

Study 2: Titus Chapter 1

Introduction

Paul begins the letter to Titus with a very brief introduction and greeting. He quickly gets down to the main point of the letter – that of dealing with leadership in the churches. The whole of the first chapter is devoted to the issue – The charge to appoint elders (1:5); The qualifications for elders – marriage and family (1:6-9); personality and character (1:7-8); and devotion to sound doctrine. He then discusses the need for qualified leadership in the church (1:10-16).

Body of the Study

What are the important things that Paul wants them to know?

Who does Paul address the letter to?

Greetings and Salutations

Appointing Elders

The opposition

Response to the situation

Homework and preparation for next week:

- Read the notes as a review of the study,
- Read chapter 2 in preparation for next week.

- *Compare the characteristics that Paul requires of elders in 1st Tim 3:1-7. What things are different between the two sets of requirements? (Make a note of these for when we get to 1st Timothy 3). What factors might affect these differences?(ie why would the differences be there?)*

Notes for study 2: Chapter 1

Introduction

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Body of the Study

What are the important things that Paul wants them to know?

Paul's introduction to the letter is found in 1:1- 4. The main part of the letter begins in 1:5 "*For this reason I left you in Crete ...*" By highlighting the key words in the introduction, and the conclusion of the letter, we can start to understand things Paul is going to say in the letter.

Some of the key things that we find are:

Paul writes to Titus (1:4), to help equip him for the task that he has been given of establishing elders in every city (1:5). Their faith in God was strong (1:1, 1:2, 1:4, 3:15), however with their faith was not "blind faith", but *faith and knowledge* working together (1:2) – specifically *knowledge of the truth* (1:1). We know that these things are *truth* because they come from *God who does not lie* (1:2). As we grow in the *knowledge of the truth* we are *lead to godliness* (1:1). There is a contrast between the *eternal life* that awaits us at the end of life's journey when God made these *promises before the beginning of time* (1:2). We can be assured of God's deliverance because *God is our Saviour* (1:3) and also *Jesus Christ is our Saviour*.

The end of our faith requires us to be active, and not live unproductive lives (3:14), but to *do what is good* and *provide for the daily necessities* of life (3:14).

In each chapter of the letter, Paul uses the same term to describe God as he does Jesus, showing the nature of Jesus as God (1:3,4; 2:10,13; 3:4,6)

Who does Paul address the letter to?

The Pastoral Epistles are all addressed to one person (in this case, Titus), rather than to a church or group of churches. Paul obviously has a strong affection for Titus, as he describes him as "*...my true son in our common faith...*" (1:4 NKJV). It is highly likely that Paul converted him either on the first missionary journey, or during the work in Antioch. Paul gives a similar greeting to Timothy (1 Tim 1:2). At the time of writing, Titus had been a devoted coworker for Paul for at least 20 years.

Greetings and Salutations

The greetings and salutations are very short compared to some others of Paul's letter. Paul basically gets straight down to business. This suggests that the time between Paul having seen Titus and the writing of the letter was shorter rather than longer – possibly less than a year.

Paul affirms himself as "*...an apostle of Jesus Christ...*" (1:1), and so establishes his right to speak authoritatively. In many of his letters, Paul addresses them to a church (or churches), where some of the members might need to have that authority reinforced. This was hardly the case with

Titus, and so Paul’s primary purpose must have been towards establishing that what he was speaking was not on his own authority, but that he spoke with God’s authority. [To put it simply, this was not a personal letter of advice from Paul to Titus, but a letter of instruction from God to Titus via the hands of Paul.]

Appointing Elders

We will cover this in much more detail when we get to 1st Timothy (having had the benefit of looking at both that letter and this one). Titus was left behind in Crete after being together with Paul, with the express purpose of “...*appointing elders in every city...*” (1:5). There is a slight difference in what Titus and what Timothy had been instructed to do, since Timothy needed to set the disorderly elders into order, whilst Titus was appointing elders where none existed.

There are three words in the Greek language that describe this one office, and for each of these Greek words there are at least two English words that they are translated into, making a total of seven different English words. Each of these Greek words has a different meaning.

<i>Presbuteros</i>	<i>Poimain</i>	<i>Episkopos</i>
<i>(What he looks like)</i>	<i>(What he does)</i>	<i>(How he acts)</i>
Elder	Shepherd	Overseers
Presbyter	Feed	Bishop
	Pastor	

Two passages in the New Testament use all three Greek words for the same office:

Acts 20:17-28 “...*From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the **elders** (presbuteros) of the church.* ¹⁸ *When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time ...* ²⁸ *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers** (episkopos). Be **shepherds** (poimain) of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood...*”

1 Pet 5:1-2 “... *To the **elders** (presbuteros) among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:* ² *Be **shepherds** (poimain) of God's flock that is under your care, serving as **overseers** (episkopos) --not because you must, but because you are willing...*”

On the first missionary journey (on their way back), Paul and Silas “...*appointed elders in every church...*” (Acts 14:23). So, taking this passage together with Tit 1:5 we see that elders are to be appointed in every church in every city. In every case in the New Testament, a *plurality* of elders is spoken about. It was never just one elder overseeing a single church, nor a plurality of churches in a single city.

Paul gives Titus some instruction about who is to be appointed. It is always a *man* who is to be appointed (particularly noteworthy in this time when many denominations are appointing, or seeking to appoint, women into the eldership). The characteristics that he is to have are:

- Blameless
- The husband of one wife
- Having faithful children who are not wild or disobedient
- A steward of God
- Not self-willed
- Not quick tempered
- Not given to wine
- Not violent
- Not greedy for money

- Hospitable
- Loves what is good
- Self controlled
- Upright
- Holy
- Disciplined
- Holds fast to the truth
- Able to teach and exhort by sound doctrine those who oppose it

The picture that Paul paints here is of a mature family man, who has learned by *the school of hard knocks* how to deal with the situations of life.

The opposition

Paul discusses the role that the elder has in being able to teach and refute the opposition (1:9), and then uses the bridge “*For...*” to explain just why such characteristics are needed. “*...For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group...*” (1:10 NIV). The Jews were quite vocal against the christians, and exhibited the rebellion against God that was typical of the opposition that the church faced everywhere. The elders – the leaders in the congregation – need to know how to, and be skilled at handling the situation.

However, this was not all of the opposition. These people were seeking to exploit the christians “*...they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach--and that for the sake of dishonest gain...*” (1:11 NIV). The characteristics are typical of those of the Cretans, who had (apparently) infiltrated the church so that they might have personal benefit. Paul describes how Epimenides, who lived about 600 BC, wrote, “*...Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons...*” (1:12 NKJV). Paul plays out an interesting position here: He quotes one of their own philosophers to make the point that some of them are being dishonest. He therefore avoids any possible charge that he himself is biased towards the Cretans, and they are forced to either accept the statement as given, or to deny the charge altogether, with no recourse to Paul!

He then finishes his analysis of the situation by his own observation (probably made whilst he was on the island with Titus) “*...This testimony is true...*” (1:13).

Response to the situation

Those who were seeking to gain by dishonest means were to be “*...rebuked sharply, that they might be sound in the faith...*” (1:13). This clearly shows that they were christians, not those from outside of the church, and they were exploiting the Cretan culture of getting whatever gain that they could at whatever expense! The rebuke was not to be brought about so as *to win an argument* with them, but *so that they might be sound in the faith*. Bringing them to the truth was the imperative, and having them in full fellowship.

Likewise for the Jews (who were no doubt trying to take the christians back to the Law of Moses again). The saints were “*...not to take notice of the Jewish fables and the commandments of men who turn from the truth...*” (1:14).

Paul concludes his instructions for dealing with the false teachers “*...To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled...*” (1:15 NKJV). This suggests that many of the opposition would not change because they really had improper motives. Those who had the pure motives, but were misguided would have no problem in accepting the rebuttal and changing. Those who reject it “*...profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work...*” (1:16 NKJV).