

## Titus 1

### Read verses 1 – 4

1. Paul calls himself a servant (NIV) or bondservant (NASB or NKJV) or slave (NLT). He used the Greek word “doulos” which means “low slave” or “slave by choice”. Once he was humbled by his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, it is an appropriate description of Paul. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul even called himself the chief sinner.
2. In verse 1, Paul begins just as he did in most of his letters. He points out that he is an apostle called by Jesus Christ. He is a messenger sent by Jesus to share the Gospel message with the Gentiles. Acts 9:15 tells us that Jesus gave this commission to Paul through Ananias. *“But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”*
3. As this lengthy sentence goes on through verses 1, 2 and 3, Paul elaborates on his commission from Jesus. His commission is to *“further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth”*. The Jews would say that they are God’s elect because they were born Jewish.
4. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul wrote, *“For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence.”* The Calvinist would call this further proof of predestination, but I believe that what God predestined was for both Jew and Gentile to receive salvation through their faith in Jesus. I don’t believe that God specifically said that John Green would have salvation before he was born. I believe that John Green had salvation made available to him if he called on the name of Jesus as his savior. If God specifically chose each one of us, then why did He send Paul?
5. So who are *God’s elect*? Jesus tells us in John 10:27-28. He says, “John 10:27-28 *“27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”* They are true Christians.

6. Paul says that understanding this true gospel “*leads to godliness*”. Paul spent a significant amount of time explaining godliness in his first letter to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 6:6 Paul says, “*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*” He says that true godliness is about your relationship with God and contentment with who He is and what He has done and not material wealth. It is knowing that God is in control of every situation. It is living your life and trusting God. It is truly understanding, Romans 8:28 “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*”
7. Righteousness leads to godliness but it also leads to eternal life. Our hope that leads to eternal life does not rely on our own righteousness. It requires us to have faith in Jesus. Our righteousness is imputed righteousness, which means we have His righteousness because of our faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who was the only truly righteous man.
8. I can’t read about our “*hope of eternal life*” without quoting John 3:16-17, “*16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*” As the old hymn says, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.”
9. Throughout the Bible, we can see that God only speaks the truth. Hebrews 6:18 says, “*it is impossible for God to lie*”. Lying is not in His nature. He has no reason to lie. God is holy.
10. Then Paul says that God promised salvation and eternity “*before the beginning of time*”. Nothing that has happened in history has taken God by surprise. He knew from the beginning that Adam and Eve would fail. He knew that we would fail and would need a savior. His Word lists too many examples of failings to count. He knew that He would have to send his only begotten son to bring salvation to the world. He knew that they would put Him to death. Grace wasn’t added after sin happened. He knew that He would have to give

us His Grace. Why? Because, as 2 Peter 3:9 says, He wanted everyone to come to salvation but no one can be righteous, not one (Romans 3:10).

11. In verse 3, Paul says “*this season*” and in Galatians 4:4, he says “*fullness of time*”. Galatians 4:4-5 says, “*4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*” This is the season of salvation but like our seasons, it too will come to an end. Either through death or the Rapture, the offer of salvation will end.
12. No one knows how many people the Apostle Paul has reached. His letters are impacting lives even today. I thank God for His Word which includes these letters. His preaching that he is writing about is still alive today.
13. Paul says in the last sentence of verse 3 that he was sent to share the Gospel message by God. He calls it a “work” but he was so devoted to it that I doubt he considered it work.
14. In verse 4, Paul tells us that he is writing this letter to Titus. Paul started 1 Timothy with “*2 To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Paul has a similar relationship to Titus that he did with Timothy. Titus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts. Paul does mention him a few times in 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 8:16 says, “*Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you.*” He also says that Titus walked in the same spirit as Paul. And here in this letter to Titus, Paul says that Titus has a common faith as Paul.

Read verses 5 – 9

15. Paul said that he left Titus on Crete to “*appoint elders in every town*”. This shows the confidence that Paul had in Titus. This job was not something that you would leave to just anybody.
16. Just as he did in his letter to Timothy, Paul outlines what types of men are to be elders and overseers. For the attributes of an elder, Paul gives Titus the

“Cliff Notes” version. He says, “*An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.*” The church is God’s church so the qualifications do not change based on where the church is located.

“The list in this passage means that God has specific qualifications for leaders in the church. Leaders should not be chosen at random, or just because they volunteer, or because they aspire to the position, or even because they are “natural leaders.” Leaders should be chosen because they match the qualifications listed here. It is fine if a man thinks he is “called.” Yet he must also be qualified.”  
(Guzik)

17. Remember that the overseer would be equivalent to a pastor today. Having Titus select church leadership in each town would have been an impossible task. These are the men who are to ensure the success of the church. Calvin said that the men chosen by Titus would have been men that the churches would have respected but they still had to meet the qualifications set by Paul.
18. Many of the qualifications for pastor, elder, deacon or other church leaders are similar. It is important that the people in leadership of the church do not turn others away from Jesus. I consider the blameless qualification the one most difficult to achieve. Is Paul talking about blameless in the sight of God, men or your family? Men and your family may not see everything that goes on in your life but God sees everything. I would assume that blameless would mean that neither God nor man would have issues with putting you in charge of the church.
19. In verse 7, we see that both an overseer (pastor) and elder need to be blameless, “*Since an overseer manages God’s household*”. Paul does not stop with blameless though. He continues with the qualities of an overseer, “*he must not be overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.*”<sup>8</sup> *Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.*”<sup>9</sup> *He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”*

These are very high requirements; sometimes they appear to be too lofty, but then again they are qualities that all Christians should strive to obtain. Also, if you think you have all of these qualities, then maybe you don't.

Read verses 10 – 16

20. Just as it is today, there were teachers who preached an improper gospel. What have we learned about deceit? It is one of the main tools of Satan. Paul battled with men that preached an improper gospel for their personal gain. He also constantly had trouble with the Jews and Jewish Christians. Salvation comes from grace through faith in Jesus alone. The Jewish Christians wanted the Gentiles to convert to Judaism in addition to faith in Jesus. Paul was unyielding on this point, in Christ alone!
21. Even the Christian counsel in Jerusalem during Paul's time gave in to the pressure from the Jews stating that salvation comes from Jesus but "*You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*" (Acts 15:29) As Paul says in verse 10 that there are teachers that say that men must be circumcised to be saved. These are the Jewish Christians trying to force new Christians to be more Jewish.
22. In verse 11, Paul says what needs to be done with these men who are teaching an improper gospel. They must be stopped. They are causing all sorts of problems in the towns, churches and homes. They are ruining all aspects of Christian life. They are watering down the true Gospel message for personal gain. Sounds like 2026 to me.
23. In verse 12, Paul says that there are people on the island of Crete who are teaching an improper gospel. I had always heard the term "Cretans" but didn't realize that this is where it came from. Paul says that one of their prophets says that "*Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.*" Cretan is definitely not a complimentary name.

24. As for these Cretans and the people like them that are described in verse 10, Paul says that Titus is to “rebuke them soundly” so they will start teaching the proper Gospel and thus be “sound in faith”.
25. In Paul’s journeys, he would go first to the synagogues to preach to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. These Jews often caused him lots of problems and he was imprisoned because of his teaching. These Jews even followed him to Jerusalem where he was put on trial by the Sanhedrin. Eventually, he was beheaded based on accusations from these Jews.
26. It is interesting that in verse 14, Paul tells them not to pay attention to the “Jewish myths”. These myths would have included things like: You can’t have salvation unless you are circumcised or you have to convert to Judaism in order to be saved.
27. In verse 15, Paul adds some more “Jewish myths”. The Jews had a list of clean and unclean foods. Acts 10:9-16 records Peter’s visions regarding clean and unclean foods. God tells Peter, “*Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.*”
28. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*”. Paul says if you are pure in heart then all things are pure but if you are corrupt and not a believer then you will see everything as corrupt or impure. By “everything”, Paul is actually speaking to those things that are seen as corrupt by the Jews or legalism.

“True purity resides not in the practice of ritual or in devotion to rules and regulations. Purity that God recognizes and commends comes from within, and a person can attain this only through faith in Jesus Christ. Cleansed from within, that person becomes free to live in purity, washed of all selfishness. The mind, transformed by the truth, ignites the conscience to obey God willingly in all manner of living.” (Holman New Testament Commentary)

29. In verse 16, Paul continues his description of these legalists or Cretans that Titus will encounter on the island of Crete. He says, “*They claim to know God,*

*but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*” This sounds like some televangelists that I have heard in my lifetime. They preach a gospel close to the true Gospel but they make it benefit themselves but then they live differently than they should.

“While they appear to seek God, following rituals of outward purity, before the Almighty, they are disgusting. While they demand strict obedience to rules and regulations, before God they remain defiant. Though they trumpet their actions, Christ declares them unfit and useless. (Holman New Testament Commentary)