobedient) occur, the context suggests disobedience to God, mostly in contrast with faith (O. Becker, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* [Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1986], electronic edition, STEP Files, 1999.

²³ Ralph Keiper, cited in *When the Saints Come Storming In* by Leslie B. Flynn (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, a Division of Scripture Press Publications, Inc., 1988), 42.

marked with a capital A, for *adokimos*, and left aside, as being unfit to have any place in the building...²⁴

As previously mentioned, one of the themes of this book is “good works.” One of our purposes in life is usefulness in the service of Christ and in ministry to others. It is only through faith in Christ, however, and through abiding in the sufficiency of His life that we can become fit for good works so that they can pass the test of God’s judgment.

Through the believer’s new life in Christ—as one translated out of darkness into the light of Christ—we stand approved in Christ (cf. Rom. 16:1) and are made fit (qualified) for a share in the inheritance of the saints (cf. Col. 1:12-14). But though qualified for a portion of the inheritance (rewards), we must remain faithful and abide steadfast in our confidence in Christ so that we are living out of the source of His life and sufficiency. The reason is that Christ Himself will pass judgment on our works (*dokimazō*, “test and approve or disapprove”) at the Judgment Seat (*Bema*) of Christ where we will receive for the things done in this life (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Rom. 14:10, 12). Indeed, He is even now the tester of our hearts (cf. 1 Thess. 2:4).²⁵

Conclusion

As is obvious from the reference to Jewish connections (vs. 10) and to Jewish myths and commandments of men in verse (vs. 13), the false teachers were seeking to revise the doctrine of salvation and/or sanctification by adding certain religious works (do’s and don’ts) to the gospel message. And let’s remember that the gospel is not just a message of salvation from sin’s penalty, but one that includes God’s deliverance from sin’s power and reign over our lives. As in Galatians, such was not truly a gospel, but a perversion of the message of grace. These false teachers not only needed strong rebuke that would expose their error, but set forth the truth in such a way that the false teachers, along with those who were listening to their teaching, might become sound or healthy in the faith—the body of apostolic truth as it had been passed down through the apostles including Paul. Without this, they would remain in the disastrous condition described in verse 16, “detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed.”

With this in mind, we might also compare Paul’s statement in Colossians 1:11. There he is speaking of the results of being filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. In the context of Colossians, this means an understanding of all that the believer possesses in Christ. One of the problems facing the Colossians were false teachers who were teaching that, in addition to faith in Christ, one also needed to observe certain religious and ascetic rules (cf. 2:4, 6-23). Thus, one of the results of such full knowledge is “bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness.” In other words, it is entirely possible to engage in good deeds or religious works, but have them rejected as unfruitful because our works have been produced outside of full confidence in Christ. Unless our works are the product of a life empowered by God’s grace as we rest in the sufficiency and enablement that Christ gives, our works will be *adokimos*, “rejected, useless” and so “unfruitful,” at least from God’s standards and judgment.

²⁴ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, First Edition 1956), 281.

²⁵ “Approved” in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 is the perfect tense of *dokimazō*, “to test for the sake of approval.”

4: Instruction Concerning Various Groups (Titus 2:1-10)

A General Instruction to Titus (2:1)

2:1 But as for you, communicate the behavior that goes with sound teaching.

In this section, 2:1-10, the apostle moves from the issues of church leadership and false teachers to the various groups within the church and their moral obligations before the world in which they live. He is concerned that they show the beauty of the truth about Jesus Christ in order to have a positive impact on an unbelieving world (cf. 2:5, 8, 10). Biblical truth or sound Christian doctrine (2:1) is designed to not only bring us into an intimate relationship with God, but it is to equip us, as stewards of His grace, to represent Him as His ambassadors in a fallen world. We sometimes hear, “He’s so heavenly minded that he is no earthly good.” The thrust of this statement is that people who are focused on spiritual matters have their head so much in the clouds that they are useless when it comes to the needs and realities of this life. But if that’s the case, then they haven’t really focused on spiritual matters in a biblical way. Indeed, just the opposite is true if the truth has truly gripped their hearts.

In the months before his execution by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: “I fear that Christians who stand with only one leg upon earth, also stand with only one leg in heaven.” His concern was for Christians who had disengaged themselves from the world, who could stand by and watch atrocities committed as if the Christian message or individual Christian responsibility had no bearing whatsoever upon earthly affairs.

The fact of the matter is that the Christian faith intends full engagement in the world. Certainly the origin of this new life is otherworldly. Certainly Christian values are not those of the world. Certainly Christian hope takes us beyond this world. But it is in this world that God has called Christians to live, and it is this world’s inhabitants that Christians must reach with the gospel. Engagement of this kind requires Christian credibility and participation in the life of the world.¹

If our lifestyle fails to reflect the character of God, then we neutralize our testimony. Because of this the rest of this epistle shows that the gospel or sound doctrine places moral obligations on all believers regardless of their age or station in life. “The Christian’s duty and usefulness lie exactly in, not outside of, the circumstances under which his life is lived.”²

The opening statement of chapter 2, “But as for you,” is somewhat emphatic in the Greek text and sets forth a contrast between Titus and his responsibilities and the beliefs and behavior of the false teachers. They were so engrossed in sickly doctrines that they were already having negative results on the moral conduct of the Christians at Crete, especially in the realm of the home. This contrast highlights the important responsibility God has given us to carefully communicate His Word in view of the many false teachers who stand opposed to the truth.

“Communicate the behavior that goes with sound teaching” is literally, “speak what is fitting to sound teaching.” Titus was to “rebuke sharply” the opponents, but he is to “communicate” or “speak” to the people. The words, “the behavior that goes with,” translate the verb *prepō*, “be fitting, be suitable to something.” That something is sound teaching. Sound or healthy teaching is teaching that is in accord with the message of the Savior. This message gives eternal life, but it is also designed to produce behavior that corresponds to the Savior’s purpose for coming into the world as evidenced in His person, life, and work

¹ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, series ed., Grant R. Osborne, consulting ed., D. Stuart Briscoe, Haddon Robinson (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1994), 233-234.

² D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1957), 46.

on the cross. He came to die for the penalty of sin and to give eternal life as a free gift, but He also came to overcome Satan's rule and sin's reign in the lives of those who put their trust in Him (cf. Rom. 5:17, 6:1ff; Heb. 2:14-15; Eph. 2:1-10; 1 John 3:5). The point is that a sinful lifestyle is not only evil, but it stands in opposition to the person and work of Christ. The apostle will address this again later in this chapter in 2:11-12, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (NASB). Writing on 1 Timothy 1:10 and the term "sound teaching" as it is used in the pastoral epistles, Fee writes:

In these Epistles, the metaphor of healthy teaching becomes a thoroughgoing polemic against the diseased false teachers. But the concern of the metaphor is not with the *content* of doctrine; rather, it is with behavior. Healthy teaching leads to proper Christian behavior, love and good works; the diseased teaching of the heretics leads to controversies, arrogance, abusiveness, and strife (6:4).³

Thus, there are two fundamental truths that emerge in this section. First, it is the message of the Lord Jesus and the new life we have in Him that becomes the foundation for a Christian's behavior or lifestyle in this fallen world. True changes, those that take place from within, simply do not occur without an intimate relationship with God through faith in the truth of the message of Christ. Second, that message of the Savior should lead, as it is appropriated by faith, to a life that is consistent with Christian doctrine. Anything else is contradictory to the message as Paul exclaims in Romans 6.

6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to remain (continue, abide) in sin so that grace may increase? **6:2** Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **6:3** Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? **6:4** Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in new life (Rom. 6:1-4).

Instructions for Older Men (2:2)

2:2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.

This verse is directed toward the senior men in the congregation. Though not mentioned here, these are those who should naturally model Christian truth to the younger men, but being a good example will depend on their moral character. "Older" is the term *presbuteros*, "old man, aged man."

... Philo, *On the Creation* 105, cites Hippocrates as referring to the sixth of seven periods of a man's life, ages fifty to fifty-six; Philo himself uses it to refer to a man over sixty in *On the Special Laws* 2.33.⁴

It is not surprising that the qualities listed here are some of those previously listed for the office of elder (1:6-9) and that these senior men, because of their maturity, would normally be the ones chosen for the office of elder. Of course, age is never a guarantee of spiritual and emotional maturity. True spiritual maturity comes through growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ, but older men should be models of maturity and involved in mentoring other men in the Lord.

Four qualities are singled out. They are to be:

1. "Temperate." This is one of the qualities for the office of elder (1 Tim. 3:2) as well as deacon (1 Tim. 3:11). It is the Greek *nēphalios*, "temperate in the use of alcohol," and then, with a broader meaning, "sober, clear-headed, self-controlled." In this context, *nēphalios* refers to being free from all forms of

³ Gordan D. Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Hendrickson Publisher, Peabody, Mass., 1988), 46.

⁴ Fee, 185.

excess or life-dominating patterns through the control of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). This is seen in contrast to the “lazy gluttons,” a term used to describe the false teachers.

2. “Dignified.” As used of people, this term, the Greek *semnos*, means “worthy of respect, honorable, noble, dignified.” Hiebert describes it as “revealing a personal dignity and seriousness of purpose that invite honor and respect.”⁵

3. “Self-controlled.” This is *sōphrōn*, used in 1:8 where it was translated “sensible.” It means “of sound mind, sane, sensible, thoughtful,” or “self-controlled, sober-minded.” Since “temperate” as listed above contains the idea of self-control, perhaps the focus here is on “soundness of mind in thought and judgment.” This word is a favorite of Paul in the Pastoral Epistles. It is used of elders (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8), of the younger women (Tit. 2:5) and the verb form, *sōphroneō*, is used of younger men (Tit. 2:6). So here is a spiritual quality that should be a part of the life of all Christians, one that is easily recognizable. May we not forget however that biblically there are hidden resources that are to form the foundation and motivation for such a life. This is now addressed in the next qualities listed.

4. “Sound in faith, in love, and in endurance” could well be translated “being sound in...” “Sound” is a present participle (*hugiainantas*) of the verb *hugiainō*, “to be in good health, be physically or spiritually sound, healthy.” By switching from the use of an adjective to the participle,⁶ the apostle could have in mind not only other needed qualities, but those that form the means or cause and motivation for the previous virtues. For a similar emphasis, compare 1 Thessalonians 1:3, “your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope” (NIV).

Here in Titus 2:2, each noun has the article and refers to their faith, their love, and their endurance.⁷ Though *the faith* sometimes refers to the body of revealed truth, especially when *faith* has the article as it does here, that is doubtful in this case because of the linkage with love and endurance. Here it is personal and focuses on their *faith* through their relationship with God through the Spirit and the Word. *Love* may focus on both the vertical (love for God) and the horizontal relationship Christians are to have to others. *Endurance* looks at staying power over the long run in a Christian’s relationship with both God and people.

Instructions for Older and Younger Women (2:3-5)

2:3 Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good. **2:4** In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, **2:5** to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.

While the instruction here is directed to the older women, the apostle moved naturally to instructions for the younger women as well in verses 4-5. This is because the instructions there are to occur through a mentoring ministry of the older women.

“Likewise” (*hōsautōs*, an adverb of manner, “in like manner, just so, likewise,” cf. vss. 3 and 6) focuses on the fact the same kind of behavior is expected for all age groups in the body of Christ, older men and women and younger women and men. The godly behavior of the older women becomes the model and foundation for a ministry to the younger women, but before delving into the exposition, it is important

⁵ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament*, Frank E. Gaebelien, gen. ed. (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992), electronic media.

⁶ This participle may function as a dependent adverbial participle to an implied verb (*dei*, “ought”) that goes with the “to be” verb, the infinitive of *eimi* used earlier in the verse. The participle thus would express the means or cause of becoming temperate, etc.

⁷ This is the case of the article used as a possessive pronoun, a well established use of the Greek article where possession is implied from the context (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1996], 215).

to note that this instruction is directed toward the home and the domestic responsibilities or roles of these younger women.

Though we aren't told this directly, in view of the fact that the false teachers were overturning whole families (1:11), it would appear the false teachers were teaching things that were undermining God's roles for husbands and wives, particularly for the women. This is not new and the battle rages today as never before. There was a time in this country when "It was taken for granted that a dignified and competent wife and mother, devoted to her home and family, was a highly desirable constant in American culture"⁸ but this is no longer the case. Home economics used to be an important major or part of the college curriculum for women, but no more.

The battle for home ec was over almost before it began, and soon the deconstruction of this discipline was complete. Somewhere in mothballs there may be a beautifully preserved specimen of a home economics department, but at this sitting I don't recall running into one person with this major since my own entry into the world of higher education in 1971. A woman in our congregation who teaches home ec told me recently that her professional association changed its name from National Association of Home Economics Teachers to the National Association of Consumer Education. "It no longer has the word 'home' in it!" she lamented.

The demise of home economics is indicative of a sea change in the thought patterns and habits of women standing at the edge of adult life today. Although elementary education, Christian education, nursing, and even home economics are still studied, these degrees are often chosen for their professional, and domestic, value. Women make academic decisions about course work and majors with little thought of the value of specific areas of knowledge for running a home, raising a family, or educating children. Instead, the marketability of the degree is primary. Not surprisingly in a culture that disparages motherhood, we see a decline of conscious preparation for this task by women making academic, financial, and career decisions.⁹

Quite contrary to the way the world has gone regarding the home, the biblical mandate calls us to make the Christian home a vital part of our calling and witness to the world. At the center of this is the role God has ordained for women as wives and mothers. There is no higher or more glorious calling or need in our society than this, but our world has not only demeaned it, but to a large degree, rejected it. Too often today young Christian women are almost ashamed to admit that their primary goal in life is to be a godly wife and mother with any idea of a career outside the home as secondary. So, let's see what Paul has to say!

Instructions for Older Women (2:3)

2:3 Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good.

"Behavior" is a word (*katastēma*) found only here in the New Testament. It describes a manner of life that expresses inner character.¹⁰ "Holy" is a very interesting word. It is *hieroprepeis*, a word derived from *heiros*, "consecrate, sacred place, temple," and *prepō*, "to be fitting, suitable." Thus, *hieroprepeis* carries the idea of "fitting that which is sacred, reverent." Outside the New Testament, this word was used to characterize the conduct of priestesses. Paul's use of this rare word may be stressing the principle that all of life is a sacred duty. This is spelled out in two negatives and one positive.

⁸ Tim Bayly, "Preparing for Motherhood," *Journal For Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Vol. 4, Nos. 2-3, Libertyville, Ill, Winter 2000), 23. See the web site for *The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* at www.cbmw.org

⁹ Bayly, 24.

¹⁰ Hiebert, electronic media.

1. **“Not slandering”** is the plural of *diabolos*, “slandering.” It is the word used for the devil (*ho diabolos*, “the slanderer, the devil”) because he is the slanderer and the one who promotes it in the world.

2. **“Not slaves to excessive drinking”** is literally, “to much wine, not enslaved.” Slandering talk and drunkenness were among the vices commonly associated with many older women in Greco-Roman society.¹¹ It was evidently a problem at Crete.

3. **By contrast, the older women were to be “teaching what is good.”** This word, *kalodidaskalos* from *kalos*, “good, excellent,” and *didaskalos*, “a teacher,” is found only here in Greek literature, but it focuses on the important responsibility older women have as models in the Christian community. In the training of younger women, the scope of the teaching is found in verses 4-5.

Instructions for Younger Women (2:4-5)

2:4 In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, 2:5 to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.

Literally, “in order or so that they will train the younger women.”¹² “Train” is *sōphronizō*, “to bring to one’s senses” and then “to advise, encourage, urge”¹³ (cf. *sōphrōn*, “self-controlled, sensible,” in 1:8; 2:1, 5). The choice of this word rather than others for teaching, training, etc., suggests that Paul was concerned about the erroneous and foolish concepts that some of the younger women may have heard from the false teachers. “Younger women” is the feminine form of *neos*, “new, young.” Paul may have in view the newly married, but certainly the much younger wives.

Proverbs 14:1 proposes a vital maxim for the home. It reads, “The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.” The apostle was concerned that these younger women have God’s ordained perspective or biblical wisdom regarding the home and their roles since this is so important to the well being of the Christian family (husbands, wives, and children alike), on society as a whole, and on the testimony of the Christian community to the world.

But this was and is not a matter of cultural norms or practices, but of biblical wisdom or God’s ordained plan. Some of what is said here fits with cultural practices, but this is not the basis for the duties called for in this passage. This is clear in other passages where more detail is given on the Christian home and the roles and duties of both husbands and wives (cf. Eph. 5:23f). The duties described are based on God’s creative purposes and order as is evident in 1 Timothy 2:13-15 and 1 Corinthians 11:8-10. Seven duties are now described. The first six can be divided into three pair.

Pair Number 1: “To love their husbands” is *philandros*, which carries the idea of “devoted to their husbands.” A right relationship between a husband and wife is the first responsibility and priority in the home for this relationship is foundational to the parents’ ability to properly love and care for their children. The home is where life makes up its mind for it is in the home that children develop a proper view of men and women, of love, marriage, respect for others, and even of God’s love as they see it modeled in their parents. Thus, Paul quickly moves to the second part of the pair, **“to love their children.”** This is *philoteknos*, which also means loving their children in the sense of being devoted to their care and nurture.

¹¹ Towner, 237.

¹² The clause is introduced with *hina* followed by the present indicative in the verb *train*. Normally it is followed by the subjunctive mood. Whenever this occurs, there is always a manuscript problem with the subjunctive being attested in other manuscripts. For a discussion of this, see translators notes in the NET Bible at <http://www.bible.org>.

¹³ Walter Bauer, Wilbur F. Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979), electronic media.

Anthusa lived from c. 330 to 374 A.D. in Antioch. Widowed at the age of 20, she is remembered for her influence in the life of her son, John Chrysostom, one of the greatest preachers and leaders of the 4th-century church. Her contemporaries tell us Anthusa was cultured, attractive, and from a wealthy family. Yet she chose to not remarry after her husband's death, deciding instead to devote herself to rearing her two children, John and his sister.

John later wrote that his mother not only taught her children to know and love the teachings of the Bible, but also that her very life was a model of biblical teaching. A student of law, rhetoric and the Scriptures, John was ordained by Bishop Meletius and later became bishop of Constantinople. A zealous missionary himself, he inspired numerous others to serve as missionaries. And he always emphasized that a crucial factor to effective evangelism is for Christians to be living examples of Christ-centeredness. Surely he learned something of this from his mother Anthusa.¹⁴

“The Christian wife who sets an example of love sends a powerful message that is understandable even to those outside the church.”¹⁵

Pair Number 2: “To be self-controlled (see 2:2) and pure” forms a second pair of qualities that may at first seem to digress from the focus on the home, but these two qualities are basic to a woman's capacity to be devoted to husband and children alike. In this context of love for the husband, “self-controlled and pure” may mean “virtuous and chaste.”¹⁶ Self-control is a quality needed by all Christians in all areas of life, but in this context, the focus is more a self-control that promotes sexual purity as is suggested by the addition of the term “pure” (*hagnos*, “free from defilement, morally pure, innocent, chaste”). Naturally, “pure” means purity in the sex life (faithful to their husbands), but also purity of heart and mind since this is the root of all behavior.

Pair Number 3: “Fulfilling their duties at home” and “kind” form the third pair with the second adjective describing the way a loving wife and mother carries out her duties at home—“with kindness”—in a way that is “good” or “fit, capable and beneficial to others.” “Fulfilling their duties” translates *oikourgōs* from *oikos*, “house, household, family” plus *ergon*, “work, task, employment, enterprise” or “a deed, work.” Thus, *oikourgōs* means “working at home, being domestic, fulfilling duties at home.” The translations of the KJV, “keepers at home,” or of the NASB, “workers at home”, must not give the impression that Paul means the home is her prison or that she is only a housekeeper.

The KJV rendering “keepers at home” (*oikourous*) is based on a slightly different text and has less textual support than the rare term (*oikourgous*) behind the rendering above. The latter is the more stimulating concept and agrees with Paul's condemnation of idleness in 1 Timothy 5:13, 14. The devoted wife and mother finds her absorbing interest in the innumerable duties of the home.¹⁷

Perhaps no passage gives us a better picture of the domesticity that God has in mind than the “excellent wife” portrayed in Proverbs 31:10-31. We should note that the picture given in Proverbs 31 is of a woman whose ministry extends beyond her own household, though the home is the center and focus of her life and takes precedence over all else.

As mentioned, to the quality of domesticity, the apostle adds the term “kind.” “Kind” is the adjective *agathos*, which means “good, fit, capable, useful.” This Greek word looks at the concept of goodness from the standpoint of what is useful or profitable and is often the term chosen when moral and intrinsic goodness is in view. Several translations (ASV, NASV, NIV, NET) have rendered it as “kind” here in

¹⁴ *The Bible Illustrator For Windows* (Parsons Technology, 1990-1998), electronic media.

¹⁵ Towner, 238.

¹⁶ Fee, 187.

¹⁷ Heibert, electronic media.

Titus 2:5, while the KJV and NKJV render it simply as “good.” Regardless, Heibert is on track when he clarifies the meaning of “kind” in this passage:

These demand unsparing self-giving and may subject her to the temptation to be irritable and harsh in her demands on members of her household. She must therefore cultivate the virtue of being “kind,” i.e., benevolent, heartily doing what is good and beneficial to others, especially those of her household.¹⁸

The Seventh and Final Duty: Paul concludes his instructions to the younger wives with, **“being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.”** The apostle does not give the detail that he does in Ephesians 5 on the Christian home where he also describes the duties of the husband. Here he was undoubtedly dealing with certain problems that existed in Crete and was providing Titus with the apostolic authority he might need to establish these principles. It should be assumed that Titus would elaborate and expand on the brief skeleton given here with the details found in others New Testament passages.

“Being subject” is a grammatical construction (present adverbial participle) which may point to a condition or manner of life that is foundational to a wife’s ability to carry out her domestic role within the home. Further, “being subject” is in the middle voice which carries the idea of “subject yourselves.” This indicates that submission is to be a voluntary response of the wife’s heart that flows out of her greater submission to God’s ordained plan for the home. Nowhere are husbands told to demand this submission. Rather he is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Indeed, he is to love and care for her as if she were his own body, nourishing and cherishing her as such (Eph. 5:25-31). In the New Testament, headship is not a dictatorship or being the boss. Rather, if done biblically (see Luke 22:24-30), it is a loving leadership that takes on the disposition of being a servant and one that assumes responsibility for the relationship.

The requirement to love her husband does not eliminate her duty to yield to his headship. In declaring the spiritual equality of the woman before God (Gal 3:28), Christianity immeasurably elevated her status but did not thereby abolish her functional position as the complement and support of her husband as the head of the home.¹⁹

Then, we should note that this submission is to her “own husband.” “Own” is *idios*, “private, one’s own, peculiar to oneself.” It refers to what is private in contrast to what is public or that belongs to another. It focuses on the special relationship and private bond that is to exist between a husband and a wife and reminds us of why marital infidelity is so contrary to marriage. A man and his wife are to become as one.

...This term “your own” shows that the relationship of leadership and submission between a woman and her husband should be different from the relationship of leadership and submission which she may have with men in general. Husbands and wives have responsibilities to each other in marriage that they do not have to other men and women.²⁰

Finally, Paul concludes these seven spiritual duties with a purpose clause, “so that the message of God may not be discredited.” “The message of God” is literally “the Word (*logos*, “of God’s divine revelation through Christ and His messengers”²¹) of God.” The purpose clause undoubtedly applies to all seven duties since all would impact the testimony of a Christian woman before the world. “Discredited” is *blasphēmēō*, “to blaspheme, defame, slander, speak lightly of.” The apostle is deeply concerned that our lives as Christians never discredit the truths of the word of God to the world. Rather, our lifestyle must be consistent with the eternal and holy principles of Scripture (cf. vss. 8 and 10).

¹⁸ Heibert, electronic media.

¹⁹ Heibert, electronic media.

²⁰ John Piper, *What’s the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible* (Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1990), 32.

²¹ Bauer, Gingrich, & Danker, electronic media.

If Christian wives ignored these demands and **flouted the role their culture demanded** of good wives, the gospel would be maligned, criticized, and discredited by non-Christians. Christianity would be judged especially by the impact that it had on the women. It therefore was the duty of the women to protect God's revelation from profanation by living discreet and wholesome lives. For Christians, no life style is justified that hinders "the word of God," the message of God's salvation in Christ.²² (emphasis mine)

Maybe I have misread them, but this and similar statements in other conservative commentaries disturb me.²³ Hiebert is a godly and skilled expositor, but his wording here makes it appear that a Christian woman's lifestyle, at least as it pertains to the home and her relationship to her husband, is dependent on the roles demanded by the culture or society. I doubt that he intended this, but part of his statement here could be taken by some to teach that the principles the apostle is advocating here are culturally-based when this is simply not true. Instead, Paul's directives here are biblically-based principles and are based on God's ordained design for the home regardless of the accepted norms of a culture. As a result of the present day distortions of feminism and what is now the politically-correct view of the roles of men and women, the woman who highly prizes being domestic and voluntarily submits herself to her husband's leadership is looked down upon and even ridiculed.

Sadly, much of today's world scorns the principles of this passage as demeaning and destructive to a woman's sense of self-worth and personal achievement. As a result, following the directives of this passage in our culture often brings disdain on the Christian community. Does this mean, then, that a Christian woman is now to put aside the principles of domesticity and submission to her husband in order to pursue a career in advertising or marketing or real estate or whatever, and reject these directives as part of her God-designed role as a wife and mother? This is not the time nor the place to debate the issues here, but God forbid that we misinterpret the purpose clause here to reflect such an idea. If that were the case, then the same could be said about Paul's concerns in 2:8 and 10 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:12). For an excellent discussion of the roles of manhood and womanhood according to the Bible, I would highly recommend John Piper's small but excellent book entitled *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible* (Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1990).

Instructions for Younger Men and Titus (2:6-8)

2:6 Encourage younger men likewise to be self-controlled, **2:7** showing yourself to be an example of good works in every way. In your teaching show integrity, dignity, **2:8** and a sound message that cannot be criticized, so that any opponent will be at a loss, because he has nothing evil to say about us.

Turning to instructions for the younger men (*neōterous*, the comparative masculine plural of *neos*, "new, fresh, young"), the apostle again repeats the "likewise." While the roles of Christian men and women vary, certain spiritual qualities are to be found in all believers alike. Further, Titus is commanded to "encourage" the younger men to self-controlled. "Encourage" is *parakaleō*, "to call on, entreat, appeal to" or "admonish, urge, exhort" or "comfort, encourage." It may be *prospective* in the sense of an appeal to obey or respond to certain truths or principles or it may be *retrospective* in the sense of "be comforted,

²² Hiebert, electronic meida.

²³ Writing on verses 4-5, Gordan Fee writes, "Thus, very much in keeping with 1 Timothy 2:9-15 and 5:9-15, Paul sets a standard, conditioned in part by the cultural norm of what was expected of a good wife, that **the younger women's** place in Christ was to be found in the home" (Fee, 188). Towner writes, "There is no question that the behavior of the Christian wife taught here would have pleased the pagan critic. In fact, this lifestyle has the outsider in mind, as the purpose (*so that*) of verse 5 reveals. One of Paul's concerns was to protect the Christian message (*the word of God*; compare Col 1:5; 1 Thess 2:13) from charges that it encouraged disrespectful or revolutionary behavior..." (Towner, 239).

consoled, encouraged” in view of what has happened according to the context. Here, Titus is to urge the younger men to sober minded, self-controlled.

Whereas he was not to counsel the younger women personally for obvious reasons of impropriety, now he is to personally minister to the younger men. Further, the instructions for the younger men are summed up in one instruction—they are to be self-controlled, a quality previously stressed in 1:8; 2:2, 5. Here it is the verb form, *sōphroneō*, “to be of sound mind” or “to be temperate, self-controlled.” “Since young men are inclined to be somewhat impetuous and unrestrained in conduct, their basic need is to be ‘self-controlled,’ cultivating balance and self-restraint in daily practice.”²⁴ As previously mentioned, self-control for the believer is to be part of the fruit of the Spirit’s control as the believer submits to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit by faith (Gal. 5:16, 22-23).²⁵

We should also note that the apostle blends his instructions to the younger men with instructions to Titus himself because the Christian teacher and leader is to be a model of good works in every sphere of life. This is similar to Paul’s exhortations to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12, “Let no one look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity.” Because of the word order, the appeal here to Titus is rather emphatic, which stresses the importance of the need for modeling Christian character. Literally, “in every way showing or presenting yourself as an example.” Some would connect “in every way” with the “self-control,” but, as most translations take it, the emphasis seems to be on Titus’ responsibility as an example. Whether it refers to the self-control of the young men or to Titus, “in every way” shows how important it is for our relationship with the Savior to penetrate every sphere or area of our lives (Eph. 3:17). Christ is to be at home in our hearts by faith. “Showing yourself” represents a construction in the Greek text (an adverbial participle of continuous action) that defines the manner or means that is so important to the effectiveness of the appeal Titus or any leader may make to others for self-control. For Titus, however, the focus is on being an example of good works, a subject that is repeated in this book (see 2:14; 3:8, 14).

With the words, “in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and a sound message that cannot be criticized,” there is a further appeal to Titus, but one now directed toward the character of his teaching. Paul knew that without sound teaching you cannot have godly behavior and Spirit-produced good works. To demonstrate the relationship to the preceding focus on how Titus is to show or present himself, we can translate, “showing yourself ... uncorrupt and serious in your teaching, and with a healthy message that is not open to rebuke (i.e., one that is beyond reproach).” Oh that we might grasp the reality of this emphasis in the body of Christ today! So often I see church leaders exhorting and preaching about good works and changed lifestyles but without a balanced diet of sound doctrine that teaches and promotes spiritual health by a walk in the Spirit and a life in the Word. As result, their exhortations often lead to gimmicks of manipulation and coercion in order to see things happen in their congregations. It is not without significance that many of Paul’s books first cover the foundations of doctrine and then move to the application or the outworking of that in the life (cf. Rom. 1-11 with 12ff and Eph. 1-3 with 4-6).

“Show integrity” is *aphthoria*, “incorruption” and so “soundness.” This word is found only here in the New Testament and is from *phtheirō*, “to destroy, corrupt.” The emphasis here could be on the purity of the content of teaching, but in view of the words that follow, “a sound message,” the emphasis is undoubtedly on his motives—teaching that is without the corrupting influence of the false teachers who were teaching for personal gain. “Dignity” is *semnotēs*, “dignity, seriousness, reverence, respectfulness.” In *semnotēs* the stress is on the manner in which the message is taught. “‘Seriousness’ points to his outward dignity, reflecting the high moral tone and serious manner appropriate to his sacred task.”²⁶

²⁴ Hiebert, electronic media.

²⁵ For a study and more detail on the Spirit-Controlled Life, see Part 2 of *The ABCs for Christian Growth: Laying the Foundation* at <http://www.bible.org/docs/splife/abc/toc.htm>.

²⁶ Hiebert, electronic media.

Titus is also to communicate “a sound message that cannot be criticized.” “Sound” is *hugiēs*, “sound, whole, healthy.” “That cannot be criticized” is *akatagnōstos*, “not open to just rebuke, irreprehensible.”²⁷

Paul then sets forth the reason or purpose. It is “so that any opponent will be at a loss, because he has nothing evil to say about us.” “To be at a loss” is from a verb, *entrepō*, which literally means, “to be put to shame.” But how can one teach or preach a message that will not be criticized by someone, especially false teachers? The reality is we can’t, but we can proclaim a message that is so true to the text of Scripture that it cannot be *justly* criticized. The result is that those who do will be ultimately put to shame or embarrassed because their arguments are rebuked by the plain truth of the message which refutes their false claims. “Every faithful teacher must at times declare doctrine to which some rebellious hearer may object, but such objection must prove unjustified upon faithful examination.”²⁸

Instructions for Slaves (2:9-10)

2:9 Slaves are to be subject to their own masters in everything, to do what is wanted and not talk back, **2:10** not to pilfer, but showing all good faith, in order to do credit to the teaching of God our Savior in everything.

Perhaps no place better demonstrates the New Testament’s different perspective on life than what it teaches regarding slaves. It teaches us that life, regardless of the circumstances, is to be lived in submission to God and for His eternal purposes. For the third time in this passage, we have a purpose clause (*that, so that, in order to*; cf. 2:5, 8, 10). Each of these connects the Christian’s behavior to biblical principles that transcend the circumstances of life and highlight his or her responsibility to be a witness as an ambassador for Christ.

Now, there are a couple of surprises here. First, we might be surprised to find what appears to be a sudden switch to slaves. Slaves, however were very often, if not normally, a part of the household as well as a very important part of the culture, thus they are naturally mentioned.

Second, we might also be surprised that the New Testament does not come right out and condemn slavery—a fact that has disturbed many and caused the Bible to be maligned and criticized as condoning or supporting slavery. A couple of years ago I heard a well-known television host comment during her show that the Bible promoted slavery and the Bible was wrong. Such statements demonstrate pain over the disgraceful slavery situation that once existed in this country, but they also demonstrate a misunderstanding of what the Bible, and especially the New Testament, actually teaches.

While the New Testament never condemns or teaches revolution against slavery, it also never condones it. Instead, it lays down principles for both slaves and slave owners that if followed would abolish slavery, as it actually did and has in much of the world. Also, we need to be reminded that the idea of the sacredness of human life and the dignity of all men was practically unknown in ancient society. By proclaiming the love of Christ and the worth of all men as created in the image of God, the evils of slavery became more and more evident.

No effect of early Christianity was more pronounced than the elevation of labor to a nobler plane than it has ever occupied under pagan influences. Nothing can possibly degrade labor more than a system of slavery; and wherever the gospel was accepted the foundations of slavery began to be undermined. While for good reasons there is little or nothing of express condemnation of slavery in the words of Jesus Christ, it is plain that a gospel which declares that God “hath made of one blood all nations” (Acts 17:26) and that there is before the Highest no distinction of “bond or free” (in the Church, Gal 3:28), works logically to the final extinction of slavery. Hence we are not surprised to find express denunciation of slavery in the teachings of the Fathers. Thus Clement of

²⁷ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1973), 16.

²⁸ Hiebert, electronic media.

Alexandria declared that “no man is a slave by nature” (*Paedagogos*, iii. 12). This echoes the spirit of Christ as over against the universal teaching of paganism. And through strictly Christian influences, within two centuries after the death of our Lord, reforms looking to the abolition of slavery were inaugurated in Rome. That slavery in civilized states lingered in the world until the 19th century was no fault of the gospel of Christ; and, apart from the question of slavery, Christianity operated from the first in the societies in which it found acceptance to give a dignity to manual labor it had never before received. Chrysostom taught that labor is essentially noble and denounced idleness as a most serious sin (cf. *Social Results of Christianity*, p. 214). “Work with your hands” was the exhortation of Barnabas (*Epistles*, xix). Under such teaching, work cannot remain a badge of servility. It becomes a crown of honor to the worker. Those who toil with their hands become God’s freemen. In early Christian societies, again, we find the happiness of the working class promoted by certain forms of Christian charity. For instance, hospitals for the sick were established through the inspiration of Christian teaching. The first hospital is said by Mr. Lecky to have been founded in the 4th century by Fabiola, a Christian woman of Rome, as an avowed Christian act (*History of European Morals*, II, 85). Then, too, the new value that the Christian religion placed upon human life practically operated within the range of the early Christian church to the advantage of working people by protecting them from occupations or situations in which life or health were needlessly jeopardized.²⁹

The same can be said for the 19th Century. In discussing Christian social responsibility, writing from his broad scholarship and his historical analysis, Earle E. Cairns demonstrates how the great 19th Century reformers in England (Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, and many others) were moved to initiate social reforms. This was brought about through their own spiritual regeneration as a result of the revivals of John Wesley and George Whitefield. This was especially true regarding the abolition of slavery in the British Empire.³⁰

So why didn’t Jesus and Paul fight slavery and its many inequalities? Because in the New Testament Christ has called us to a greater task—the task of calling men from the slavery of sin into a relationship with God through the message of the Cross. Our primary task as Christians is not that of changing the world system to make it more moral or correct social wrongs, as important as that may be. Rather our primary task is to evangelize people, to make disciples and to teach them to obey all the things Jesus commanded. It also calls on us to recognize that man’s only real hope for complete justice is the return of Christ when the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20).

Being moral or changing social wrongs does not save people (give them eternal life) nor does it make us Christian people. Thus, this is not the focus of the gospel. Moral behavior and working to help injustices in our society should indeed be one of the products of being a Christian, but it neither gives us eternal life nor does it make us a Christian. In the final analysis, what does it matter if we make life more just and moral and comfortable for people if they end up eternally separated from God? Further, the thrust of Scripture is that ungodliness and all that entails is ultimately the product of unrighteousness or of not knowing God and the life He gives (cf. Rom. 1:18ff). The best way—and God’s way—to change society is to change men through personally trusting in Christ and growing in the grace and knowledge of the Savior.

As we contemplate this issue and this passage, may we remember that:

Half of the population of the Roman Empire was slaves. Three fourths of the population of Athens was slaves. The life of a slave could be taken at the whim of the master. Over the centuries, Christianity abolished slavery, first in the ancient world and then later in the nineteenth century, largely through the efforts of the strong evangelical William Wilberforce. It didn’t happen overnight, and certainly there have been dedicated

²⁹ George Francis Greene, “What the Working Classes Owe to Christianity,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Dallas Theological Seminary, Vol. 103, #411, July 1946), 337.

³⁰ Earle E. Cairns, *Saints and Society* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1960), 61.

Christians who were slave owners. Nonetheless, the end of slavery, which has plagued mankind for thousand of years, has come primarily through the efforts of Christians....

Christians don't assert that the Christian religion abolished slavery overnight. If Christianity totally disallowed slavery, the gospel could not have spread as it did in the early Church. Once the gospel did spread, the seeds were sown for the eventual dissolution of slavery. Thus by reforming the heart, Christianity, in time, reformed the social order! Furthermore, as Latourette points out, "Christianity undercut slavery by giving dignity to work" (Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, Vol. 1 [New York: Equinox books, 1971], 489).³¹

Thus, rather than attack slavery, Paul gave biblical principles to enable slaves to live their lives under God's sovereign care and in a way that they could witness to the power of the gospel. For other passages on Paul's instructions to slaves and masters, see also 1 Timothy 6:1-2; Ephesians 6:5-6; Colossians 3:22-4:1.

The Attitude Called For (2:9a)

2:9 Slaves are to be subject to their own masters in everything, to do what is wanted.

"Slaves" is *doulos*, the same term by which Paul identified himself in verse 1, "Paul, a slave of God." Though sometimes translated "servant," this word refers to one who was the property of another and not to one who simply served others as a freeman. As mentioned, slaves made up a large percentage of the population in the Roman world. We can see something of the nature of slavery in the Roman world from Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 6:1 where he speaks of those who are "under the yoke as slaves." In other words, "the power of a master over his slave was almost absolute, much like that over his *yoke*-animals."³²

Men became slaves as prisoners of war, or as condemned men, or through debt, or through kidnapping, or as those sold into slavery by their parents, and many were simply born into slavery. In fact, slaves often had their own slaves.³³

Among all these slaves there were some who had attained to a degree—sometimes a *high* degree—of culture. Not only the barber, the butler, and the cook but even the family-physician might be "under the yoke."³⁴

The instruction is that "slaves are to be in subjection to their own masters." As a part of the legal system of the day, all slaves were already under the yoke of their masters. Naturally, then, the emphasis here is on the *attitude* behind a slave's submission. To reflect the middle voice of the Greek text as with wives who were to voluntarily submit themselves to their husbands (2:5), we might render it, "slaves are to *submit themselves* to their own masters." This lays stress on the voluntary mind-set that was to undergird a slave's submission. But as explained in Colossians, behind such submission is a greater submission and service as slaves of Christ who live for the kingdom of the Savior (see Col. 3:21-24).

Though no such distinction is made and the exhortation is to all slaves, in 1 Timothy 6:1 the apostle distinguishes between slaves who had believing masters and those who did not. "Masters" here in Titus and in 1 Timothy 6:1 is *despotēs*, "master, lord, owner." "It denoted absolute ownership and uncontrolled power."³⁵

³¹ D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1994), 18, 20-21.

³² William Hendriksen, *A Commentary on I & II Timothy and Titus* (The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1957), 191.

³³ Hendriksen, 191.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Abbott-Smith, 103.

6:1 Those who are under the yoke as slaves must regard their own masters as deserving of full respect. This will prevent the name of God and Christian teaching from being discredited. **6:2** But those who have believing masters must not show them less respect because they are brothers. Instead they are to serve all the more, because those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved (1 Tim. 6:1-2).

“In everything” focuses on the unlimited extent of the submission. The slave was under the total direction of the master from morning to evening for every aspect of life. We must not understand this as an absolute that overrules even God’s authority and holy principles for life. This is obvious from the final statement which calls on slaves to “do credit to the teaching (adorn the doctrine) of the Savior in everything.” If called on to lie, commit adultery, steal, murder, he must refuse, not belligerently but in such a way that it demonstrates his integrity which would naturally demonstrate his capacity to be faithful to his master.

A Christian servant in India was once sent by his master with a verbal message which he knew to be untrue. He refused to deliver it. Though his master was very angry at the time, he respected the servant all the more afterwards and knew that he could always trust him in his own matters.³⁶

The Conduct Desired (2:9b-10a)

2:9b “...to do what is wanted and not talk back, **2:10a** not to pilfer, but showing all good faith.

In order to see the literal construction and emphasis, we can translate as follows: “Slaves are to submit themselves to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, by not *talking* back, by not *pilfering*, but by contrast, *demonstrating* all good fidelity.” The three words, *talking*, *pilfering*, and *demonstrating* are all present participles which describe the manner or the means by which slaves can submit and please their masters. This literal translation will be followed in the explanation that follows.

“To be well-pleasing” focuses on the first goal and the character of their submission. “Well-pleasing” is the translation of *euarestos*, “well-pleasing, acceptable.” It carries the concept of giving satisfaction to their masters in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as opposed to doing their work half-heartedly, being sullen, answering back, and stealing from their masters.

Thus, two negatives and one positive follow which concern the common faults and needs of slaves who, operating under difficult conditions, often sought human strategies to handle the things they often had to suffer and endure.

1. The first negative, “not talking back,” is the term used in 1:9 of those who oppose the gospel message. It’s the verb *antilegō*, which not only meant “to talk back” or “contradict,” but could carry the idea of “to oppose, refuse.” This term can carry an overtone of active resistance, rebellion, and strife that seeks to thwart the master’s directives and purposes. Such may manifest itself in sarcastic comments, often said under the breath, and defiant contradictions that question the orders of their masters.

2. The second negative, “not pilfering,” points to another common tendency due to the conditions and opportunities slaves regularly faced. “Pilfering” is *nosphizō*, “to put aside for oneself, misappropriate.” Many slaves managed their master’s household affairs and goods. They often were sent to buy the goods and to dispense them to other slaves. But many times they were underpaid and treated unfairly. As a result, there was the tendency to embezzle and keep a little back for their own needs and wants. “Rather, the genuine faith of a Christian slave will be reflected in complete honesty and trustworthiness.”³⁷

3. The positive contrast, “but showing all good faith or fidelity,” summarizes the positive behavior needed by slaves who were under the authority of their masters. “But” is a very strong conjunction of

³⁶ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, second edition, 1960), 293.

³⁷ Towner, 242.

contrast (*alla*) that focuses on the difference that slaves must show (*endeiknumi*, “to demonstrate, show forth, prove, manifest”) to their masters. As used in this context of not talking back and not pilfering, “faith,” the Greek word *pistis*, is used here in the sense of “fidelity, faithfulness, reliability” a common meaning for this noun. By “all faithfulness or fidelity” the apostle means “the utmost, the maximum.”

The Motivation Critical to All (2:10b)

2:10b “... in order to do credit to the teaching of God our Savior in everything”

This final statement of purpose (“in order,” *hina*, “in order that, that, so that”) points to the underlying purpose which should serve as the motivation that must grip the heart of not just slaves, but of any Christian if we are to function effectively in the world for Christ. And naturally, all of what is said in these verses apply to any Christian worker, employee, or servant who operates under the authority and in the service of others.

“To do credit” is *kosmeō*, “to put in order, adorn, arrange, decorate.” “This word was used of the arrangement of jewels in a manner to set off their full beauty.”³⁸ In the plural form, the noun *kosmos* was used in classical Greek of ornaments worn on the body and came to have the idea of giving *credit* or *honor* “as in the tag of Sophocles: ‘Woman, to women silence brings credit’ (*Ajax* 293).”³⁹ The idea then is that of making something *attractive* or doing *credit* to the object in view.

That object is “the teaching (or doctrine) of God our Savior.” With the words “our Savior,” the focus here is on the teaching that comes from God as our Savior—the gospel message which is the power of God unto salvation. This is a message of salvation, salvation not only from sin’s penalty, but also from its dominating power.

As a beautiful picture may be enhanced by an appropriate frame, so we (whether slaves, employees, or in other positions) make Christian teaching attractive if we exhibit its power and truth in our lives. It is the glory of the gospel which can so transform lives that even those of the lowest social order can adorn God’s truth.⁴⁰

In this final purpose concerning the behavior of slaves, we also have what amounts to a key purpose for the whole section (1-10) and for all of us as believers in Christ. In seeking to function as ambassadors of Christ who proclaim the message of our Savior, we have an awesome responsibility to make the truth of Christ attractive by lives that truly reflect the saving power of the message. How sad it is when instead we dishonor the teaching of God our Savior by living in ways that fail to communicate the power of the message.

³⁸ Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Cleon L. Rogers Jr. (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976, 1980), 654.

³⁹ Nigel Turner, *Christian Words* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1981), 498.

⁴⁰ Homer A. Kent Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles, Studies in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1958, 1982), 226.

5: The Foundation, Means, and Motivation for Godly Behavior (Titus 2:11-15)

There is no doubt that Titus 2:11-14 and its companion, 3:4-7, are two of the great theological passages of the New Testament. These texts deal with salvation (past, present, and future), with Christology (the person and work of Christ), and Pneumatology (the person and work of the Spirit), but central to their focus is the practical ramifications of this gracious working of God on behalf of all people. In the process of developing the theme of God's gracious work on our behalf, these two passages set forth the reasons why believers in Christ can and should live a godly Christian life. As to 2:11-14, there are few passages in the New Testament which so beautifully and vividly point us to the transforming power of both the first and second epiphanies (appearances) of Christ as does this passage. In these verses are truths that cry out to be communicated (cf. 2:15) because of their tremendous implications on human life for both now and in the millennial and eternal futures.

But as we examine this passage (2:11-15), we dare not overlook its place and purpose in the message of this epistle. The book of Titus strongly stresses the need of good works in the lives of Christians. In fact, this note is sounded over and over again either by way of terms like "godliness" (two times) "good deeds" or "good works" (four times) or by a list of moral qualities that characterize godly leadership and behavior (three times [cf. 1:1, 6-9, 16; 2:1-10, 14; 3:1-3, 8, 14]). For a book of three short chapters, this is a strong emphasis. Thus, as the title of this section implies, these verses provide the theological foundation, means, and motivation (the "declaration") for the previous instructions (the "exhortations") of 1:10-2:10. At the end of the last section, verse 10, the apostle demonstrated his concern that Christians do credit to the teaching of God our Savior before a lost world. With this mention of God our Savior, Paul launched into a declaration of God's gracious and saving activity which he defined as *the appearing of the grace of God that brings salvation for all people*, a reference to the first advent of Christ.

When the Son of God became a man, he made visible in a fresh, totally compelling way the grace, kindness, and love of God of which all the Scriptures testify. As Paul writes in 2 Ti 1:9-10, "Grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."¹

But what God did for us in the appearing of Christ is not in the least way a matter of cold irrelevant doctrine or theology for Paul went on to show that this appearance of the grace of God has within itself the inherent capacity to instruct us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

When David Brainerd, the outstanding missionary to the American Indians, was summarizing his ministry among them and message to them, he said, "I never got away from Jesus and him crucified in my preaching. I found that once these people were gripped by the great evangelical meaning of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, I did not have to give them any instructions about changing their behavior."²

Closely linked to this instruction for godly living is another vital element, one found in the future and glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus for His people—the blessed hope. Thus, the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus with all that this will mean to Christians forms another strong motivation for godliness as we wait or look expectantly for the sure reality of His return. So then, both the first and second appearances of Christ, when properly grasped and focused on, form a strong appeal and motivation for godliness and good works.

¹ *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Zondervan, 1985, 1991), Electronic Edition, STEP Files, 1998.

² *Our Daily Bread*, April, 1977.

Here then is a passage with a strong emphasis on the *past*, *present*, and *future* elements of the salvation God has given us in Christ, but the central thrust is on the impact that a proper grasp of this glorious salvation should have on our present lives in the purpose of God—a people who are God’s very own possession and who are zealous for good works. It is no wonder, as David Brainerd discovered, that the apostle Paul wrote:

2:1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with superior eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed the testimony of God. **2:2** For I decided to be concerned about nothing among you except Jesus Christ, as one who had been crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-2).

The Manifestation of God’s Grace (2:11)

2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.

The Connection With the Preceding: Paul introduces this section (vss. 11-14) with “for,” the Greek *gar*, a conjunction used to express cause, inference, continuation, or an explanation. Verses 11-14 stand as an explanation for the preceding ethical section (vss. 1-10), but especially verse 10, the appeal to do credit to the teaching of God our Savior in everything. In other words, the fact that God is our Savior and the appeal to transformed living are both based on the historic appearing of the grace of God in Christ.

We might also note that verses 11-14 form a single sentence in the Greek text. Some translations (NET Bible, NIV) have broken these verses down into several sentences because of the length and complexity of this passage. However, the length and interconnectedness of the Greek text does two things. First, it suggests the majestic nature of the truths of these verses. As the apostle thought on the appearance of the grace of God, one thought immediately led to another. Second, this interconnectedness shows a special relationship that exists in the truths stated in these verses that are related to one another to produce the transforming effect of godliness. This will be seen in the exposition that follows.

The Essence of What Has Appeared: The essence or nature of what has appeared is twofold: it is gracious and historic.

First, that which has appeared is *defined* as “the *grace* of God.” It may seem strange to speak of grace as appearing, but this is a clear reference to the first coming of Christ in His entire earthly life—birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven (cf. 2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 3:4). This declares that Christ is the grace of God personified and the epitome of God’s grace. In giving the Lord Jesus, we have that which man could never accomplish. “Grace” is *charis*, “unmerited favor, kindness,” and stresses that the salvation spoken of here through Christ is based on the unmerited favor of God; it provides a redemption that is free, one based not on human merit or religious works or moral good deeds, but on the gracious gift of God through faith alone in Christ alone (cf. Rev. 21:6; 22:17; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:4-5).

Second, the fact that “the grace of God *has appeared*” points us to the historic past, an objective fact of history, as the source of salvation. “Appeared” is emphatic in that it stands first in the sentence and represents a past historic event or group of events viewed as a single whole.³ In Greek, it’s the aorist form *epephanē* of the verb *epiphainō*, “to show forth, appear.” This word is “... used particularly of divine interposition, especially aid; and of the dawning of light upon darkness.”⁴ Our word *epiphany* comes from this word.

³ In form, the verb is an aorist indicative which, in this context, looks at the historic fact of the manifestation of God’s grace in Christ. But the action is viewed as a single whole (a constative aorist) though encompassing many events as in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Since this appearance brings salvation, the appearance must refer to the whole of the Savior’s life from His incarnation to His ascension.

⁴ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1998), 510.

There is a beauty and energy in the word *epiphaneē*, hath shined out, that is rarely noted; it seems to be a metaphor taken from the sun. As by his rising in the east and shining out, he enlightens, successively, the whole world; so the Lord Jesus, who is called the Sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2, arises on the whole human race with healing in his wings. And as the light and heat of the sun are denied to no nation nor individual, so the grace of the Lord Jesus, this also shines out upon all; and God designs that all mankind shall be as equally benefited by it in reference to their souls, as they are in respect to their bodies by the sun that shines in the firmament of heaven.⁵

Thus, the picture is that of Jesus Christ as the Sun of Righteousness breaking forth in human history to penetrate the moral and spiritual darkness of the world. Those who were “the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light; and on those sitting in the region and the shadow of death a light has dawned” (cf. Matt. 4:16). “Men could never have formed an adequate conception of that grace apart from its personal manifestation in Christ, in his incarnation and atonement.”⁶

Bob Woods, in *Pulpit Digest*, tells the story of a couple who took their son, 11, and daughter, 7, to Carlsbad Caverns. As always, when the tour reached the deepest point in the cavern, the guide turned off all the lights to dramatize how completely dark and silent it is below the earth’s surface. The little girl, suddenly enveloped in utter darkness, was frightened and began to cry. Immediately was heard the voice of her brother: “Don’t cry. Somebody here knows how to turn on the lights.”

In a very real sense, that is the message of Titus 2:11-14. In fact, that is the message of the gospel, the good news of what God has done for man in the person and work of Jesus Christ: Through the manifestation of God’s Son, He has shined forth in the darkness of our sinful and fallen world. Light is available, even when darkness seems overwhelming. The Bible is written against the backdrop of this spiritual darkness that floods the world. This is the root of the ungodliness and moral degeneracy that envelops us and any society that ignores God and seeks to live apart from the light of His revelation to us in the Bible and in Christ.

The Results and Scope of What Has Appeared: The results and scope are seen in the words “bringing salvation to or for all people.”

- **The Results:** “Salvation” is *sōtērios*, “saving, delivering, bringing salvation.”⁷ The basic meaning is that of deliverance and the nature of that deliverance must be determined from the context and/or the usage of the word by the author. In Paul’s writing, the word salvation encompasses more than the gift of eternal life. The salvation brought to us through the Lord Jesus encompasses the past (saved from sin’s penalty), the present (being saved from sin’s power), and the future (ultimate glorification in a resurrection body without the presence of sin). Thus, throughout the New Testament, then, the predominant thought is that the grace of God in Christ has shined forth with the results that God redeems us from sin, empowers us to live the Christian life, governs us as His people, motivates us to a new kind of life, and gives us everlasting comfort and a blessed hope.
- **The Scope:** This is seen in the phrase, “to or for all people.” There is some debate whether this phrase goes with the verb “appeared,” i.e., “the grace of God has appeared to all people” as in the NIV translation or whether it goes with the term *salvation*, i.e., “bringing salvation to all people.”

The NIV, however, states that God’s grace **that brings salvation has appeared to all men**, thus suggesting a universal *appearance*. The question is whether “to all men” goes

⁵ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the New Testament* (Parsons Technology, Inc., 1999), electronic media.

⁶ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992), electronic media.

⁷ The meaning of “bringing” is added to *sōtērios* whenever, as here, it is followed by a word(s) in the dative case. Since “to all people” is in the dative case, it means something like “bringing or providing salvation to all people.”

with “appeared” (as in the NIV) or with the adjective *sōtērios* (“that brings salvation”). Grammatically “to all men” can be taken either way, but the latter makes better sense and correlates with the clear teaching of 1 Timothy 2:4, 6; 4:10. In each case the reference to God as Savior (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3; 4:10; Titus 2:10) prompted Paul to affirm the universal availability of salvation through Christ. To side with the NIV, on the other hand, introduces an idea foreign to the New Testament and to common sense, since the gospel itself has patently not “appeared” to all men (unless “all men” means all kinds of people and not every single person).⁸

The word order of the Greek text with Paul’s teaching in other places in the pastoral epistles as just mentioned in the quote above (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4, 6; 4:10), supports our understanding of the text to proclaim the universal scope of salvation for all who would respond to the grace of God in faith. Its saving effect depends on one’s personal response in faith as brought out in the last statement of 1 Timothy 4:10, “who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.” This truth brings out a two-fold responsibility: (1) to seek to evangelize all men and (2) to stress that the ethical or life-changing truths of the gospel apply equally to all people regardless of their nationality, religious background, social or economic status, or gender.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

The Instruction of God’s Grace (2:12)

2:12 It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

The very essence and scope of this grace salvation brought to us in the appearing of Christ is highly instructive for the Christian life especially as it is seen in this present age. This present age (in contrast to the one to come with the return of Christ) is one that is totally opposed to the very nature, values, and purposes of God, but a grasp of God’s salvation in its past, present, and future aspects, instructs Christians in a different direction with life-changing results.

“Trains” is *paideuō*, “to bring up, train, educate, discipline.” In the Greek text, “trains” is a feminine participle that modifies the feminine noun *grace*. It is in the present tense which stresses the ever present work of the training of grace. *Paideuō* basically means “to train a child” and encompasses all that is involved in the training process—teaching, correction, discipline, and encouragement. Here the grace of God is practically personified in its work to bring believers to spiritual maturity in keeping with the character of God and the very essence of His saving work in Christ.

But how does the appearance of the grace that brings salvation train and correct us? By the very purposes of salvation that are seen in the coming of Christ and His death for sin. The apostle highlights this in verse 14, “He gave himself for us to (literally, “in order to”) set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.” In addition, one should also consider Hebrews 2:14 and 1 John 3:5 and 8.

With the words, “to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,” we see that this training work of grace has two sides or directions to it, one negative and one positive. Literally, the text says, “training us that, having denied (or by means of denying) ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.”

⁸ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983,1985), electronic media.

The negative side is seen in the words “to reject godless ways and worldly desires.” “Reject” is *arneomai*, “to deny, say no to, to repudiate or abjure.” In summary, two things are mentioned. The first is “ungodliness.” This is *asebeia*, “a lack of reverence for God that expresses itself in a complete disregard for God in thought and in actions.” By contrast, a godly person is one whose life revolves around the worship and service of God. Adam Clarke defines this word as:

All things contrary to God; whatever would lead us to doubt his being, deny any of his essential attributes; his providence or government of the world, and his influence on the souls of men. Every thing, also, which is opposed to his true worship; theoretical and practical atheism, deism, and irreligion in general.⁹

The second thing to deny is “worldly desires.” “Worldly” is *kosmikos* from *kosmos*, “order, world, the universe as an ordered system.” *Kosmos* is used in the following ways: (1) It is used of the inhabitants of the earth or the mass of mankind as it is arranged in tribes and nations (Acts 17:24-26; John 3:16; 1 Cor. 4:9; 1 John 2:2; 2 Pet. 2:5); (2) It is used of the order or arrangement of the heavens or the earth and all things in it (Acts 17:24-26; 2 Pet. 3:6; John 11:9; 1 Tim. 6:7); (3) But *kosmos* is especially used in a very specialized way of the vast system or *arrangement* of human affairs which always stands opposed to the will of God and is controlled by Satan who is called the ruler of this world and the god of this world (age) (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 17:15-17; 2 Cor. 4:4).

This *world system* is promoted by Satan and conformed to his ideals, aims, methods and character. It is in opposition to God, to the Word of God, to God’s grace, and the purposes of the Savior. This world system is used by Satan to seduce men from God and to contaminate their lives with Satan’s system and values. Ultimately, the design of this world system is the elimination of dependence and trust in God, His Word, and His grace through the person and work of the Savior. A further design is to nullify, as much as possible, the impact of the church on mankind by contaminating it with this satanic world system.

Thus, *kosmikos* means “pertaining to this world, of this world” and “worldly desires” refers to desires that are promoted by this satanic world system and are naturally at variance with God and His purposes for us in Christ.

Then, the positive side is seen in the words, “to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.” “Self-controlled” is *sōphronōs*, an adverbial form related *sōphrōn* used in 1:8, 2:2, 5 and *sōphroneō* in 2:6. “Upright” is *dikaiōs*, “justly, uprightly, in a just manner.” “Godly” is *eusebōs*, “piously, godly, reverently.” It is just the opposite of the ungodliness expressed and explained above. We should note that in these last three adverbs we have three changed relationships:

1. “Self-controlled” naturally relates to one’s personal life so that we are free under God’s control to overcome life-dominating patterns.
2. “Upright” relates to one’s relationship with others or to our neighbor in fairness, integrity, honesty, and truthfulness.
3. “Godly” naturally pertains to one’s relationship with God in that one’s life is centered on Him as the primary object of worship and on His will and purposes. This forms the foundation and source of motivation and control for the other two relationships.

Paul then adds, “in this present age.” “Age” is *aiōn*, “age, epoch, a time span.” By mentioning this present age, the apostle wants us to think in terms of two things: of the nature of this present age as contrary to God’s purposes and the way He wants us to live, and, as the next verse will stress, to think in terms of the temporary nature of this age for a glorious age is coming. Zondervan’s *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* has some excellent comments on the term *aiōn*.

Often *aion* indicates an “age,” or “epoch.” Then it focuses our attention on a time span marked by some distinctive or moral characteristics. According to Scripture, the

⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the New Testament*, electronic media.

underlying idea of history is that time and events flow in a series of successive ages toward God's intended culmination (Mt 13:39; 28:20; 1 Co 10:11; Heb 9:26).

... Descriptions of "this" age focus on characteristics of the human societies within which Christians are called to live. "This age" is not only the undetermined period of time between Christ's first and second comings; it is also the spiritual and psychological state of a humanity that ignores all that God has done in Christ to redeem mankind.

As a spiritual and psychological state, this age is evil (Gal 1:4). Its wise men and its philosophers are blind to God and ignorant of him, for they scornfully reject the crucified Christ (1 Co 1:20-25). The principles by which this age operates are "foolishness in God's sight" (1 Co 3:19), for lost humanity is blinded by illusions that are sponsored by Satan, the unacknowledged "god of this age" (2 Co 4:4).

The Bible's exciting news about this present age is that God has invaded it and mankind's dark territory (Eph 6:12). Jesus has acted to rescue us (Gal 1:4), not by removing us from the world but by calling us to share in a divine transformation. Believers actually taste "the powers of the coming age" (Heb 6:5), for God is at work now to transform us into Jesus' likeness (2 Co 3:18), and he will do so fully at the resurrection (1 Jn 3:2-3). Our calling is to "live godly lives in this present age" (Tit 2:12), refusing to be "conformed to this world" (*aion*, Ro 12:2). Instead of conforming, we are to open our lives to God, permitting him to reshape our attitudes and perspective. We thus learn to live by God's principles rather than by the subtly distorted principles that infuse human society, and we experience God's blessings now and in the age to come (Mk 10:29-30; Lk 18:30; 1 Ti 6:19).¹⁰

This dual emphasis expressed in the negative and the positive emphasis of 2:12 is very much in keeping with Paul's practical instructions on the Christian life in his other epistles. Compare Romans 6:5-14 (putting to death and bringing to new life); Ephesians 4:22-32 and Colossians 3:8-14 (putting off and putting on); and Galatians 5:16-26 (the works of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit). This reminds us that the Christian life *never* consists of just the negative things we don't or should not do. Instead, the negative must be replaced with Christ-like character. The goal is the positive replacement of the old manner of life with new Christ-like behavior that is in keeping with the purposes and accomplishments of His death and resurrection (see 2:14).

Based on the spiritual issues involved (the purposes and accomplishments of the death and resurrection of Christ) and the grammar of the text,¹¹ Paul is showing us that living godly lives with the kind of character this calls for cannot be done without self-denial or the repudiation of the kind of life-style that is contrary to the character of God and the nature of the salvation He has given us in Christ. Plainly put, we must learn to say no to that which is contrary to a people who are God's special redeemed possession. By the power of the indwelling Spirit of God or the Spirit-controlled life and the Christian's new position in Christ, the old life is to be put to death that the new might take its place.

The Expectation of the Blessed Hope (2:13)

2:13 as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Having mentioned this present and temporary age, the apostle quickly moved to the age to come that will be ushered in with the glorious appearing of the Savior. This is to be another strong motivation to godly living, a fact that is even more obvious in the Greek text. "As we wait" represents the translation of

¹⁰ *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, electronic media.

¹¹ There is a point of Greek grammar here that is interesting and instructive. The main verb in this sentence is "we should live soberly." "Having denied" is an aorist adverbial participle, which normally precedes the action of the main verb, especially when it is in the present tense as here.

another adverbial participle that is dependent on the previous verb, “that we should live.” We could easily translate it, “we should live ... by waiting expectantly for the happy fulfillment of our hope (literally, the blessed hope). . . .” The participle points us to one of the means by which we are to live in this present age, by living with a view to the return of Christ. Waiting for the blessed hope provides added incentives that enable us to live godly lives in this present age.

The object we are to wait for is described as “the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” or literally, “the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

First, the use of the article *tēn* with “blessed hope” and its absence with “glorious appearing” plus the fact both are connected by “and” (the Greek conjunction *kai*) shows that the blessed hope and glorious appearing are one and the same event. In Greek grammar, this is what is often referred to as the Granville Sharp rule.¹² The point is that the blessed hope is the glorious appearing of the Savior.

Second, the Greek text literally reads, “the appearing of the glory.” The question is how should this be understood. Should it be taken as the NET and NIV, “the glorious appearing,” as an attributive genitive explaining the nature of His appearing? Or should it be understood as the RSV and NRSV, “the appearing of the glory” with the glory being the subject manifested, the what. In this view, “of the glory” refers to the product of His appearing, the revealing of God’s glory. In favor of “the glorious appearing” is the fact that the attributive genitive is very common in the New Testament as in “the steward of unrighteousness” meaning “the unrighteous steward” (Luke 16:8) or “the body of sin” meaning “the sinful body” (Rom. 6:6) or “the freedom of the glory” meaning “the glorious freedom” (Rom. 8:21). Further, especially in the pastorals, the concept of “appearing” (whether the verb *epiphainō* or the noun *epiphaneia*) is consistently applied to the Lord Jesus Himself either in His first or second coming (see 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1, 8; Tit. 2:11, 13; 3:4; 2 Thess. 2:8).

Third, His return is called “the blessed hope” because Christ’s return or appearance for the church ushers in a time of great blessing as promised over and over again in Scripture. It is blessed because of all that the Savior’s return will mean to us as believers in Christ. His coming for us means *translation* (the rapture of the church to meet the Lord in the air), *transformation* or *glorification* (glorified resurrection bodies), *reunion* (meeting loved one and friends who have died in the Lord), *examination* and *remuneration* (evaluation for and the giving of rewards for faithful service), and *reigning* with Christ in the glorious future that follows (1 Thess. 4:13f; 2 Tim. 2:10-13; 1 Cor. 3:12-13; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 2:16; 3:21; 5:10).

Fourth, and most important, is the way this verse describes Jesus Christ. He is described as “the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” Some have understood that two persons are in view here, the Father (“the great God”) and His Son, (Jesus Christ our Savior) as seen in the translation of the KJV, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Various arguments have been used in an attempt to get around the fact this is a clear affirmation of the deity of Christ, but the same point of grammar (the Granville Sharp rule) that shows “the blessed hope and glorious appearing” are one and the same event applies here as well. That only one article governs the two nouns, God and Savior, shows us only one person is in view, namely, our great God and Savior who is

¹² “In Greek, when two nouns are connected by *kaiv* and the article precedes only the first noun, there is a close connection between the two. That connection always indicates at least some sort of *unity*. At a higher level, it may connote *equality*. At the highest level it may indicate *identity*. When the construction meets three specific demands, then the two nouns *always* refer to the same person. When the construction does not meet these requirements, the nouns may or may not refer to the same person(s)/object(s)” (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, Zondervan, 1996), 272. The three rules necessary for *identity* are—both nouns are *personal*, both are *singular*, and both are *common terms*, not *proper* names. While hope and appearing are not personal nouns, appearing is clearly presented here as the blessed hope. In the next clause, “our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,” all three of the necessary rules apply so that this becomes a clear affirmation by Paul of the deity of Christ.

Jesus Christ. This verse is very precise and is a clear example of the grammatical rule discussed in footnote above.¹³ Further, nowhere in the New Testament is the term “appearing” or *epiphany*, used with reference to God the Father nor is He portrayed as coming with the Lord Jesus at the time of Christ’s return. Towner summarizes some of the arguments in favor of the interpretation that two persons are in view, God the Father (the great God) and Jesus Christ (our Savior):

In favor of the second interpretation: (1) It is unusual, perhaps unprecedented (compare Rom 9:5), for Paul to refer to Christ as “God.” (2) It is argued that in the epiphany passages of the Pastorals there is a tendency to distinguish between God and Christ (1 Tim 6:13-14; 2 Tim 1:9-10). (3) Paul tends to emphasize Christ’s dependence upon God in the pastorals, so that a reference to Christ as God would be out of character.¹⁴

But Towner quickly adds:

On the whole, grammatical and background considerations recommend the first interpretation. It is best to conclude, therefore, that *the blessed hope* is the hope in God’s ultimate manifestation of glory in the return of Christ. Paul affirms that Christ is God. The use of epiphany language (“appearance”) in this passage for both events of Christ not only implies the “helping” character of these events but also characterizes the present age between them. What began with Christ, salvation and a new manner of life (vv. 11-12), will be brought to completion only with his return (v. 13). The present age, and life in it, thus takes its meaning from these two reference points. The past reference point is certain, historical; it is the substance of the gospel message. The future reference point is based on the past event, but its time is uncertain, requiring hope and the expectant look.¹⁵

In the name *Jesus* we have reference to His humanity and with the name *Christ* He is identified as the Messiah of the Old Testament. Here is one who is both God and man united together in one person, God incarnate (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 11:1; Micah 5:2; Luke 1:32; John 1:1, 14, 18; Phil. 2:5f).

In summary, the motivation for good works, so much a theme of the book of Titus, looks both ways—to the past and to the future. We should be motivated to faithful service and good works as we (1) reflect back on *what* Christ has done for us and *why*, and (2) as we wait expectantly for His blessed and glorious appearance for us. This glorious coming is one of the prominent themes of the New Testament. Realizing the impact the return of the Savior could have on his audience who were going through trials, James wrote, “You also be patient and strengthen your hearts, for the Lord’s coming is near. Do not grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged. See, the judge stands before the gates!” (Jam. 5:8-9). Likewise, urging his readers to live godly lives by setting their sights on both the Lord’s return and on his past work, Peter wrote,

1:13 Therefore, get your minds ready for action, by being fully sober, and set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed. **1:14** Like obedient children, do not comply with the evil urges you used to follow in your ignorance, **1:15** but, like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all of your conduct, **1:16** for it is written, “*You shall be holy, because I am holy.*” **1:17** And if you address as Father the one who impartially judges according to each one’s work, live out the time of your temporary residence here in reverence. **1:18** You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, you were ransomed—not by

¹³ For an in depth discussion of this grammatical rule (the Granville Sharp Rule), see Wallace’s discussion in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pp. 272ff. See also the study note in the NET Bible on the BSF Web site in reference to 2 Peter 1:1 for more discussion on the Granville Sharp rule as it applies to Peter’s statement, “the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” The same rule is also seen in 2 Peter 1:11, “our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹⁴ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, series ed., Grant R. Osborne, consulting ed., D. Stuart Briscoe, Haddon Robinson (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1994), 247.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

perishable things like silver or gold, **1:19** but by precious blood like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, Christ. **1:20** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was manifested in these last times for your sake. **1:21** Through him you now trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God (1 Pet. 1:13-21).

In 1 John, the apostle John had the same dual emphasis (the past and present work of Christ) as a motivation to a godly life through fellowship with the Lord:

2:28 And now, little children, remain in him, so that whenever he appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame when he comes back. **2:29** If you know that he is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness is fathered by him.

3:1 (See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called God's children—and indeed we are! For this reason the world does not know us: because it did not know him. **3:2** Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. But we know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is. **3:3** And everyone who has this hope focused on him purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure).

3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; indeed, sin is lawlessness. **3:5** And you know that Jesus was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin....

3:8 The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil.

The Intention of God's Redemptive Plan (2:14)

2:14 He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.

In 1:10, Paul spoke of the teaching of God our Savior and, since salvation depends on the coming of the One promised in the Old Testament, he immediately spoke of the appearing of the grace of God bringing salvation. As we have seen, this is a clear reference to the appearance of Christ on the scene of human history. He then spoke of the blessed hope, the future appearing of Jesus Christ whom he described as the great God and Savior. With this second mention of the title Savior, Paul focuses our attention on that which forms the *basis* of our hope and the *reason* we should live godly lives in this present age—the voluntary, sacrificial, substitutionary, redeeming, purifying gift of Himself (a reference to His death) on our behalf.

First, the verb “He gave Himself for us to free us” calls to mind the Lord's own statement in Mark 10:45 and the statements of Paul and Peter in 1 Timothy 2:6 and 1 Peter 1:18-20 respectively.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a *ransom* (*lutron*) for many (Mark 10:45; cf. also Matt. 20:28)

who gave himself as a *ransom* (*antilutron*) for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time (1 Tim. 2:6).

You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, you were *ransomed* (*lutroō*)—not by perishable things like silver or gold, **1:19** but by precious blood like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, Christ. **1:20** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was manifested in these last times for your sake (1 Pet. 1:18-20).

The Greek words for ransom, *lutron*, *antilutron*, and *lutroō*, carry the idea of providing freedom from slavery by paying a price. That price, of course, was the death of Christ when He shed His blood as

God's substitute lamb in our place. This verse, then, points to the death of Christ as an offering or sacrifice for our sin by which He took our penalty, an offering and a penalty that we could never pay ourselves.

Second, the willing or voluntary nature of this sacrifice is stressed in the words, "He gave Himself." No one forced Jesus to go to the cross. Out of love for the world and in submission to the eternal plan of the Godhead (Acts 2:23), Jesus Christ willingly became a man and went to the cross to die for man's sin (see Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 12:2; John 13:1).

Third, the words, "he gave himself *for us*" means He gave Himself in our place as our substitute. He bore the penalty that was ours to bear. "For" is the preposition *huper* which, when used with a noun in the genitive, may mean "for the sake of" in the sense of "for the benefit of." But it may also carry the idea of "instead of" in the sense of "in the place of." It carries this last meaning in the following passages:

5:15 And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised... **5:21** God made the one who did not know sin *to be sin for us*, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:14, 21).

2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So the life I now live in the body, I live because of the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and *gave himself for me* (Gal. 2:20).

3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming *a curse for us* (because it is written, "*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*") (Gal. 3:13).

5:2 and live in love, just as Christ also *loved us and gave himself for us*, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God (Eph. 5:2).

Though writing of the use of *huper* in 2 Corinthians 5:14, Charles Hodge has a comment that is meaningful here. He writes:

In all those passages in which one person is said to die for another or in which the reference is to a sacrifice, the idea of substitution is clearly expressed. The argument does not rest on the force of the preposition, but on the nature of the case. The only way in which the death of the victim benefited the offerer, was by substitution. When, therefore, Christ is said to die as a sacrifice for us, the meaning is, he died in our stead. His death is taken in the place of ours so as to save us from death.¹⁶

Fourth, with the words, "to (literally, "in order to") set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good," the apostle points us to two key purposes of Christ's death as they pertain to this life in this present age. In doing so, these purposes also show us how the *epiphany* of Christ in His first advent instructs us toward godly living. For the first century reader living in the culture of that day, this statement brings to mind the picture of being bought out of slavery into freedom by the ransom price paid. Christ's death not only freed us from the penalty of sin, but from its power and rule over our lives as our task master.

The Savior gave Himself for us with a twofold purpose—one negative and one positive. From the negative standpoint, He died in our place "in order to set us free (to ransom or redeem us) from every kind of lawlessness." The preposition "from" (*apo*) suggests a complete or effective removal. "Lawlessness" (*anomia*) refers to an "active violation of either divine or innate moral principles." "The apostle John says, 'Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness' (1 Jn 3:4). The seriousness of lawlessness is seen in its association with the virulent outbreak of satanic power destined for history's end (2 Th 2:3, 7-8)."¹⁷ And though there are many forms of lawlessness seen in man's defiance of God's law, the ransom of

¹⁶ Quoted from *Church Dogmatics, IV, The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Part One (Edinburgh, 1956), 230, by Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (The Tyndale Press, London, 1965), 63.

¹⁷ *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, electronic media.

Christ effectively sets us free from all these many forms when Christians will appropriate their new life in Christ by faith (Gal. 2:20; 5:16ff; Rom. 6:1ff).

But this negative work is the preparation for the ultimate focus of the purpose of Christ's atoning sacrifice which is primarily positive—"and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good." "Purify" (*katharizō*, "to cleanse, make clean") calls our attention to the spiritual and moral defilement so evident in man's lawlessness.

Sin makes us not only guilty but also unclean before a holy God. The blood-wrought cleansing (1 John 1:7) enables men to be restored to fellowship with God as "a people that are his very own." Since they have been redeemed by his blood (1 Peter 1:18-21), Christ yearns that they voluntarily yield themselves wholly to him. Such a surrender is man's only reasonable response to divine mercy (Rom 12:1, 2).¹⁸

But the ultimate purpose and grace of this purification is that we might become fit to be a people "who are truly His" or "a people for His own possession" (NASB). The Greek word here, *periousios*, is a very interesting and instructive term. It means "chosen, special; i.e., something that belongs in a special sense to oneself."¹⁹ Regarding this word, Barclay comments, "It means *set apart, reserved for*; and it was specially used for that part of the spoils of a battle or a campaign which the king who had conquered set apart specially for himself."²⁰ Through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus by which He defeated Satan and his kingdom, we become qualified to be the special possession of God as those who have been delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into the inheritance of the saints in light.

1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. **1:13** He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, **1:14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 2:12-14).

2:13 And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nonetheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. **2:14** He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross, **2:15** and disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:13-15).

In the final clause, "who are eager to do good (literally "zealous for good works")," we see the moral purpose and power of the grace of God in Christ. The Savior has not only delivered us from the penalty of sin and brought us to God as His special people (reconciliation), He has also enabled us to live productively in a fallen world that is characterized by rebellion and self-will. The ultimate goal, as with the nation of Israel (see 2 Sam. 7:23-24), is to bring us into a right and special relationship with God as His very own special people who manifest this relationship by the character of their redeemed lives as a people zealous for good works.

The Obligation of God's Messenger (2:15)

2:15 So communicate these things with the sort of exhortation or rebuke that carries full authority.

Literally, the Greek text reads, "speak these things and exhort and rebuke with all authority," but the above translation of the NET Bible accurately expresses the meaning of the text. The three duties—speak, exhort, and rebuke—describe Titus' responsibility and that of those who lead and teach in the church, but

¹⁸ Hiebert, electronic media.

¹⁹ Rogers and Rogers, 510.

²⁰ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 2nd ed., 1960), 295.

“with all authority” shows us how they are each to be done. They are to be done in such a way that each carries full authority because they express the will of God as it is contained in the Word of God. For Titus, part of this authority came from his association with Paul, an apostle, but for us, it is found in the nature of the Bible as God’s Word. In other words, the authority is not in the messenger, but in the message of the Word. It is equivalent to “Thus says the Lord.”

“These things” undoubtedly looks back to the whole of chapter two, but especially to verses 11-14 and the doctrinal truth expressed there. For it is this that forms the basis, the means, and the motivation for the good works enjoined throughout this little book. Why? Because without the dynamic of these glorious truths of salvation, the exhortation to good works and godliness becomes an exercise in futility. It is nothing more than man trying to be good by his man-made religion or ascetic good works which are futile to our condition and faithless to God’s provision (see Col. 2:16-23).

A threefold task is set before Titus and Christian teachers in the body of Christ—(1) proclamation or communication, (2) exhortation or encouragement, and (3) rebuke designed to bring conviction. Each of these are present imperatives that command the action called for. Since Titus was undoubtedly, as Paul’s trained representative, already doing this, the use of present tense imperatives means Paul was calling for a continuance of these actions regardless of the opposition he might face. For us today, these are responsibilities that are to characterize the ministries of the leadership of all local churches if they are going to be faithful to the Word.

“Communicate” is *laleō*, “to speak, say,” but in a context like this one where it is combined with exhortation and rebuke, it becomes synonymous with teaching or communication in general. As Adam Clarke has commented, “**These things speak**—That is, teach; for *lalei*, speak, has the same meaning here as *didaske*, teach, which, as being synonymous, is actually the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus.”²¹ Some take the next words, *exhortation* and *rebuke*, as pointing to two ways or methods to be used in the communication. In the Greek text, however, they are simply connected together as three responsibilities called for as required by the circumstances—“speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority.”

“Exhortation” is *parakaleō*, “to encourage, exhort, comfort.” It was used in 1:9 where it was translated “give exhortation” and in 2:6 where it was translated “encourage.” As mentioned previously, depending on the context, *parakaleō* may have a *prospective* appeal in the sense of calling on others to obey or respond to certain truths or principles, or it may be *retrospective* in the sense of “be comforted, consoled, encouraged” in view of what has happened according to the need. Christians need both and teachers need to be sensitive to what is needed in any given situation.

“Rebuke” is *elenchō*, which first means “to bring to the light, expose, set forth.” It refers to the process of exposing someone’s sin in order to bring conviction followed by correction or spiritual change.

The eyes of the sinner must be opened to his sin. The mind of the misguided must be led to realize its mistake. The heart of the heedless must be stabbed broad awake. The Christian message is no opiate to send men to sleep; it is no comfortable assurance that everything will be all right. It is rather the blinding light which shows men themselves as they are and God as He is.²²

In the phrase, “with all authority,” “authority” is the Greek *epitagē*, “command, order, injunction.” The idea is with all impressiveness²³ because behind what is said by way of teaching, exhortation, or rebuke is the authority of God’s holy Word—assuming, of course, that the communication of the teacher is based on Scripture and not his own opinions or ideas. This is not a call to act in a domineering way as dictator like a Diotrephes (3 John 1:9) or as one who seeks to lord it over the flock (1 Pet. 5:3), but as

²¹ Clarke, electronic media.

²² Barclay, 295-296.

²³ Walter Bauer, Wilbur F. Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979), electronic media.

servant leaders who, acting on the authority of God's authoritative Word, seek to impress upon the hearers that these things are not optional like a cafeteria where we pick and choose what we want.

Finally, Paul closes this section with "no one must disregard you." "Disregard" is *periphroneō*, from *peri*, "around" and *phroneō*, "to think." Thus, *periphroneo* meant "to think around someone, to overlook," and then, "to look down on, disregard, despise." Coming from the apostle, this remark was intended as much for the Cretans as for Titus. The point is that none of us are to seek to reason or rationalize around the authoritative truth of Scripture and its communication to us.

Obviously, neither Titus nor any Christian leader can control the feelings and actions of others. And in this situation Paul anticipated opposition to his delegate's authority (1:9-10, 13; 3:10). But for his part Titus was to insist on his authority (and not allow others to ignore him or "go over his head") and behave in a commendable manner (so that no one would question his suitability to lead). Christian leaders should keep in mind that authority and exemplary behavior are to be inseparable.²⁴

The truth we must bear in mind, though, is that the authority of the Christian leader or teacher is not in themselves, but in the truth of God's holy Word. "The minister's authority rests in the nature of his message; he is not raised above the truth but the truth above him."²⁵

²⁴ Towner, 250-251.

²⁵ Hiebert, electronic media.

6: Instruction to Live as Good Citizens in the World (Titus 3:1-8)

Christians live in two spheres and the tremendous contrast between those two spheres often poses a very difficult challenge. On the one hand, Christians are citizens of a heavenly kingdom with Christ as their Lord. On the other hand, they are called of Christ to represent Him in the midst of an age that is passing away and in a world system that is opposed to the plan and purposes of God. They live in the world, but they are not of the world (John 15:19; 17:14, 19). As those who live in this world, they are to live as aliens and sojourners and as ambassadors for the Savior without being contaminated by the age and the world system whose god is the devil himself (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:17f; 2:11-12; 2 Cor. 5:20). The apostle now addresses this very issue in 3:1-11.

As Augustine wrote in his book, *The City of God*, there are two cities, the city of man and the city of God. The city of man, being the product of his pride and rebellion against God, reflects man's dreams, earthly hopes, and values. This is an earthly city, a city of this age and Satan's world system. It is temporal and fundamentally opposed to God and ultimately ruinous to man.

There is another city, however, "with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10). This is the city of God with God's values, plan of salvation, and one that endures forever. At the center of this city is the cross or the person and work of Christ who died for our sin. Here is a city that can change the people of the city of man and add stability to their society because of the new life and values that are a part of the city of God. The citizens of the city of God have new life, are a part of an unseen spiritual world, and have their sights set on eternal values.

Concerning Augustine's city of man, Lutzer writes:

Augustine did not mean that the city of man is destitute of all civil righteousness and justice. Yes, pagans have built great civilizations, thanks to the virtues they inherited as those created in the image of God. Indeed, Christians should be actively involved in the city of man, building it, maintaining it, and working alongside of those headed to destruction. But Christians should also have no illusions about building an earthly utopia, for they must pass this life with continual opposition from the citizens of the city of man. They must march through the crumbling empires of the world, spreading the knowledge of the gospel.¹

Looking at our past life as a part of the city of man, the apostle shows us that the city of man as so evident today in America is built on the cult of self-absorption and the desires of man's fallen nature.

The church always faces the temptation of fighting a legitimate battle in the wrong way. We always are tempted to fight the world with the weapons of the world. We always are tempted to use a sword of steel instead of the sword of the Spirit. And today, that temptation is greater than ever.²

In chapter 3 of Titus, the apostle shows us how the church is to live in the midst of this city of man. As seen in nearly all the New Testament letters written to the church, Titus was written to help God's people live in a world and age that is a sea of pagan and humanistic values. But significantly, Paul neither calls on us to use the world's methods nor seek to Christianize the morals of the society. Again, in his book, *Why the Cross Can Do What Politics Can't*, Lutzer has an excellent word here:

¹ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Why the Cross Can Do What Politics Can't* (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1999), 18.

² Lutzer, 20.

The second premise of this book is my deep conviction that *our so-called culture war is really a spiritual war*. In other words, our problems are not fundamentally abortion, trash television, and homosexual values. The roots of our cultural decay is first and foremost spiritual; we must attack the root of this corrupt tree. As always our greatest challenge is theological, not political or cultural.³

As the salt and light Jesus called us to be, we are to seek change from the inside out through faith in the person and work of the Savior and through a personal walk with Him—with His values and priorities and calling. That this is so is clearly evident, or should be, from the way Paul reminds us of our past life, but then points to the theological basis, as in 2:11f, for our spiritual change by the regenerating and justifying work of God (3:4-7). And it is this message that has its hope centered on the eternal that we are to confidently proclaim (vs. 8) rather than any manmade substitutes (vs. 9). Again, let me quote Lutzer:

Today, it is tempting to wrap the cross of Christ in the flag, to equate the American dream with God’s dream for this nation. We have attached a myriad of agendas to the cross of Christ, often clouding the one message that the world needs to hear with clarity and power...⁴

Incredibly, the church has, for the most part, abandoned the very message that is most desperately needed at this critical hour of history.⁵

My clear purpose is to challenge the church to confront the world with the one message that is able to transform society, one life at a time. Yes, we must fight social evils; we must attempt to use whatever means we have to clean up our contaminated culture. But all of our efforts will be futile unless we go to the source of our defilement.⁶

The various exhortations of the first two chapters of Titus largely concern relationships within the church, the body of Christ, “which when seen by outsiders would keep them from ‘maligning the gospel’ (2:5) and perhaps would even attract them to it (2:10).”⁷ With chapter 3:1-8, however, the apostle broadens the focus to the believer’s behavior in the world where he or she is to function as a good citizen and neighbor. As mentioned, this is in keeping with the Christian’s purpose to function as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Verses 1-2 set forth a *reminder* of two general responsibilities, to government authorities in general (vs. 1) and to all people (vs. 2). Then, as in 2:11-14, the apostle points to the *basis* or the *reasons* why such behavior is both called for and possible (vss. 3-7). Again, theology forms the foundation for behavior. With this as the doctrinal motivation, there is then a *re-affirmation* for good deeds (vs. 8) followed by a statement of *reticence* or *caution* against the error of false teachers and the futility of what they proclaim (man’s solutions to life). When men turn away from the central truth of the cross and the grace of God in Christ, it will be futile to truly impact the life for good works and be beneficial for mankind (vss. 9-11).

The Reminder to Live as Good Citizens in the World (3:1-2)

3:1 Remind them **to subject** themselves to rulers and authorities, **to be obedient, to be ready** for every good work. **3:2** **to slander** no one, **to be non-fighting** (peaceable), **to be gentle**, showing all courtesy (considerateness) to all people (literal translation).

As the above translation demonstrates, the main command here is to remind the Cretans of certain duties that would naturally commend the gospel to those in the world at large. These duties are spelled out

³ Lutzer, 11.

⁴ Lutzer, 8.

⁵ Lutzer, 9.

⁶ Lutzer, 12.

⁷ Gordan D. Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Hendrickson Publisher, Peabody, Mass., 1988), 200.

by six infinitives (the words in bold) with a sixth infinitive to be understood. This is then followed by a participial phrase (“showing all courtesy”) that could be taken as another command or as pointing to the manner in which all the duties listed are to be carried out or expressed or even to the results that occur when these duties are obeyed. But how are we to understand these duties? Do they all point to the Christian’s responsibilities to government or does “to be prepared for every good work” make a transition from one’s civic responsibilities to government to one’s duties as a good citizen within the world? As Fee suggests, “More likely this is a generalizing imperative that prepares the way for the rest of the list. It could include civic duty, but need not be so limiting.” In this study, the duties of verses 1-2 will be divided between responsibilities to government (vs. 1) and those to all people as good citizens (vs. 2).

Responsibilities to Government (3:1)

3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.

As other New Testament passages do, this verse clearly points to the God-ordained place of human government in the affairs of men (cf. Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13). Here the apostle simply summarizes three key responsibilities—**submission**, **obedience**, and **preparation**—that promote good government and aid the work of governmental officials as keepers of law and order, which is their God-ordained task. But being faithful to these duties to government is often difficult because, being sinful men and also part of Satan’s world system, rulers are very often corrupt and unjust and fail to accomplish God’s purpose for government. It is easy, then, for Christians to fall into the pattern of the world and to malign and complain and act in rebellion against the government or to find excuses and seek ways to get around government’s authority or their duties to government. As Barclay points out,

Here there is laid down the public duty of the Christian; and it is advice which was particularly relevant to the people of Crete. The Cretans were notoriously turbulent and quarrelsome and impatient of all authority. Polybius, the Greek historian, said of them that they were constantly involved in “insurrections, murders and internecine wars.”⁸

Hendriksen concurs and writes,

Moreover, from the writings of Polybius and of Plutarch it appears that the Cretans were fretting and fuming under the Roman yoke. It is *possible*, therefore, that this circumstance had something to do with the precise nature of the present “reminder.”⁹

So Titus is called on to “remind them” of their duties to government. Because of the historical circumstances just mentioned and because Paul had obviously already taught the Cretan believers on this subject, Titus was to remind them. “Remind” is a present imperative that commands Titus to periodically repeat such teaching to cause them to keep these duties in mind. As those who are responsible to protect and lead the flock of God, church leaders and teachers of the Word often need to remind believers of God’s truth and never apologize for this. Note the following passages.

3:1 Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! To write this again is not a bother for me, and it is a safeguard for you (Phil. 3:1).

1:12 Therefore, I intend to remind you constantly of these things even though you know them and are well established in the truth that you now have. **1:13** Indeed, as long as I am in this tabernacle, I consider it right to stir you up by way of a reminder (2 Pet. 1:12-13).

The first duty is “to be subject.” This is *hupatassō*, “to rank under” and then “to be subject to.” As with 2:5, the voice of the verb should be understood as middle, “subject yourselves to.” The middle voice

⁸ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 2nd ed, 1960), 296.

⁹ William Hendriksen, *A Commentary on I & II Timothy and Titus* (The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1957), 386.

in place of the passive stresses the willing nature of the submission. Recognizing this as a divine responsibility, it is to be done willingly as an obedience to God (Rom. 13:1f). It will also be made easier if believers keep in mind the purpose of government as outlined in Romans 13 and if they pray for their rulers according to that purpose (1 Tim. 2:1f).

The apostle uses two abstract terms to designate government without pointing to any specific form of government or person.¹⁰ “To rulers” would apply to the Roman emperors, but by further application, it refers to the supreme civil powers in any form of government. “And authorities” takes this to the next level under the supreme commanders’ authority. It refers to deputies of the supreme ruler in the chain of command in any government system. For us, these two designations would refer to everything from the president down to the city government and local police.

“To be obedient” and “ready for every good work” gives further clarification to the meaning and results of “submission” to government as good citizens. “To be obedient” is *peitharcheō*, which literally means, “to obey authority” and then simply, “to be obedient.” Its use points to the various laws established by government. Significantly, it is used only four times in the New Testament (Acts 5:29, 32; 27:21 and Tit. 3:1) and in two of the places (Acts 5:29, 32), its use points us to the exception and the rule that holds true whenever human government clearly contradicts the higher authority of God and the clear commands of His Word. A classic illustration can be seen in Daniel 3:16-18.

The practical outworking of obedience would include things like paying taxes, being orderly in behavior, displaying honesty in business, and in general, obeying the laws of the land. But submission to government and being a good citizen does not stop with just obedience. It should also include being “ready (*hetoimos*, “ready, prepared”) for every good work.” Because of the context, this clause should not be limited to good works in the Christian community, but understood as broadening the believer’s responsibility in the world around him as an influence for good in the community. It would certainly include civic responsibility, but should not be limited to that in view of the context that follows (vs. 2).

There is an important contrast here that we should not miss. The fact that Christians can and should be prepared for every kind of good work stands in sharp contrast to the false teachers and the error they advocate. They are “unfit (unqualified, worthless) for any good work” (1:16) because what they advocate or teach is empty, they themselves become “useless and empty (futile)” (3:9). By contrast, believers who stand firmly on God’s truth in Christ rather than the “arguments” and “quarrels” of the false teacher, can become “ready for every good work.” Paul now begins to elaborate on what is meant by “every good work” in the verses that follow.

Responsibilities to All People (3:2)

3:2 They must not slander anyone, but be peaceable, gentle, showing complete courtesy to all people.

The addition of “anyone,” literally, “no one,” which is emphatic by position, suggests that the apostle is broadening this beyond the rulers to include all people. “To slander” is *blasphēmēō*, “to slander, revile, defame, to injure the reputation of by slanderous remarks.” As Hiebert points out, “That does not mean that they are never to talk of and expose the evils of men, for Jesus Himself did so very forcefully. It means that they are not to malign, slander, or speak injuriously of others. Prevailing practices made this a constant snare to believers...”¹¹

In view of the degenerate moral behavior of many in our government in recent years, especially at the level of our highest office, it has become more and more difficult to refrain from abusive comments. It is right to hate the sin, to even become angry at the sinfulness that undermines the fiber of our society and that sets such a lousy example (cf. Eph. 4:26), but it is wrong for us to express this in ways that demonstrates hatefulness against the person and disrespect for the office. As verses 3-5 will demonstrate,

¹⁰ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1957), 65.

¹¹ Hiebert, 66.

God hates our sin, but in the coming of Christ, He has shown His kindness and love toward us as sinners. This demonstration of God's love and kindness must temper our comments and attitudes toward others.

"To be peaceable," is *amachos*, which literally means, "not fighting, uncontentious, non-combatant." While "peaceable" is the dynamic equivalent and the goal in mind, it misses the force of *amachos*. Paul could have used *eirēnikos* (from *eirēnē*, "peace"), which means "peaceable, peaceful." *Machē* means "a fight, a quarrel, strife, contention." So an *amachos* person is one who is not prone to fighting or starting quarrels. This does not mean that a Christian, as a good citizen, will not be ready to stand up for the principles he believes in and even give reasons for the hope that is in him (1 Pet. 3:15), but he is willing to allow others to hold to their opinions and is not one who is always ready to step into the ring with those who disagree with him. Those who are contentious and quarrelsome with their neighbors not only make poor citizens but poor testimonies for the Savior.

But as usual, the negative is quickly followed up with the positive and it is the next two qualities that give a person the capacity to be uncontentious. The Christian is also "to be gentle." This is *epieikēs*, "yielding, gentle, kind."

Aristotle said of this word that it denotes "indulgent consideration of human infirmities." That it denotes the ability "to consider not only the letter of the law, but also the mind and intention of the legislator." The man who is *epieikēs* is ever ready to temper justice with mercy, and to avoid the injustice which often lies in being strictly just.¹²

In essence, then, the *epieikēs* person is the opposite of the one who stands up to the very end for his or her legal rights. Behind this is undoubtedly the spirit of grace and mercy we are to show others just as God has done for us. The apostle will appeal to this in verses 4-7.

"Showing complete courtesy to all people" is the final positive quality that describes the good Christian citizen. As mentioned previously, "showing" is a present participle that could be taken as another command or as pointing to the manner in which all the duties listed are to be carried out or expressed or even to the results that occur when the previous duties are obeyed. "Courtesy" is the Greek *prautēs*, "gentleness, meekness, courtesy, considerateness." After discussing Aristotle's comments on this word, Barclay describes it as follows.

... We might put it this way—the man who is *praus* is the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time.

That brings us to the use of *praus* which really illumines the whole matter. In Greek *praus* is used in one special sense. It is used—as is *mitis* in Latin—for a beast which has been tamed. A horse which was once wild but which has become obedient to the bit and to the bridle is *praus*.

Now herein lies the secret of the meaning of *praus*. There is a gentleness in *praus* but behind the gentleness there is the strength of steel, for the supreme characteristic of the man who is *praus* is that he is the man who is under perfect control. It is not a spineless gentleness, a sentimental fondness, a passive quietism. It is a strength under control. Num. 12:3 tells us that Moses was the 'meekest' man upon the earth, but that same Moses was a man who could act with decision and blaze with anger when the occasion arose.

To such a character no man can attain by himself and his own efforts. *Proatēs* is strength under control, but it would be wrong to say that the man who is *praus* is perfectly *self-controlled*. He is perfectly *God-controlled*, for only God can give him that perfect

¹² Barclay, 297.

mastery. It should be our prayer that God will make us *praus*, masters of ourselves, for only then can we be the servants of others.¹³

Biblically and logically, the Christian can experience such qualities only as they walk by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit so that the Savior is free to reign more and more supreme in his or her life.

The Reasons for Living as Good Citizens in the World (3:3-7)

Verse 3 begins with the conjunction “for” (omitted by the NIV). This shows that Paul is pointing to the reasons why Christians should obey the duties outlined in verses 1-2 and for living a life that is different from that of the world. The first of the two reasons given is a reminder of what we were before coming to the Savior with the second reason focusing on the kindness and love of God as the powerful source that leads to the change brought about in the Christian’s life. In these verses we see the truth that, as George Whitefield so accurately put it when he saw a criminal going to the gallows, “there but for the grace of God go I.”

The Remembrance of the Believer’s Past Condition in Sin (3:3)

3:3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Remembering what we used to be before coming to Christ should be a strong motive for obedience to God and for being more understanding (uncontentious, gentle, courteous) toward the unbeliever. The tendency is to become pharisaic and look down on those whose lifestyle is not like ours. There should be a moral difference, but the issue is not the moral difference, rather the cross is what made the difference. To stress this, Paul uses terms to stress the change. The “for we too were once” of verse 3 must be seen in the light of “but when the kindness of God appeared.” But for the grace work of God, we would still be in the same predicament as the unbelieving world, a predicament graphically described by the apostle.

First, the apostle says, “we too (or also).” By the “we,” which is emphatic in the Greek text, Paul includes himself. This demonstrates the common ground of all Christians regardless of their religious background in the description here of the past life. This is especially significant since Paul had been a very religious person. Unless one’s religious life is based on the cross or faith in the person and work of the Savior, no religion can save us from what we are as sinners.

Second, he says, “we too (or also) were foolish.” “Foolish” is *anoētos*, “unintelligent, foolish, without understanding.” It is used here of the spiritual blindness of men before coming to Christ and the enlightening work of the Spirit of God. Because of man’s spiritual death, the blinding work of Satan (2 Cor. 4:4), and his condition in sin, fallen man cannot fathom the spiritual things of God (1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:18). This is the root—or at least part of it—while the next conditions, “disobedient, misled, etc.,” point to some of the results.

“Disobedient” is *apeithēs*, and it is part of a word group in Greek that is basically concerned with one’s personal relationship with a person or thing which is established by trust and trustworthiness.¹⁴ The problem is one of disobedience to both God and human authority, failing to obey the laws of conscience or the voice of parents or laws of human government. Fundamentally, the root of disobedience to God is unbelief or a failure to be persuaded by the message of God’s truth through natural revelation (Rom. 1:18f) and the special revelation of the Bible. It is this that ultimately leads to disobedience in the other chains of authority in society.

¹³ William Barclay, *New Testament Words, Combining a New Testament Wordbook and More New Testament Words* (SCM Press LTD, Bloomsbury Street, London, 1964), 241-242.

¹⁴ Colin Brown, General Editor, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, 1986), electronic edition.

What follows describes the pitiful results of this spiritual blindness and a disobedience that is related to a lack of trust in God. This is not only suggested theologically, but by the use of several adverbial participles that follow and may very well point out the results, the downward spiral of pre-conversion blindness and rebellion. We could translate verse 3 as follows:

For we also at one time were without understanding ourselves, disobedient, *with the result that we were* **deceived, enslaved** to various lusts and pleasures, **spending our life** in malice and envy, hateful, **hating** one another.

“Misled” is a present passive participle from *planaō*, “to lead astray, cause to wander,” but in the passive it means “be misled, deceived.” The middle is also possible here, “deceiving ourselves.” When men reject the knowledge of God, He turns them over to their own foolish imaginations with the result they are not only deceived, but that they both deceive themselves and others (see Rom. 1:18f; Eph. 4:17f; 2 Tim. 3:13). This pictures the unbeliever as one who has been deceived or led stray from the path of truth by the various false systems of belief and deceptions of Satan and his world system.

“Enslaved to various passions and desires” takes this to the next downward level. “Passion” and “desire” are not wrong in themselves. The evil comes when they enslave us and when they are outside the will of God. Sexual pleasure is a beautiful gift from God—but only in the confines of marriage. God has given us all things to enjoy but they become wrong when we make them our god and seek from them what only God can truly give us (1 Tim. 6:17-18).

Interestingly, “desires” is the Greek *hēdonē*, “pleasure, enjoyment.” “Hedonism,” the philosophy that only what is pleasant or has pleasant consequences is intrinsically good, comes from this Greek term. Ironically, one of man’s greatest misconceptions, as a further product of his own blindness and spiritual unbelief, is the false belief that happiness and security can be found through his own strategies to make life work—through having possessions, power, praise, position, and pleasure. Such a false and futile belief system leads to enslavement. The downward spiral resulting in enslavement to various passions is seen even more clearly in Ephesians 4.

17 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness (Eph. 4:17-19, NASB).

“Spending our lives in evil and envy” is a further graphic depiction of the downward spiral and of our pre-salvation condition. The resultant sphere in which man spends his life is emphasized in the Greek text. Literally, “in evil and envy, spending our lives.” “Evil” is *kakia*, “wickedness, depravity, malignity.”¹⁵ It stands opposed to moral goodness and excellence. “Envy” (*phathonos*, “envy, jealousy”) flows out of that mentality in man that is never satisfied with what he has. When men live by the belief system that happiness is found in the abundance of what one possesses, the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence, the neighbor’s side—his or her car, spouse, boat, house, furniture and on the list goes. Envy and jealousy begrudges another their good fortune and leads to the next part of the description.

This is seen in the words, “hateful and hating one another.” “Hateful” is *stugatos*, found only here in the New Testament. It means “hateful” or “hated.” Some have described it as being “odious, repulsive, offensive, and disgusting to others.”¹⁶ The further result is “hating one another.” “Hating one another” “marks the climax in the active operation of mutual antagonisms that hasten the dissolution of the bonds of human society.”¹⁷

¹⁵ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1973), 227.

¹⁶ Hendriksen, 388, D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Expositors’ Bible Commentary* (Frank E. Gaebelein, General Editor, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992), electronic edition.

¹⁷ Hiebert, electronic edition.

The preceding description, Paul reminds us, is what we all were at one time. This realization must, then, temper our attitudes toward the unbelieving world. Let us not expect from them what we were not ourselves before God saved us as described next in the passage. Thus, our further responsibility is to strive by our walk and words to win the lost to the Savior. That, and that alone, is the only answer to a sick society.

The Realization of the Believer's New Condition as the Recipient of God's Kindness (3:4-7)

3:4 But “when the kindness of God our Savior appeared and his love for mankind, **3:5** He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, **3:6** whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior. **3:7** And so, since we have been justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life.”

In these verses, the apostle again teaches us that the only cure for the darkness that has engulfed the world and that once engulfed us is the appearing of the Sun of Righteousness who has not only come to dispel the darkness, but has come with spiritual healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2). And unless the Christian community understands this, we will, as previously stressed, try to fight the moral degeneration of our culture with the weapons of the world. Indeed, many are attempting to use Christianity as a base for moral change without taking people to the foot of the cross and faith in Christ, which is alone the true foundation for change.

... But unless we understand the deeper reasons for our nation's love affair with violence, immorality, and drugs, we will not be effective in our primary mission and will lose the moral war as well. I agree with T. S. Elliot, who wrote, “To justify Christianity because it provides a foundation for morality for the general culture instead of showing the necessity of Christian morality from the truth of Christianity is a very dangerous inversion. It is not enthusiasm but dogma that differentiates a Christian from a pagan Society.”¹⁸

Clearly, the apostle affirms this fact in these verses. He shows us that it is the truth of the Lord Jesus in His life, death, and resurrection that is the foundation for the change that occurred in the life of the Cretan believers. Though God uses such change as a witness to the world, it is always the cross or the truth as it is found in Christ that is the root of change.

The Realization of the Kindness and Love of God Our Savior (vs. 4)

3:4 But “when the kindness of God our Savior appeared and his love for mankind...”

In verse 3, the apostle referred to what we were which implies that this is not, however, what we are now. This change can only be explained by the divine intervention of God. The source of such a change is in God alone. We are the recipients of what He initiated as a Savior God (cf. Ps. 65:5; 68:19; 79:9; 85:4).

Thus again, as in 2:11, the apostle used the term *epephanē*, the aorist form of the verb *epiphainō*, “to appear, show forth.” It looks back to the historic manifestation of the incarnate Christ. Our word *epiphany* comes from this term. As previously seen, this term was used of the appearance of the sun which gives light dispelling the darkness. In other words, it is the realization of what God has done in the appearing of Christ that is now pointed to as the greatest motivation and source of enablement to live productive lives amidst the world. This manifestation of the incarnate Christ who came to die for our sin and bring salvation is the greatest evidence of the kindness and love of God our Savior for man.

“Kindness” (*chrēstotēs*) refers to God's “goodness, excellence, uprightness, or generosity.” It speaks of a disposition to be gracious and to bless. “Love of God” (*philanthrōpia*) “love for man, kindness.” In

¹⁸ Lutzer, 137.

this context, it naturally refers to God's love for man as expressed in the appearing of the incarnate Christ who came to die for our sin and bring us into an eternal relationship with God (see Rom. 5:8).

Indeed, the appearing of Christ revealed God's kindness and love and His nature and intent as a Savior God who deeply cares about man. But many unbelievers are cynical about such a statement.

God cares about the world.

That statement lies at the heart of the Christian faith. But many unbelievers do not want to hear what we have to say because they believe that the God of Christianity is indifferent to the sufferings of this planet. They believe the gods of New Age religion, the gods of the East, are more compatible with our plight because these deities do not claim omnipotence. A god who resides within us can hardly be responsible for the evils of the world. But the Christian God—the Being who exists independently of the universe, a personal being who answers prayer and supposedly created the universe in the first place—such a being is more culpable. A God who sees human suffering and fails to intervene is hardly worthy of worship....

We cannot get a hearing from a cynical world unless we can show that God cares, and that because He cares, people matter. False religions proliferate because of cynicism—the conviction that the Christian God has proven to be indifferent to the world's plight. Even those who would like to believe conclude that God isn't benevolent, and sadly, it appears as if His followers aren't either. Many people find Christians to be judgmental, self-serving, and unwilling to be uprooted from their comfortable lifestyles....

Only at the cross do we see the love of God without ambiguity. Here is God's farthest reach, His most ambitious rescue effort. God personally came to our side of the chasm, willing to suffer for us and with us. At the cross His love burst upon the world with unmistakable clarity....¹⁹

May we not forget that the behavior called for in 3:1-2 that expresses itself in gentleness and meekness has its root in the realization of God's love for the world.

The Realization that Salvation Is According to God's Mercy, Not Human Works (vss. 5-6)

3:5 He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, **3:6** whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior.

The fact that God had to send His own Son into the world to die for our sin should bring the realization that salvation could never be accomplished by human works or any meritorious religious system. If we could in any way work to accomplish our own salvation, the appearing of Christ on the scene of human history would have been an act of futility. That salvation is not by human effort of any sort is strongly stressed by the word order of the Greek text. Literally, the text reads, "Not by works, those²⁰ in righteousness which we ourselves have done, but (by strong contrast) according to His mercy, He saved us."

As Paul often does, he states the basis of salvation both negatively and positively to make his point.

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not of works, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

¹⁹ Lutzer, 99-101.

²⁰ Paul uses the Greek article as a relative pronoun here to more pointedly sharpen the focus on the issue.

... and be found in him, not because of having my own righteousness derived from the law, but because of having the righteousness that comes by way of Christ's faithfulness—a righteousness from God that is based on Christ's faithfulness (Phil. 3:9).

He is the one who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not based on our works but on his own purpose and grace, granted to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made visible through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

First, then, salvation is not by human works whether they be religious, moral, social or whatever form of righteous behavior a person might engage in. This would include things like the sacraments of penance, water baptism, the Eucharist, self-denial, the observance of religious days or even, as in the context of Titus, good works done for others (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14). Though this letter calls for good works and though Paul has just pointed to the believer's changed condition, he makes it clear that "...our present condition of new life is not due to any deed which we performed in the realm of righteousness. The product of our lives could bring only the verdict of guilty when tried by the demands of God and His Law..."²¹

Second, salvation is based on the mercy of God. This last clause which is literally, "but according to His mercy, He saved us," begins with the conjunction *alla*, which expresses the strongest kind of contrast. It serves to stress the basis of salvation as not of man and wholly of God's mercy. "According" is the preposition *kata*, which may point to the standard or norm which governs something and which is often at the same time the reason or cause for what is done.²² The point is that which governs the saving work of God is His mercy, not our works regardless of their nature. "Mercy" is *eleos*, "mercy, compassion, pity." As *grace* stresses the free gift of God's salvation as the unmerited favor of God, so *mercy* stresses the pitiable condition of man or God's pity for man's sad condition which man cannot assuage because he is totally helpless to deal with his sinfulness and misery. The appearance of the Savior on the scene of human history gives no glory to man, but points instead to God, to His goodness, love, grace, and mercy.

Third, salvation is an accomplished fact. The words, "He saved us" clearly point to our salvation as an accomplished fact. "He saved us" is a tense in the Greek (an aorist) which points to a fact of history. Indeed, in view of the clear teaching of the New Testament, it points to an accomplished and finished work of God on our behalf through the death and resurrection of Christ. Here is an act that, by contrast to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, need never be repeated. It is a finished, once and for all work (see Heb. 9:1-15, especially vs. 12).

It might again be pointed out that in Paul's theology, the saving work of Christ encompasses not only deliverance from sin's penalty and the guarantee of heaven, but the provision for sanctification or spiritual growth in Christ-like change—a change that takes place from the inside out because we are made new spiritual creations in Christ. Thus, Paul immediately points us to the means by which this salvation is accomplished.

Fourth, the means of salvation is seen in the words, "by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (3:5b-6a). Paul is not here ignoring or bypassing the death and resurrection of Christ which is at the heart of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1f). Instead, his reference to this work of the Spirit assumes the death and resurrection of Christ as the foundation for the gift and ministries of the Spirit as a part of the provision of salvation (see John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 2; Tit. 3:6).

But how are we to understand "the washing of regeneration"? For many, the mention of anything that might be associated with water is immediately seen as a reference to water baptism. As a result, this is another of those passages used to teach baptismal regeneration or that water baptism is necessary for

²¹ Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles, Studies in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1958, 1982), 233.

²² Walter Bauer, Wilbur F. Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker (BAGD), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979), electronic media.

salvation. But such an interpretation should be seen as strange in view of two important facts. First, the immediate context has stressed this salvation is not by works, those in righteousness that we have done. Second, the vast majority of Scripture teaches us that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. To add some human work to this is to contradict these clear passages. The rule is that the difficult must be understood in the light of the clear, especially when they are in the vast majority. We must seek other solutions from the context regarding the meaning of those passage that appear to add something else to saving faith.

Not only does the context help here (not by works ... which we have done), but Greek grammar may also help us. The fact that there is one preposition used with both phrases, “by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,” suggests these are connected or somehow closely related to each other. Further, “of the Holy Spirit” is a subjective genitive, i.e., a renewal produced by the Holy Spirit. It obviously cannot be an objective genitive, “a renewal that produces the Holy Spirit.” It is the Holy Spirit who brings about the spiritual renewal through the work of spiritual regeneration. But what about the previous phrase, “of regeneration”? This could be an objective genitive, “a washing that produces regeneration” or a subjective genitive, “a washing (a spiritual cleansing) produced by regeneration.” Since both phrases are introduced by one preposition, are both connected by “and,” and since the Holy Spirit is the agent of renewal, the great probability is that we have here two parallel subjective genitives with the second as a further explanation of the first. Thus, the passage very likely means, “the washing (spiritual cleansing) produced by regeneration, even²³ the making new accomplished by the Holy Spirit.”

“Washing” is *loutron*, “a washing, a bath,” that which cleanses. The washing lays stress on the concept of the cleansing needed because of our defilement due to sin. But this should not be seen as a reference to water baptism but instead as a spiritual work of cleansing accomplished by the Holy Spirit based on the death of Christ. As Hendriksen points out,

...Note “through a washing” (*loutrovn, ou*), not “through a laver or basin for washing.” The washing referred to is wholly spiritual. It is that of *regeneration and renewing*, regarded as one concept.”²⁴

“Regeneration” is *palingenesia*, “rebirth, regeneration.” It is derived from *palin*, “again,” and *genesis*, “birth.” *Palingenesia* is used only twice in the New Testament, here in Titus and in Matthew 19:28. It means *to be born again*. In keeping with the Lord’s comments as seen in John 3:3, it means to be born either again or from above (*anōthen*). And it is the work of the Holy Spirit who imparts new life to the one who believes (John 3:5). It is used here of spiritual regeneration and refers to the giving of a new life. The two powers that produce the new life are “the word of truth” (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23) and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6; Tit. 3:5). Ephesians 5:26 explains *loutron*, “the washing,” as a cleansing “by the washing of water with the word.”

God regenerates (John 1:13) according to His will (James 1:18) through the Holy Spirit (John 3:5) when a person believes (1:12) the Gospel as revealed in the Word (1 Peter 1:23).²⁵

As Evans points out,

Regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life; a new creation; the production of a new thing. It is Gen. 1:26 over again. It is not the old nature altered, reformed, or reinvigorated, but a new birth from above. This is the teaching of such passages as John 3:3-7; 5:21; Eph. 2:1, 10; 2 Cor. 5:17.

²³ The two clauses are connected by “and,” the Greek *kai*, which can mean, “even.” This is the ascensive use of *kai* which further develops the previous statement as determined by the context.

²⁴ Hendriksen, 391.

²⁵ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Victory Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1986), electronic media.

By nature man is dead in sin (Eph. 2:1); the new birth imparts to him new life—the life of God, so that henceforth he is as those that are alive from the dead; he has passed out of death into life (John 5:24).²⁶

“Renewing” is *anakainōsis* from *ana*, “back” or “again” and *kainos*, “new in quality or kind” but not necessarily new in time. While some see this as a reference to the ongoing sanctifying work of the Spirit, it seems best, as explained previously, to see *regeneration* and *renewing* as one concept. While the concept of the sanctification process may be the focus of *renewal* in other passages (Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:16), that does not seem to be the point in this context. That this is true is supported by the statement of verse 7 which literally reads, “in order that, having been justified (pointing to the cause) by the grace of that one (speaking of Jesus Christ our Savior just mentioned), we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Paul is talking about salvation (vs. 5) from the standpoint of justification which is the basis for eternal life and becoming heirs of God Himself and all of this as a work of God, not man. Therefore:

The impartation of the Holy Spirit makes us new creatures, in contrast to the old condition of life. The Spirit has been bestowed through Christ, who also is called “our Saviour” here. Thus all Persons of the Trinity are involved in the salvation of sinners. The washing and the making new are the two basic elements of our regeneration, both of which are the work of God.²⁷

Towner seems to agree and writes:

Rebirth and *renewal* describe the work of the Spirit. *Rebirth* is a coming back to life from death, an apt description of the new life in contrast to the old one of sin and death (v. 3; on the Spirit and [re]birth see Gal 4:29; 1 Cor 4:15 with 2:4). As explained in Romans 6:4-11 and Philippians 3, by faith in Christ one is enabled to participate in Christ’s resurrection life even now. *Renewal* expresses almost synonymously the idea of “re-creation” (compare 2 Cor 5:17). These two terms bring together the whole change associated with conversion and life in the new age of salvation—restored fellowship with God and new, eternal life.²⁸

The Realization of the Possessions of Salvation (vss. 6b-7)

... whom (the Holy Spirit) He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. And so, since we have been justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life.

First, we have the gift of the Spirit poured out richly by the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ our Savior (see John 14:16-17; 15:26-27; Acts 1:4-5). This has a dual effect or force. First, Paul associates the gift of the Spirit as a proof of salvation or justification (Rom. 8:9). He is God’s earnest or down payment of the future glories of salvation (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:14). But second, the Holy Spirit is God’s gift to enable believers to live the Christian life through the ministries of the Spirit in the process of sanctification (Gal. 5:16f; Eph. 5:18f). By mentioning the rich bestowment of the Spirit, the apostle assures us that we have the capacity to do good works and to witness to others by life and lip or walk and talk (Acts 1:8).

So second, we have been justified by His grace. This is seen as the basis or reason we can be confident of being heirs with the hope of eternal life. “Since we have been justified” is an adverbial participle of cause or reason. We have eternal life and are heirs of God because we have been justified. The term “justified” (*dikaioō*) in this context means “to declare or pronounce as righteous.” Justification is the act of God by which He imputes our sins to Christ and His perfect righteousness to be ours so that we stand acquitted before God and accepted by Him, complete in Christ. But again, lest we miss the point, Paul

²⁶ William Evans, *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1974), electronic media.

²⁷ Kent, 234-235.

²⁸ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, Series Editor, Grant R. Osborne, consulting ed., D. Stuart Briscoe, Haddon Robinson (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1994), 257.

adds, “by His grace.” Literally, “by the grace of that one,” which is somewhat more emphatic involving the emphatic use of the demonstrative pronoun *ekeinos*.

Finally, as justified believers, we are heirs according to the hope of eternal life. We must not understand this to mean that we do not have eternal life now. Eternal life is a permanent possession given when one trusts in the person and work of the Savior who died for our sin and was raised as evidence of our justification. The point is that the possession of eternal life brings with it the hope (the confident expectation) that we are heirs of God. An “heir” (*klēronomos*) refers to one who, as a son, receives something as a possession from his father. A careful study of the concept of our *inheritance* suggests that there are two aspects of being heirs.

...The inheritance in the Bible is either our relationship with God as a result of justification or something in addition to justification, namely a greater degree of glorification in heaven as a result of our rewards. As is always the case in interpretation, the context of each usage must determine meaning in that context...²⁹

In this context with the focus on our justification, what is inherited is eternal life itself and having an eternal relationship with God as His children.

Hope (*elpis*) may refer to the activity, *hoping*, or to the object hoped for, the *content* of one’s hope. By its very nature, hope may stress two things: (1) futurity and or (2) invisibility. It deals with things we cannot see or haven’t received or both (cf. Rom. 8:24-25).

Biblically, from the standpoint of the object hoped for, *hope* is often synonymous with salvation and its many blessings as promised in Scripture, *past*, *present*, and *future*. As in our context here in Titus, this is true even with what we have already received as believers because these blessings come under the category of what we cannot see, at least with our physical eyes (see Rom. 8:24-25). We may see or experience some of the results, but it still requires faith and hope. As an illustration, we do not see the justifying work of God, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to our account, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when we are saved, our co-union with Christ, or the eternal life God’s gives us. We believe these things to be realities, but this is still a matter of our hope. We believe in the testimony of God in the Word and this results in the confident expectation that all this is true.

The Re-affirmation for Good Works in the World (3:8)

3:8 This saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on such truths, so that those who have placed their faith in God may be intent on engaging in good works. These things are good and beneficial for all people.

“This saying is trustworthy” is a formula common in the Pastoral epistles (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11). Here it looks directly back to the majestic doctrinal truths of verses 4-7. With verse 8, the apostle again directly addresses Titus, but as before, undoubtedly with the Cretans in mind.

Because the content of these verses are so trustworthy, Titus and all teachers and church leaders have a very important responsibility, one in keeping with the theme of this letter and its focus on good works. When Paul wrote, “I want you to insist on such truths” he was not just expressing a mere desire. “I want” is *boulomai*, which is a stronger expression than the more frequent *thelō*, “I desire, will.” *Boulomai* expresses decisions of the will that occur after previous deliberation or careful thought.³⁰ The reason, of course, is the enablement and motivation that such truth brings when properly grasped or understood.

Titus’ responsibility was to “insist on such truths.” “Insist” is *diabebaiomai*, “to speak confidently, to affirm, to insist.” The teacher of God’s Word can and should speak confidently and insist on the trustworthiness of the glorious truth God’s gracious salvation as expressed in verses 4-7. This naturally

²⁹ Joseph C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Schoettle Publishing Co. Hayesville, NC, 1992), 90-91.

³⁰ BAGD, electronic media.

necessitates a clear understanding of these truths plus a firm conviction of their reality. Why is it so important to confidently affirm them? Because there is no message more important or with greater ramifications for all mankind. For both for time and for eternity.

The immediate purpose Paul had in mind was the promotion of godly behavior in believers. This is seen in the words, “so that those who have placed their faith in God may be intent on engaging in good works.” Several important truths are evident here.

First, the promotion of good works via the affirmation of this truth is for “those who have placed their faith (believed or trusted) in God.” “Have placed their faith” is a perfect active participle of the verb *pisteuō*, “to believe, trust.” The use of the perfect stresses the present state of affairs as a result of past action, that of trusting in Christ. Thus, it stresses the present relationship of one who trusts in God, naturally, of course, through faith in Christ. Trusting in God implies knowing something about Him and living in dependence on Him. Thus, this is a call for good deeds, but never apart from personal relationship and a spirit of faith/dependence on God through the Holy Spirit already spoken of in verses 5-6.

Second, such a relationship of trust should manifest itself in a changed mind set, one “intent on engaging in good works. “Intent” is *phrontizō*, “to think of, be intent on, be careful or concerned about.” This word is found only here in the New Testament, but it is used often in the papyri and other non-literary sources for the idea of being careful or taking heed to do something like carefully following instructions. Again, the new relationship the believer has with God through Christ and His Word introduces us to a holy God who wants to use us to manifest His character to a fallen world.

Third, the object of this focus or new mind set is seen in the words, “engaging in good works.” “Engage” is an interesting term. It’s an infinitive of the verb *proistēmi*, “be at the head, lead, direct, manage” and then, “be concerned for, care for, busy oneself with, engage in.”³¹ But the prominent use in the New Testament is that of some form of leadership of those who stand out in front whether of church leaders or of a father who manages his own household (Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17). Therefore, Kent is probably right when he writes:

Persons who have put their faith in our Savior God are expected to take the lead in good works. *Proistasthai* means to stand before, preside, superintend, take the lead. (The ASV margin, “profess honest occupations” seems to be unwarranted, since all other uses of this verb in the New Testament are with the usual sense.). Christian faith is intended to change human lives. Christians are to be lights in the world. They should be in the forefront in good works, not dragging their feet while others take the lead. Of course, good works must be the fruit of faith, not a substitute for it.³²

Finally, the apostle does not describe the “good works” in view, but this undoubtedly refers to the kind of character mentioned throughout the book, especially at the beginning of chapter three.

The motive for this admonition of verse 8a is spelled out in the words, “These things are good and beneficial for all people.” “These things” refer to the good deeds, but perhaps also the affirmation of the doctrinal teaching that must form the foundation for good deeds.

“Good” is *kalos*, which Barclay describes as “The Word of Winsomeness.”³³ It’s an important word in the NT occurring 101 times.

Wherever this word is found there is the idea of loveliness, of attractiveness, of graciousness, of that which delights the heart and gives pleasure to the eyes.

Further, *kalos* is the adjective which implies love and admiration. Her citizens who love her called Athens *the Beautiful (kalos)*...

³¹ BAGD, electronic media.

³² Kent, 236.

³³ Barclay, 151.

Still further, although *kalos* has this essential idea of beauty, it also has the idea of *usefulness*. The beauty which *kalos* describes is not merely decorative; it is also useful to men. So Homer, describing Phaeacia, says: ‘A *fair (kalos)* harbour lies on each side of the city’ (*Odyssey* t.263). He uses it of a *favourable* wind. “They embarked and set sail from broad Crete with North wind blowing fresh and *fair (kalos)*’ (*Odyssey* 14.299)....

Kalos in Greek also means *beautiful* and *honourable* in the *moral* sense. Homer, speaking of rapacious men, says: ‘It is not *honourable (kalos)* or just to robe the guest of Telemachus’ (*Okyssey* 20.294).³⁴

After discussing the use of *kalos* in classical Greek and in the papyri, Barclay had this to say about its use in the New Testament.

The Christian must be an example of, and zealous for, *good works* (Titus 2.7, 14). He must be anxious to produce *good works*, by which his life must be marked (Titus 3.8, 14). Christians must incite each other to love and *good works* (Heb. 10.24); and they must have a *good* conscience (Heb. 13.18).

Here is a use of the word *kalos* which sheds a flood of light on the Christian life. Clearly it is not enough that the Christian life should be good; it must also be attractive....

From this basic idea of the word *kalos* there follows an appeal which runs through the whole New Testament.... It stresses the fact that the best advocate of Christianity to the outsider is the sheer attractive loveliness of the life of the true Christian.³⁵

Thus, “good works” are also “beneficial for all people.” “Beneficial” is *ōphelimos*, “advantageous, useful, helpful, profitable.” But what exactly is the benefit Paul had in mind. Naturally, as people express love to one another through various good works, there is benefit to the person doing the good deeds as well as others around them like others members of the body of Christ, but Paul’s outlook is contextually broader than this.

For several reasons it is likely that Paul is speaking from a missionary concern for those outside the faith. First, the unambiguous reference to believers in the first half of verse 8 suggests that the reference to *everyone* at the end is primarily to unbelievers (the same contrast appears in 3:1-2). Then, as in 2:5, 7-8, 20-11 and 3:2, so also in this case: the importance of the visible attractiveness of the Christian life is that it might point others to belief in God. Paul’s thought is that since God’s love in Christ has transformed the lives of those who have believed (3:3-7), the manifestation of that love in their lives (3:1-2, 8) should have similar results in the lives of others. Mission is one of the primary reasons for the performance of the Christian life in the world.³⁶

As believers in Christ, God has called us to witness to the Savior by life and lip, but when we fail to live godly lives with a deep concern for good works that demonstrate our faith, then what we are or really what we fail to be (Christ-like) speaks so loudly others refuse to hear what we have to say.

There is a magnificent story in Marie Chapien’s book *Of Whom the World Was Not Worthy*. The book told of the sufferings of the true church in Yugoslavia where so much wrong has been perpetrated by the politicized ecclesiastical hierarchy. That which has gone on in the name of Christ for the enriching and empowering of corrupt church officials has been a terrible affront to decency.

One day an evangelist by the name of Jakov arrived in a certain village. He commiserated with an elderly man named Cimmerman on the tragedies he had experienced and talked to him of the love of Christ. Cimmerman abruptly interrupted

³⁴ Barclay, 152-153.

³⁵ Barclay, 156-157.

³⁶ Towner, 260.

Jakov and told him that he wished to have nothing to do with Christianity. He reminded Jakov of the dreadful history of the church in his town, a history replete with plundering, exploiting, and indeed with killing innocent people. “My own nephew was killed by them,” he said and angrily rebuffed any effort on Jakov’s part to talk about Christ. “They wear those elaborate coats and caps and crosses,” he said, “signifying a heavenly commission, but their evil designs and lives I cannot ignore.”

Jakov, looking for an occasion to get Cimmerman to change his line of thinking, said, “Cimmerman, can I ask you a question? Suppose I were to steal your coat, put it on, and break into a bank. Suppose further that the police sighted me running in the distance but could not catch up with me. One clue, however, put them onto your track; they recognized your coat. What would you say to them if they came to your house and accused you of breaking into the bank?”

“I would deny it,” said Cimmerman.

“‘Ah, but we saw your coat,’ they would say,” retorted Jakov. This analogy quite annoyed Cimmerman, who ordered Jakov to leave his home.

Jakov continued to return to the village periodically just to befriend Cimmerman, encourage him, and share the love of Christ, with him. Finally one day Cimmerman asked, “How does one become a Christian?” and Jakov taught him the simple steps of repentance for sin and of trust in the work of Jesus Christ and gently pointed him to the Shepherd of his soul. Cimmerman bent his knee on the soil with his head bowed and surrendered his life to Christ. As he rose to his feet, wiping his tears, he embraced Jakov and said, “Thank you for being in my life.” And then he pointed to the heavens and whispered, “You wear His coat very well.”³⁷

These verses, chapter 3:1-8 have dealt with the believer’s testimony in the world, a world that is divided politically, economically, religiously, culturally, racially, and domestically. In this fragmented world, God has called us to manifest His love through the gift of His Son in a way that not only brings people to a saving knowledge of Christ, but that demonstrates the power of the cross to bring people together in loving relationships. In his book, *Why the Cross Can Do What Politics Can’t*, Erwin Lutzer has a chapter that points to the cross as a power for reconciliation. His comments in a couple of paragraphs form a fitting close to the believer’s responsibility to manifest the power of the cross as God’s means of not only reconciliation with Him, but of reconciliation with one another.

In such a world, many relationships are either brief, high-intensity encounters which quickly burn themselves out, or casual interactions that do not fill the human desire for love and a lasting connection. Americans are, for the most part, a lonely lot, seeking to fill the void with the latest gadgets or entertainment venues. Deep relationships characterized by loyalty and commitment are few in number and little is done to encourage them. Thus our desires are unmet, and as a nation we keep turning to those solutions that only inflame greater unmet desires.

To where do we turn?

The church is called to model wholesome, caring relationships in a culture that no longer believes that such friendships are possible. Our calling is to eschew that part of our culture that is fueled by a radical individualism that selfishly seeks one’s own “good” at the expense of one’s neighbor. We have to prove that deep and loyal friendships can exist among those who otherwise have racial, cultural, and economic differences. In other words, we are to model oneness for which Christ prayed. It is at this very point that we should be most unlike the world.³⁸

³⁷ Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* (Word Publishers, Dallas: 1994), 101-102

³⁸ Lutzer, 119.

7: Final Instructions and Greetings to Titus (Titus 3:9-15)

Caution Regarding Certain Kinds of Discussions (3:9-11)

3:9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, quarrels, and fights about the law, because they are useless and empty. **3:10** Reject a divisive person after one or two warnings. **3:11** You know that such a person is twisted by sin and is conscious of it himself.

Sound or healthy teaching is one of the prominent themes of the pastoral epistles. Healthy teaching is teaching that is in line with the apostolic tradition and God's special revelation through His inspired writers (Luke 1:2; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 11:2; 15:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; Heb. 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 2:21; 2 Pet. 3:15-17; Jude 3, etc.). At the heart of this teaching is the gospel truth of the person and work of the Savior (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Tit. 2:11-14; 3:4-7). But the reason for this emphasis found over and over again in the pastorals is that only such healthy teaching is profitable and forms the foundation for a healthy faith and productive Christian living. Anything else is not only futile, but dangerous (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4 with 1:6 and 4:6 with 4:7 and 6:3 with 6:4-5; see also 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:23; 4:3-4; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1-2, 8).

Thus, having stressed the profitability of teaching that is centered in the person and work of the Savior (3:4-8), the apostle once again warns against the futility and worthlessness of the perverted (the non-biblical) opinions of man. Titus, the Cretans, and all of us will come in contact with false teachers and their teaching. While we are to be able to defend the faith and give a reason for the hope within us, we must not get involved in the wrong kind of discussions. Thus, Paul first warns against some of the various kinds of false teaching that Titus and all believers will face (vs. 9) and then gives abbreviated directions for handling these false teachers themselves (vss. 10-11).

The Perverted and Useless Teaching (vs. 9)

"But" introduces the reader to the contrast between what is important (the priority) and what must be avoided not only because of its uselessness, but because it is dangerous to the spiritual life. We should not be surprised because of Satan's character and his tactics. He "is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44) and though his ultimate goal is always to deceive, he and his servants often appear as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:3, 14-15). Consistently, he seeks to perpetuate one deception after another and always at the expense of the truth as it is found in God's special revelation. Let's remember:

He does not come as the devil, the adversary of God. He could have come to Adam and Eve revealing his terrifying fury and evil intentions. But he has no regard for truth in advertising. He comes under a disguise and without revealing who he really is. He changes himself into something he is not to deceive others. He does not come to frighten, but to soothe, to encourage, to instruct.¹

"Avoid" is *periistēmi*. In the active voice this verb means "to place around" or "to stand around." But in the middle voice as here, it carries the idea of "going around something in order to avoid it." As context suggests here, the middle voice stresses the subject's personal involvement and interest (one of deep concern and caution) in the action. Here is something we are to pay special attention to because of the various problems incurred when we do not. Finally, the verb is a present imperative of command calling for a continual attitude that seeks to avoid such useless discussions.

In the Greek text, the things to be avoided are placed before the verb as a means of emphasis. Four terms are used to describe this, but these are not four different errors of false teaching. Rather, they are four

¹ Erwin W. Lutzer, *The Serpent of Paradise* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1996), 42.

descriptions that together describe the nature of what Titus, the Cretans, and all believers may face. As was the case at Ephesus, the doctrinal nature of the problem was centered around mythological genealogies and arguments about the law by which these teachers were seeking to add legal demands (commands) for either salvation or sanctification or both (see 1 Tim. 1:4-8; Tit. 1:14). Let's now look at the four terms (Foolish controversies, Jewish myths, genealogies, and disputes about the law).

"Foolish controversies." "Controversies" is *zētēsis* from the verb *zēteō*, "to seek, search after, inquire into." *Zēteō* was used of philosophical inquiry in classical Greek as well as in the New Testament (see 1 Cor. 1:22; Acts 17:27). But it was also used of seeking God in prayer (Matt. 7:7-8), of seeking first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:32-33), and of seeking things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. The noun *zētēsis* could mean "investigation, inquiry" (see Acts 25:20) and while one might think the use of this term in the pastoral epistles (1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:9) would denote the investigation of religious and theological problems in search of the truth, it is best understood to have a different meaning in the pastorals.² As suggested by our context and its use for philosophical investigation, this word occurs in the New Testament with the idea of "controversy, dispute, debate" with the emphasis not on seeking the truth, but on the manner in which it is done. In John 3:25; Acts 15:2, 7, and in the pastorals, the stress seems to be on an exchange of words rather than a genuine search for truth. With this in mind, there is little wonder that Paul stresses time and again that discussions are useless, unprofitable, and incompatible with faith and productive Christian living.

Paul described "controversies" as foolish because this adjective describes one of the results of the doctrinal error being promoted. "Foolish" is the *moros*, "foolish, stupid," from which we get our term *moron*. No matter how brilliant or sophisticated or scholarly the proponents may appear, such discussions are foolish because they fail to seek the truth or heed the clear teachings of Scripture. As a result, these kinds of discussions become occupied with nonsense "like the problem whether Lot's wife as a pillar of salt, or one who has risen from the dead, will make unclean according to the laws of uncleanness through contact with the dead."³

"Jewish myths" (see 1:14), "genealogies" and "disputes about the law" (3:9) point us more precisely to the nature and source of the foolish and empty discussion. It concerned Jewish legendary and fictitious tales added to Old Testament history, legends about Adam, Moses, Elijah, and other Old Testament saints. But somehow fictitious additions were added to the genealogical trees of these and other Old Testament saints. Some have sought to link these with gnostic aeons as found in the teaching of Gnosticism as it was later developed, but such lists are never called "genealogies." Kittel's one volume theological dictionary has a good summary of the issues involved with these "genealogies" (*genealogiai*, the plural of *genealogia*).

... The only NT instances are in 1 Tim. 1:4 and Tit. 3:9. The meaning here is contested. The texts link the term with (Jewish) myths and therefore with Jewish Gnostics who claim to be teachers of the law (1 Tim. 1:7) but who do not truly keep the law (1:8), teaching human commandments instead (Tit. 1:14). The genealogies, then, are probably human ones taken from the OT and the reference in the phrase "myths and genealogies" is to the biblical history enriched by interpretations and additions.⁴

This poses a warning to all of us against those kinds of theological discussions that are not truly aimed at knowing the truth and its ramifications on faith and practice or on the impact that our theology should

² Walter Bauer, Wilbur F. Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979), electronic media.

³ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964, 2000), electronic media.

⁴ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), electronic media.

have on our daily walk with the Savior. Barclay has an excellent description on the historical background of these discussions that highlights their foolishness.

The second part of the passage warns against useless discussions. The Greek philosophers spent their time on their fine-spun problems. The Jewish Rabbis spent their time building up imaginary and deifying genealogies for the characters of the Old Testament. The Jewish scribes spent endless hours discussing what could and could not be done on the Sabbath, and what was and was not unclean. It has been said that there is a danger that a man may think himself religious because he discusses religious questions. There is a kind of discussion group which argues simply for the sake of arguing. There is a kind of group which will argue for hours about theological questions. It is much easier to discuss theological questions than it is to be kind and considerate and helpful at home, or efficient and diligent and honest at work. There is no virtue in sitting discussing deep theological questions when the simple tasks of the Christian life are waiting to be done. It is indeed true that such discussion can be nothing other than an evasion of Christian duties.

Paul was quite certain that the real task of the Christian lay in Christian action. That is by no means to say that there is no place for Christian discussion; but it is to say that the discussion which does not end in action is very largely wasted time.⁵

Obviously there is a place and need for biblical inquiry and discussion regarding the truth and the meaning of Scripture, but if the goal is proving one's point in an attempt to win an argument or to prove one's scholarship or protect one's scholarship before one's peers rather than Christ-like living, then we have missed the point and goal of the Bible. The apostle addressed this in 1 Timothy 1.

1:3 As I urged you when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay on in Ephesus to instruct certain people not to spread false teachings, **1:4** nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies. These promote useless speculations rather than God's redemptive plan that operates by faith. **1:5** But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. **1:6** Some have strayed from these and turned away to empty discussion. **1:7** They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not understand what they are saying or the things they insist on so confidently (1 Tim. 1:3-7).

The Perverted Advocates (vss. 10-11)

3:10 Reject a divisive person after one or two warnings. **3:11** You know that such a person is twisted by sin and is conscious of it himself.

As with the serpent in Genesis 3, Satan always has his messengers that he uses to perpetuate his lies. They may appear as angels of light or messengers of righteousness, but they are always up to no good (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Eve was deceived because she accepted the serpent's message even though what she was told contradicted God's original message. Perhaps she thought he was there to update them on how to interpret the previous revelation from God. The point is simple, however. Not only must we avoid the wrong kind of theological discussions that benefit no one (Tit. 3:9), we must not cater to the false teachers or those who do not abide by the text of Scripture or seek to go beyond the message of the Bible in those things the Bible addresses. By God's sovereign authority, God placed Adam and Eve in charge of the new creation and its creatures (see Gen. 1:26-28), not Satan who disguised himself behind the serpent (see Heb. 2:6-9). Because of this authority, one word of rejection from them could have sent Satan on his way, but because they listened to his lies and failed to rebuke him, they died spiritually, began to die physically, and came under Satan's authority and power as the new ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 2:14). Thus, in an abbreviated fashion, Paul gives directions for handling false teachers and those who are caught up with them in their teaching.

⁵ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 2nd ed., 1960), 303.

Paul's instruction for dealing with the false teachers and those attracted to such teaching consists of identifying their character and conduct and then the manner in which they are to be dealt with. They are to be dealt with on an individual and case-by-case basis.

First, they are *identified* as divisive. "Divisive" is *airetikos*, a causative adjective from *airesis*, which means "a sect, party, school" (Acts 5:17; 15:5), "a dissention, faction" (1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20), or "an opinion, dogma, heresy" as with "destructive opinions or heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). Thus, *airetikos* means "factious, causing divisions, heretical."⁶ "In Christianity it seems to have been used technically from the very first, and denotes the 'adherent of a heresy.'"⁷

In complete contrast to its use in cl. Gk. (where it means able to choose), *hairitikos* is used in biblical Gk. for the adherents of a *haireisis*, a heretic. In Tit. 3:10 we see the church's procedure for disciplining heretics, following Matt. 18:15 ff. and 2 Jn. 10.⁸

Second, Paul gives the *responsibility* which is two-fold. This may be an abbreviated form and reference to Matthew 18:15-17 and Luke 17:3.⁹ They are to be "warned" at least twice. "Warnings" is *nouthesia*, "admonition, warning, instruction." Something of the focus of this word may be found in Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians. One of the shepherding and caring functions of the leaders mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 is that of admonishing the flock. "Admonish" is *noutheteō*, the verb form of *nouthesia*. It means "to admonish, warn, instruct," but literally it means "to put into the mind." It might be used of general instruction, but it was often used where there were wrong tendencies that needed correcting as with these false teachers at Crete. It involves a moral appeal to the will, but an appeal aimed at bringing spiritual understanding through biblical instruction and the convicting power of the Spirit. There is a vital difference between biblical admonition from mere protest or reprimand and an admonition that is based on biblical instruction with the goal of correction through spiritual understanding and conviction. While the former is little more than verbal disapproval, the latter works toward reclamation and restoration. A classic illustration of this is Eli the priest. First Samuel 2:24 records Eli's rebuke or verbal disapproval of the behavior of his degenerate sons, but in 3:13 God rebuked Eli because of his failure to admonish his sons. Interestingly, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew text) uses the imperfect of *noutheteō*. The imperfect points to a habitual pattern of failure in Eli's leadership of his sons. He protested and reprimanded, but failed to truly admonish them.

But what happens when there is no response to the warnings? Then, they are to be rejected. "Reject" is the present imperative of *paraitomai*, "to reject, avoid." In other words, the recalcitrant or rebellious and disobedient person is to be treated as an outsider as the Lord advised in Matthew 18:17. The ultimate goal is that such treatment will bring the person to his senses and to repentance and restoration, but there is nevertheless a note of finality in the reason given in verse 11.

Third, in verse 11 the apostle gives the *reason* for the above action. This is found in the character and conduct of such a factious person. The NET Bible has: "You know that such a person is twisted by sin and is conscious of it himself."

But literally, as pointed out in the translators' notes of the NET Bible, the text reads, "knowing that such a person is twisted (perverted) and is sinning, being self-condemned." "Knowing" is an adverbial participle that points us to the reason or cause for turning away from the factious individual, but the words "such a person" focuses our attention on the issue of character and behavior. "Such a person" represents the adjective *toioutos*. This adjective lays stress on the degree and quality as described by the context. It

⁶ Bauer, Gingrich, Danker, electronic media.

⁷ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, electronic media.

⁸ Colin Brown, editor, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan Corporation, 1986, 1999), electronic media.

⁹ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, series ed., Grant R. Osborne, consulting ed., D. Stuart Briscoe, Haddon Robinson (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1994), 261.

means “such as this, of such a kind” whether a thing or a person. A person such as this who is impervious to loving and biblical admonition reveals serious spiritual problems.

First, such a person is “twisted.” “Twisted” is the perfect passive of *ekstrephō*. Literally this verb means “to turn inside out” and then metaphorically “to change entirely, pervert.”¹⁰ In the passive as here, “to be perverted,” points to an unmentioned agent or cause, but something has had a negative impact on the person’s life. The perfect tense points to a condition that has been reached with results that continue. It stresses the present state of affairs.

Then, the translation of the NET Bible, “by sinning,” suggests that the cause of the perversion is a continual life of sinning, whatever that might be. But since the text literally says “and is sinning,” the sinning could just as well be the product of the perversion, especially when the root problem is a mind that has been twisted by false doctrine which is futile to change one’s life and this is ultimately the issue here. Regardless, the *character* (“perverted,” a state that has been reached) and the *conduct* (“is sinning,” a process that continues) point us to the reasons for rejecting such a person.

Literally, the Greek text ends “being self-condemned.” The translation of the NET Bible “and is conscious of it himself,” seems to understand the Greek term here to refer to a self-condemnation in the sense that the twisted person is aware of his true spiritual state. In other words, he knows that in his persistent refusal to abandon his heretical views he is wrong and stands condemned by his own better judgment. However, the Greek term, *autokatakritos*, “self-condemnation,” may also be understood to mean that the twisted teachers are condemned by their own behavior (see 1:16).

Closing Remarks (3:12-15)

Paul’s closing words consist of three instructions (vss. 12-14) followed by a mutual greeting and a closing benediction (vs. 15), but as in all his epistles, these closing remarks demonstrate a couple of vital characteristics in the life and ministry of Paul. First, they show he was a team player who recognized the importance and function of the other members of the body of Christ. God had not made him a one-man team regardless of his office as an apostle or his special gifts and the direct revelation that he had received from God. Further, these final words demonstrate his warmth, compassion, and loving care for others. Finally, we also see his penchant for teaching by the way he used simple needs as an opportunity to communicate truth in practical ways. He used needs of Zenas and Apollos as an opportunity to remind the Cretans (and us) of the responsibility we all have to engage in good works.

The Instructions (vss. 12-14)

Instructions Concerning Artemas or Tychicus (vs. 12)

When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

In this first note, Titus is directed to meet Paul at Nicopolis where he had decided to spend the winter, but not before either Artemas or Tychicus had arrived, apparently as a replacement. This is the only mention of Artemas in the New Testament, but we can assume that he was another of Paul’s trusted assistants as was Tychicus. Tychicus, who was from the province of Asia (Acts 20:4), had accompanied the apostle on previous missionary endeavors and had been sent by Paul to Ephesus and to Colossae (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7). At another time he was apparently sent to Ephesus as a replacement for Timothy (2 Tim. 4:12-13). Paul described Tychicus as “my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord” (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7).

¹⁰ G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1973), 141-142.

As to Nicopolis, we might wonder why the apostle chose to spend the winter in this town. With the apostle's ever present commitment to minister the gospel, Towner is undoubtedly right with his assessment of the circumstances.

... Nicopolis was a busy port town on the western coast of Greece. It was actually known for its harsh winters; many travelers from all parts would have been forced to spend the winter there, so that Paul could continue ministry despite the impossibility of travel...¹¹

Instructions Concerning Zenas and Apollos (vs. 13)

Make every effort to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; make sure they have what they need.

Zenas and Apollos, probably the bearers of this letter, were not only to be received by Titus and the Cretans, but outfitted for the continuation of their journey. "Make every effort" is *spoudaiōs*, an adverb that may mean "with haste" or "with special urgency" (see Phil. 2:28 and 2 Tim. 4:9, 21). From the idea of haste came the meaning, "zealous effort" in the sense of "diligently, earnestly, zealously." It expresses the idea of zealous concern and commitment. "Help ... on their way" is *propempō*, "accompany, escort" and then "help on one's journey" with food, funds, and whatever necessary provisions might be needed including companionship if also needed.

Zenas is not mentioned elsewhere so we do not know exactly what is meant by the designation, "the lawyer." As Kent points out, "It is not known whether the designation 'lawyer' marks Zenas as a converted Roman jurist or an ex-rabbi (teacher of Mosaic Law),..."¹² By contrast, Apollos is the well-known preacher mentioned numerous times in Acts and 1 Corinthians (see Acts 18:24, 27; 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 16:12).

Instructions Concerning Good Works (vs. 14)

Here is another way that our people can learn to engage in good works to meet pressing needs and so not be unfruitful.

As mentioned, the presence of Zenas and Apollos and the needs for their journey and ministry provided an excellent illustration and occasion for the Cretans to engage in good works. Thus, the apostle reminds them of this privilege. The Greek text simply says, "and our people must learn to engage in good works," but the NET Bible's translation, "here is another way..." is right contextually by connecting this admonition to the previous needs. "Must learn" is a third person imperative, but as some translations do, it should not be translated simply as "let our people learn." Rather, it expresses that which is a must, an imperative for believers. "Learn" is *manthanō*, "to learn through instruction" or "to learn by experience." Regardless of the means (instruction or experience), the basic meaning is "to direct one's mind toward something."¹³ Since the object to be learned here is a fruitful life in good deeds, the thrust seems to be on using the varied opportunities and experiences of life, as illustrated in verse 15, to develop a commitment and skill in doing good.

The apostle had previously mentioned good works, but now he gives added definition to this with the words "to meet pressing needs." "Pressing" is *anankaios*, "necessary." It expresses some situation of need as determined by the context. One of the goals is naturally reaching out to help others, but another, as stressed here by Paul, is that God's people may never be found unfruitful. We have been saved by His grace, but He has created us for good works as the loving expression of His love and as demonstrations of the power of the gospel.

¹¹ Towner, 263.

¹² Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Studies in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus (Moody Press, Chicago, 1958, 1982), 239.

¹³ Kittel, electronic media.

The Mutual Greeting and Closing Benediction (vs. 15)

Everyone with me greets you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

The apostle closes with final greetings from all of his associates again showing his team spirit. Though they are left unnamed, Zenas and Apollos would surely identify them. Then, Titus is to greet “those who love us in the faith,” undoubtedly a reference to the whole church of believers who loved and respected Paul and his team. “In the faith” is literally, “in faith,” which because of the absence of the article may mean “faithfully.”

He closes with, “grace be with you all,” which expresses not only his affection, but his desire for all believers since grace is so vital to our experience and walk with the Savior. Grace is not only the source of our salvation, but the basis of our sanctification, fruitfulness, and reward.