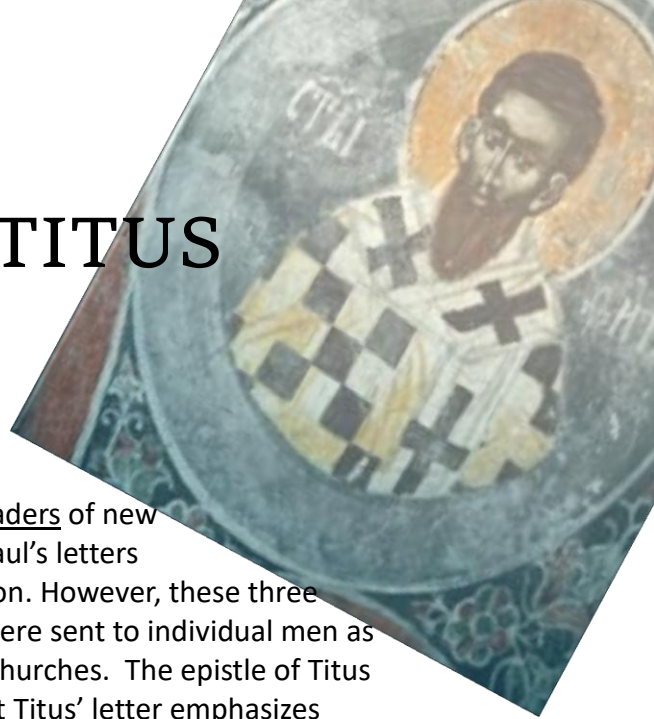


The Book of TITUS

HPC Trinity Class

June 16, 2024



Titus, along with 1st and 2nd Timothy, are called the “Pastoral Letters.” (PL)

These epistles were written to two specific leaders of new Christian believers: Titus and Timothy. Most of Paul’s letters were intended to be read in front of a congregation. However, these three (1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, as well as Philemon) were sent to individual men as an aid to them in forming and leading their new churches. The epistle of Titus has many similarities with 1st Timothy, except that Titus’ letter emphasizes church order; that of 1st Timothy stresses sound doctrine.

Paul probably wrote encouraging letters to all or most of the Christian groups he fathered. Because 1st Timothy and Titus are so strikingly alike in style and topic, we may assume that many similar letters were sent to other fledgling church leaders over the years. Only these few, however, are known to have survived.

[READ TITUS 1:1-3]



--- **Who was Titus?**



-----Little is known about this young (2:6-7) Greek man. The name “Titus” was common at the time. Paul chose him to lead the fledgling Christian congregation in Crete—we don’t know when or how Christianity first came to the island. The two remained close friends (1:4)¹.

Nothing is mentioned of Titus in Acts, but we learn elsewhere that he was a Gentile, not circumcised **[READ GALATIANS 2:1-3]**. Titus acted as a trusted secretary and interpreter of Christ’s message throughout the rest of Paul’s lifetime (i.e., from @49 A.D. on). According to the ancient historian Eusebius, Titus was the first bishop of Crete. He served the church there until his death in @100 A.D.



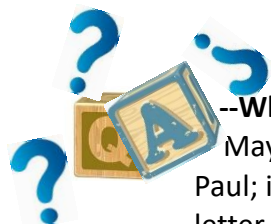
----- **When was it written?**



--- About 60-64 A.D. but no later, because the letter does not mention the persecution of Christians by Nero, which began in late 64.*


*This assumes Paul to be the author.

¹ “My true son in our common faith” implies that he was Paul’s convert. (Heibert)



--Who wrote this letter to Titus?

Maybe Paul, maybe not. Until the early 1800s people assumed that it was Paul; it says so right up front! Today, however, most scholars believe that the letter was written by one of Paul's devoted followers. If true, we should not view this letter as a forgery, but instead as a heart-felt work from a disciple of the Pauline school.

|  | YES <i>it's Paul writing</i> | NO <i>it's a follower of Paul who is writing</i> |
|---|---|--|
| The vocabulary and writing style are unlike any of Paul's confirmed writings. ² | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A person's words and writing style change over the years. ✓ It's possible that the PLs were part of a Pauline collection available and editable by early church fathers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Over 1/3 of the words used in the PLs do not appear in any of Paul's letters. The author writes more like a cultivated Classical Greek philosopher—not Paul's Koine style. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 of these words never appear again in church writings until the 2nd C.³ ✓ "Binding words" (prepositions & conjunctions) are not in other works of Paul. |
| Historical facts don't match. | If true, how did the church for 1,800 years fail to detect this? | The role of bishops, elders, and certain traditions in Titus were not present until at least 150 A.D.—long after Paul's death. |
| The PLs cannot be harmonized with the information in Acts and Paul's other letters. | Two examples: 1) A personal note in 2 nd Tim. 4:10 has Titus going to Dalmatia. (??) This implies that there may be many unknown fragments not recorded in our Bibles. 2) In 2 nd Cor. 10:9 Paul discusses the letters [plural] already sent to them, not simply 1 st Cor. | "According to Acts and the other Pauline letters, Paul was never in the region mentioned in Titus." ⁴ (see map on pg. 4) |
| Titus is shown as weak, timid. | He needs to be reminded and urged to carry out his authority. | Other writings (Gal. & 2 nd Cor.) show Titus to be vigorous, resourceful, and a strong right-hand man for Paul. |

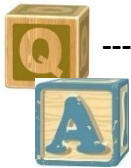
² Galatians, Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, and 1st Thessalonians.

³ "I used to tell my students in NT Intro that if their Greek vocabulary would be based on the other letters attributed to Paul only, they would be completely lost when trying to read the Pastoral Epistles." (Theron, p. 51 fn.)

⁴ Lohse, "Formation," pg. 100. In Acts 27 he merely passes Crete during a storm at sea.

An **amanuensis** = an ancient scribe, sometimes being a slave. They often did more than take dictation. For instance, Sosthenes, Timothy, and Silvanus all assisted Paul and are expressly mentioned at the beginning of some letters being co-authors.

A **pseudonymous** author = someone who wants his reader to believe that the work was written by someone else, or with that person's approval. The name used was usually that of a famous person from the past. (e.g., the "Assumption of Moses" or "2nd Peter"). If the Epistle of Titus is not from Paul's own hand, then it's a product of the Pauline school of thought. The author would have felt comfortable in writing as if Paul were at his side.



---What is Paul's advice?

- Select your leaders carefully. They must be upright. **[READ TITUS 1:5-9]**
 - This task is urgent because heretics threaten to destroy this fledgling church (1:10-16). Gnostics and Judaizers are always present.
- As a leader, you must not be misled. **[READ TITUS 1:10-16]**
- Teach all groups—old men & women, young couples, youths...everyone---teach them sound doctrine so they might lead others by their example and self-control. **[READ TITUS 2:1-10]**
 - Verse 15 could also be interpreted as, "Don't let them wear you down!" Be smart, Titus. Be in command.
- Avoid controversy and exercise church discipline when required. **[READ TITUS 3:9-11]**
 - Note that the term "good works" is used three times in Chap. 3. Paul makes it clear that we are not saved by doing good works (3:5). Rather, these works are the fruit of our faithful love of Christ. As the Presbyterian belief statement professes, "The (Holy) Spirit justifies us by grace through faith." ...not by works.⁵ The evidence of God's grace in us is shown via our good works.



---How is the man Titus remembered today?

The Catholic, Lutheran, and other denominations venerate him as a patron saint. So does the military: the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps has established the Order of Titus Award, which is presented by the Chief of Chaplains to field chaplains and assistants for certain outstanding ministerial service.

⁵ A Brief Statement of Faith (1991), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), #54.

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Paul's Missionary Journeys

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