



# Titus 1:10-16 3:9-15

Study Outline

## Launching Question

What do you think you should do if you are in a church where you think the leaders' teaching is not right, or where their behaviour is questionable?

## Introduction

Summarise what we saw last time: why has Paul left Titus in Crete?

## Examine your elders

READ the first passage (1:10-16)

Put this passage in its context: who is Paul writing about here, and why?

Draw up two lists:

- the behaviour and the doctrine of a true and godly teacher (6-9)
- the behaviour and the doctrine of a false teacher (10-16)

If the contrast is so obvious, why does Paul need to write this letter?

From all we've seen in Titus, what's the link between belief and behaviour?

What is the consequence of the ministry of these false teachers?

Titus is written at the end of the NT era: why does all this matter so much?

What is Titus to do about these church leaders? (how would he do this?!)

What is Christian ministry going to be like for Titus? (!)

## Deal with your elders

READ the second passage (3:9-15)

What does Paul think that Christian ministry is going to be like for Titus?

Why is he to avoid the things of verse 9? (compare with verse 8)

How can Titus 'be sure' (11)?

## A final word ...

Re-READ 3:12-15

How are 'our people' (ie Christians) going to 'learn' these things? (14)

How is the instruction of verse 14 a good summary of Titus (rather than just a general 'be nice' instruction)?

## Gathering strands

So (returning to Launching Question) what should you do?

Does it matter that much (maybe other things are more important ... eg that the church is near to where we live, that our children are settled there, etc)?

Presumably self-deception is common (- we'll think our belief is OK; we'll justify our behaviour). READ 1 Tim 4:16. How do we 'watch' these things?

Where am I learning to devote myself to doing what is good?

What more could I do to grow in my 'knowledge of the truth'?



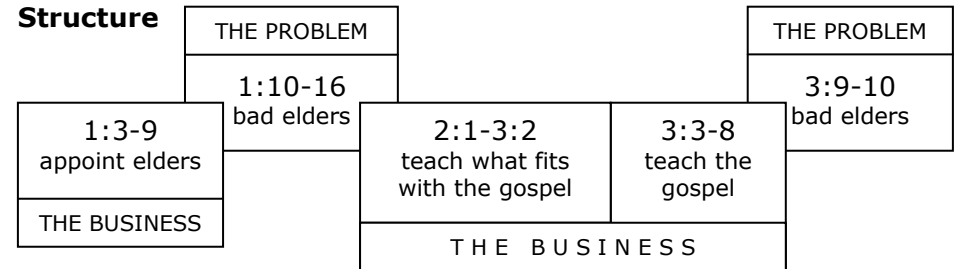
# Titus 1:10-16, 3:9-15

Titus Study 2

## Background

*Titus* (and the two letters to Timothy) is written by Paul to his young protégé, sent as a trouble-shooter to the church in Crete (as Timothy was to Ephesus). Titus is to *straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders* (1:3). The urgent need at the end of the era of the apostles is that the gospel baton, *the truth that leads to godliness* (1:2), is passed on well.

## Structure



## Theme Sentence for 1:10-16, 3:9-15

Church leaders who do not know or teach 'the truth that leads to godliness' must be stopped.

## Structure of 1:10-16, 3:9-15

10-16 Look at the elders you now have (*versus* those you should appoint):

- look at their teaching: there is no knowledge of the truth
- look at their behaviour: there is no godliness

Silence them!

9-15 A summary of 'the business' of the letter

- avoid those leaders who refuse to listen to your warning
- instead, devote yourself to doing the good this letter's described

## Ideas for application from 1:10-16, 3:9-15

- We should exercise great discernment over the leaders we listen to. If someone is teaching things they ought not to teach (ie not the true apostolic gospel), this really matters and they must be silenced.
- We should watch both our life (ie behaviour) and doctrine (ie belief). Both areas matter, and in both areas we are easily self-deceived.
- 'Doing what is good' is something we need to learn and devote ourselves to; it won't come naturally, it won't just happen. Am I being taught the gospel and what is in accord with it ... where? how?

# commentary 1:10-16

The most significant thing about the *rebellious people* that Paul now talks about – those who were the current influential church leaders in Crete – is how different they are from 1:6-9 and the *elders* that Titus is to appoint. There is a marked contrast in terms of their behaviour and their teaching. It is just as 1:1 has led us to expect: it's the true gospel, *the trustworthy message as it has been taught* (1:9), *the knowledge of the truth* that leads to *godliness*. If that true gospel has been lost, then so will be the godly lifestyle too. Their *actions* show they do not *know God* (16).

- **their teaching: no knowledge of the truth**

It's not clear what the exact errors in their teaching are. Certainly, they are not *sound in the faith* (13) and they do not *know God* (16). It may well be a Jewish thing (cf *the circumcision group* [10], *Jewish myths* [14], *quarrels about the law* [3:9]), but the application is considerably wider than that. 1:2-3 explained that the true gospel is all about what God has promised and the apostles have preached: we cannot know God and we cannot have eternal life unless that message is passed on accurately. So if these church leaders are *teaching things they ought not to teach* (11), then the inevitable result is that that are *ruining whole households*.

They must be *silenced* (11), as part of what Titus is to do as he *straightens out what was left unfinished* (5). The true gospel must be safeguarded and used to encourage the brethren and refute error (1:9). False teachers are the enemy because they undermine this *truth*, distort the promises of God and destroy the knowledge of God. In short, false teachers keep people out of heaven.

- **their behaviour: no godliness**

Their lives are no less rotten. They are *rebellious* (ie sinful 10), chasing after money (11), liars (12), so *corrupted* (twice in 15) that they are unable to differentiate purity from evil, with a gulf between profession and reality (16), *disobedient* and *unfit to do good* (16). The ungodly behaviour of the false teachers damns their teaching, for behaviour and doctrine are inextricably bound together. Bad behaviour reveals an underlying ignorance of God; and bad behaviour distorts the message, as we seek to rationalise and justify our lifestyles.

As he looked to the future (especially writing at the end of the era where the apostles are alive to provide 'quality control' on the gospel), Paul saw the fundamental importance of sound doctrine and godly living for the survival of the young churches under his care. We neglect this twofold emphasis at our peril. As he said to Timothy to *watch your life and doctrine closely* (1 Tim 4:16).

# commentary 3:9-15

1:10-16 was set up as a contrast to 1:6-9 ... teachers true and false. Here the contrast is within the passage. In their relationships within the church, the Cretan Christians should *avoid controversies and arguments* (9) and *devote themselves to doing what is good* (8, 14).

- **avoid**

It's easy sometimes to find controversy and argument attractive. And there are many things in church history that Christians have argued about that fall into the *profitless controversy* category. But the result of such things is exactly the opposite of what the true gospel of 3:3-7 produces: instead of being *profitable* (8), they are *unprofitable* (9). In other words, arguing is *useless* to produce *godliness* (1:1) which comes from *knowledge of the truth*

10-11 may sound harsh: is it right to treat someone else within the church this way, and can we be so judgemental? Whilst we should not judge one another on 'disputable matters' (Romans 14:1, 19-23), we should *judge those inside* the church over such things as what they teach and ungodly behaviour (eg 1 Cor 5:11-13). In fact, the implication behind 1:5-9 is that Titus must exercise just that kind of discernment about a person's character and beliefs. Paul is simply extending the *they must be silenced* of 1:11. If we believe in the effectiveness of God's word (ie that it is through the word of God that we've been born again [1 Peter 1:23], and that it certainly will produce a harvest [Mark 4:1-34]), then we know how important 1:9 is, and that the alternative will *ruin whole households* (1:11). Those who are messing up God's church and wreaking such havoc in individuals' lives must be stopped ... it is not loving anyone to anyone to let such damage continue.

Paul has already said that good elders will *refute* as well as *encourage* (1:9).

- **pursue**

Being devoted to *doing what is good* (8, 14) needs to be tied closely to the themes of the whole letter: it's not just a general Christiany 'be nice'.

Paul's theme is that it is the gospel of grace that produces godly behaviour: *the grace of God* not only saves us, but also *trains us* (2:11f). Titus is to teach *these things* (3:8 ie the gospel of 3:3-7) and *what is in accord with sound doctrine* (2:1) ... these things go together, for the result of being taught the gospel is the *so that* of 3:8. So Paul ends his letter re-stating this point. How will *our people* (ie Christians) *devote themselves to doing what is good*? Only if good elders are appointed who will *encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it* (1:9). Christians need to *learn* (ie be taught).

11 is a good example of the very practical down-to-earth spirituality that we've seen throughout the letter: this is what it means to *do what is good*.