

BIBLE COMPANION COMMENTARY: TITUS

TITUS

PREFACE

This commentary is based around the New European Version of the Bible, which is generally printed with brief commentary on each chapter. This commentary is the hard copy of the more detailed commentary found on the *Bible Companion* app.

Are there errors of thought and intellectual process in these volumes? Surely there are. Let me know about them. But don't fail to see the wood for the trees. Never let the wonder of the simple, basic Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom become obscured by all the angst over correctly interpreting this or that Bible verse. Believe it, respond to it, be baptized into Him, and let the word become flesh in you as it was so supremely in Him.

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Duncan Heaster

TITUS CHAPTER 1

1:1 *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ*- Paul several times calls himself "a servant of God". In the light of all his other allusions to Moses, Paul is surely alluding to the frequent descriptions of Moses as God's servant.

For the sake of the faith of God's elect- Paul in Romans understands election as evidence of grace; some are called to 'know the truth', to have faith, and others are not. This immediately removes any pride from any spiritual achievement, be it of faith or understanding.

And their knowledge of the truth- Or 'acknowledging'. There is a tremendous power in the basic doctrines of the One Faith. We come, over time in our spiritual growth, to acknowledge "the Truth" (2 Tim. 2:25), to be led to a Godly way of life by not only *knowing* the Truth but *acknowledging* its power (Tit. 1:1).

The truth which is ultimately all about reverence towards God- The NIV in Tit. 1:1 speaks of "the truth which leads to Godliness". Truth doesn't save of itself. Thus true understanding is related to true Godly living- *if* we translate the doctrines into practice. The Passover would only be properly kept, Moses explained, if the meaning of it was understood (Dt. 6:20-25). Again we note that 'the truth' is not a phrase which refers to set of theologies

correctly understood. Perhaps this was a misconception even in those days which Paul is correcting, by saying that this phrase is instead ultimately practical and not theoretical.

1:2 *In hope of eternal life*- This is to be connected with the fact that God promised this "before times eternal". The mind boggles at the huge significance which our eternity has to God. He had the idea of it before eternity and He intends to give us eternity.

Which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal- This is an intentional tautology. There can be no point before infinity. But the contradiction achieves its end- we are blown away by the thought that somehow, in a beginning before eternity, the most precious thing in our hearts was promised. And that is, our eternity, our deepest and most passionate hope, that which we fear losing above everything else... was in fact secured and promised. How was it promised at that 'point'? The Greek can mean 'to assert to oneself', and this is I think the idea. God asserted within Himself that we would come to eternity. And God cannot lie, not to us nor to Himself. And He has spent infinity preparing this for us, through developing this earth with its unique possibilities for our existence, our personal gene pool, our calling etc. What a wonderful day it will be when finally all this work of infinity comes to term in our immortalization at the Lord's return to earth! This is all a rather deep and intellectual way of saying that God passionately wishes to give us that which is our master passion too- acceptance in His Kingdom. Another take on this phrase would be to go with the AV "Before the world began" and to understand the promise of eternal life made in the promises to Abraham as being before the Jewish world began at the Sinai covenant.

1:3 *But in his own time manifested His word in the message*- The message / word is simply that God wishes to give us eternal life. We are playing a part in God's eternal purpose; the idea of giving us eternal life began 'before infinity', God asserted this plan within Himself; and He waited all this time to use us to go take that message to people who could accept it and thus come to eternity. This is why any genuine attempt to spread that message has His eternal power and strengthening and enablement behind it. It could also be said that the manifestation of that word of eternal life / salvation was in the person of the Lord Jesus.

The message with which I was entrusted- In a sense God requires not help from man; and yet in another sense He has delegated His work to us, and limits His achievements according to what we are willing to do. C.S. Lewis in *The World's Last Night* observes: "He seems to do nothing of Himself which He can possibly delegate to His creatures. He commands us to do slowly and blunderingly what He could do perfectly and in the twinkling of an eye. Creation seems to be delegation through and through. I suppose this is because He is a giver". As any employer soon learns, delegation is a risk. We have been "entrusted with the Gospel" (Tit. 1:3 RV); and therefore the world God so wants to love, the world God is appealing to, may never see Him; for He makes His appeal through us, as Paul told the Corinthians. The same word is found in 1 Tim. 1:11 (see notes there). The Gospel has been entrusted to us; in a sense, the progress of God's work depends upon us. He could save who He wishes as He wishes, but it seems He prefers to work through the mechanism of preachers sharing His word with others. See on 2:11.

According to the commandment of God our Saviour- A reference to the great commission? Or to the specific calling given to Paul at this conversion? Recall how Paul does at times begin his letters with an appeal to the fact he has been specifically commissioned as a preacher (Gal. 1:1-12; 1 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1-4; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:11). He has just written that the message was entrusted to him personally. But this is not to say that we have not also been commissioned to share the same message.

1:4 *To Titus, my true child*- There is no evidence that Paul had converted or baptized Titus. But clearly Paul had much influence in his life. Timothy was likewise Paul's son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2) although it was due to Eunice and Lois that Timothy had come to faith. This shows that our pastoral efforts for others can make them just as much our children in the

faith; and these are the family ties which shall last eternally. "My *own* child" (AV) would suggest that there was some unique influence of Paul upon Titus, just as in natural families.

After a common faith- Whoever is baptized after believing the doctrines of the true Gospel is our brother or sister- regardless of who baptized them, or what name they go under. Titus was Paul's son "after the common (Gk. *koinos*) faith" (Tit. 1:4 AV). The faith, the doctrines which he had been taught by Paul and been baptized upon believing, were what had made him Paul's son; and therefore that faith was what bound them together in fellowship. The Faith in Jesus, as in the basic doctrines which make baptism valid, are the basis of our commonality, our fellowship, with each other. Perhaps Paul is saying that Titus had become his son due to the Gospel, i.e. he had converted him. But see above.

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour- AV "Grace, mercy and peace". Peace with God comes from knowing His mercy in forgiving us, and that is because of His grace. Paul wished that Titus would feel this; there was real meaning in this otherwise standard greeting.

1:5 *The reason I left you in Crete was so you would-* The letters to Timothy begin with Paul saying he has left Timothy in Ephesus for the same reasons. The letter to Titus can be seen as a kind of template upon which those to Timothy are written; for there are many similarities of wording. The fact Paul speaks with such authority regarding matters in Crete suggests he had been instrumental in starting the work there. For he is careful not to get involved in any pastoral work which was the responsibility of others, and he did not build upon others' foundations (2 Cor. 10:16; Rom. 15:20). His mission and vision was to begin the Lord's work afresh in each place- no bad policy for any true missionary. But when was Paul in Crete? The only time mentioned is during his journey to Rome, when they stayed for a short time near Lasea (Acts 27:7-9), but because it was such a small place and not much fun to spend the Winter in, the sailors wished to sail further along Crete towards the larger port of Phenice (Acts 27:12). It was whilst trying to sail there that they got blown right off course and ended up on Malta. It would seem that during the stay near Lasea at the inlet known as Fair Havens, Paul preached in Crete. It would have been no more than a village. And from that work there arose churches throughout Crete, for Titus was to "appoint elders in every city". They were pushing towards Rome, and so they surely would not have spent long at Fair Havens. And yet there is a strange turn of phrase about their stay there in Acts 27:9: "Now when much time was spent...". The modern versions seek to avoid the difficulty by suggesting that much time had been spent on the journey overall; but the Greek really suggests that they had spent "much time" at Fair Havens. They hadn't, really. But it was a significant amount of time from God's viewpoint, because as a result of this witness, several churches developed. And the witness began in a remote village, a mere anchorage rather than a harbour, near Cape Leonda, from where they had to walk five miles to the nearest shops in Lasea, itself little more than a village by modern standards. And from that remote spot the Gospel spread throughout the island. This to me has the hallmark of the divine.

Set in order- Used by medical writers of setting broken limbs or straightening crooked ones. The reference is to the body of Christ.

The things that were lacking- Literally, the things lacking in time to fix up. This was just the right word to use considering how brief was Paul's time in Crete. No wonder he wanted Titus to remain there and establish the new churches. Although we note that Paul wrote the letter from Macedonia, according to the endnote attached to the letter. This would be reason to think that Paul was released from the house confinement with which the Acts record ends, and from Rome went to Macedonia; and then returned to prison in Rome by the time of 2 Tim. 4, when he is clearly awaiting his death in Rome.

And appoint elders in every city- "Every city" suggests the Gospel had spread throughout the island; although the 'cities' were no more than villages or towns by modern European

standards. Paul's approach to pastoral work was that it needed elders; the congregations were not left to just take it in turns to teach and run their meetings. This was not because they had the miraculous gifts of the Spirit and we in this age do not. It was simply that a system of eldership has always been God's way of structuring the life of His people, and there is no reason to think it is not to this day.

As I instructed you- The implication could be, as with Timothy in Ephesus, that Titus had not initially done what Paul had asked him.

1:6- see on Gal. 6:4.

If anyone is blameless, the husband of one wife- This could mean 'not polygamous', or could refer to not being a womanizer. He was to be a man of one woman.

Having children that believe- The converts on Crete had not long been baptized. The idea may be that it was quite acceptable for "children" to also convert; the elders should be heads of households who had accepted the faith. This was the more necessary because there is no archaeological evidence for dedicated Christian meeting places in the first century; the churches met in homes. The reference to "whole houses" (:11) would be to house churches.

Who are not accused of riot or unruly- But a related word is used about the behaviour of God's son, the prodigal (Lk. 15:13). The implication would therefore be that these brethren had done all they reasonably could so that the child wouldn't turn out like this.

1:7 *For the bishop, as God's steward-* Literally, a household manager. This is saying that the elder must have demonstrated ability to manage his own family well; family life is the training ground for work in God's family. The same is true today; an elder cannot really be a person who has clearly failed in family life because of their own faults.

Must be blameless- This is the language of priesthood. There are many allusions to the language of priesthood in the New Testament, both as major statements and also in passing, as here.

Not arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain- Clearly there were such people within the church membership, who formed the potential group from which Titus was to choose elders. He is told not to choose these types. We get the impression of a church completely open to all manner of sinners, including violent alcoholics; but the leadership was not open. A church open to sinners- all sinners- but led by Godly leadership is the ideal we should be working towards in our times. For we can hardly say that some sinners but not others are allowed.

1:8- see on Rom. 12:13.

But given to hospitality, a lover of good, self controlled, just, holy, disciplined- Literally, a lover of *xenos*, the very opposite to a xenophobe. This was a significant characteristic for a Christian to have, when most people were extremely insular and parochial, feeling negatively towards all from outside their immediate experience or geography. The same basic mentality is in us all, but in Christ we are not to be like that but the opposite, as recipients of the Lord's outgoing love toward us.

1:9 *Holding to the faithful word which is according to the doctrine-* "Holding" is elsewhere used about holding on to the Lord Jesus (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13), so the *logos* of faith could refer to the Lord Jesus, who is the substance of "the teaching / doctrine". The use of *didache* prompts the thought that there was perhaps a body of teaching which was used in missionary work, and the appointed elders would be teachers who were faithful to that. The early

Christian document known as the *Didache* may possibly be in view, but probably the body of teaching has intentionally not been preserved for us.

Mt. 6:24 = Tit. 1:9. Holding to God as your master rather than mammon is achieved through holding on to His word. Paul spoke of *holding fast* the faithful word (Tit. 1:9) with allusion to *holding to* our Master (Mt. 6:24). But- and this is an important caveat- don't deceive yourself that time spent in expounding Scripture is *necessarily* Bible study as *God* wants it- although it may make an impressive impact on a group of assembled Christians. True Bible study and understanding was what lead the Lord to the death of the cross. To *truly* love God with all our heart and understanding, not just for the intellectual fascination of it, is more than a burnt sacrifice.

That he may be able to minister comfort using the sound doctrine- Sound or faithful teaching is to be used as a "comfort" and not as an end in itself. The Bible is not a puzzle to be solved, with those who successfully make their way through some intellectual jungle of interpretation being rewarded at the end of it, for their mental tenacity and good fortune in meeting up with good teachers. God is not passive, He more actively seeks human salvation and the useful triumph of His Son's work in human lives.

And also refute those who oppose it- "Refute" means to convict, and the word is often used with the hope of eliciting repentance and reformation. We have the picture of the new churches under pressure from those teaching non-Christian ideas; but Paul doesn't say they should be driven out of the congregation. Rather his concern is with not allowing them to teach their ideas, and to convict them in the hope of their repentance. If individuals holding false ideas are to be excluded from the church, then we surely would expect to read about it here in the pastoral letters. But we never do. The concern always is with maintaining true teaching from the podium, as it were. Defenders of a closed table may respond that this is an argument from silence; but the silence is repeated, noticeable and deafening.

1:10 *For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers-* The idea is of men who were not subordinate to anything or anyone. Paul seeks to inculcate a structure in these new churches, of subordination to authorized elders, and to the *didache* or body of teaching which had been the foundation of the churches.

Especially they of the circumcision- Titus himself was a Gentile (Gal. 2:3) and the early converts in Crete were likely Gentiles. But there was a conscious campaign of destabilization of the early churches by the Jews. The same pattern is seen throughout Paul's arguments to Timothy about the situation in Ephesus. Gentile converts were being destabilized by Jewish teachers who were getting access to the platform; just as happened in the Galatian churches. The burden of the pastoral letters is to eliminate false teaching and replace it with sound teaching. Exclusion from the breaking of bread is never once mentioned as a tool to be used to this end.

1:11 *Whose mouths must be stopped-* They must be excluded from the teaching structure; there is no mention of driving them out of the church or limiting their access to the Lord's table.

Men who overthrow whole houses- The churches of Crete as elsewhere in the first century were comprised of house groups, which were vulnerable to subversion by individual teachers.

Teaching things which they should not, all for money's sake- What exactly was the connection between their teaching and money? Were they demanding payment for their

teaching services? That sounds unlikely to have been successful. Perhaps they were pedalling a version of the prosperity gospel. Or perhaps they were playing on the fact that Judaism was a registered religion within the Roman empire, and religious Jews were free from army service and paying some taxes. To affiliate with the synagogue was attractive; and we note that the false teachers were Jewish (:10,14). See on :15 *To the pure*.

The early corruption of Christianity was due to false teachers who like Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15); they taught false doctrine for the sake of money (Tit. 1:11). Time and again the NT warns against elders who would be motivated by the love of money rather than the Lord Jesus and His people (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2). The Greek translated "filthy lucre" in the AV is hard to understand; it doesn't just mean 'money'. It suggests profit that is somehow filthy, morally disgusting. This is what money turns into, in God's eyes, when men so love it.

1:12- see on Jn. 1:46.

One of their prophets said- It is often claimed that what follows is a quotation from the Cretan teacher Epimenides. He is not called a false prophet, although he was. God is not so keen to as it were cover His own back, footnoting all the time to the effect that 'this is not true'. Hence the usage of the language of demons in the Gospels when such things do not exist. But Epimenides was born around BC 660- many centuries before. The "their" in view clearly connects with the preceding context, which is about *Jewish* false teachers, who may well have repeated what Epimenides was supposed to have said many centuries ago.

Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons- To lie like a Cretan was a well-known saying in the first century. The laid back island lifestyle would have made Crete an unlikely area for the Gospel. But as noted on :5, the Gospel spread there like wildfire. So we have a picture similar to what we find today- secular people were eager to respond to the Gospel, tired of the empty life of flesh pleasing, but on conversion still carried with them the baggage of that previous culture.

The Cretans were typical port dwellers, making a living from entertaining passing sailors and their passengers, disposed to laziness from the good life, easy money and pleasant climate. Their idleness had led them to obsession with vanity in listening to vain arguments about words and turning to Judaism (:10). We see in parts of the church today an obsessive over-interpretation of Scripture, sectarianism, neo Judaism- and partly this is likewise a result of not harnessing the good life as it should be, to the Lord's service. See on 2 Thess. 3:11. It's noteworthy that division over 'doctrine' and demands to exclude others who fail to agree on some complex matter of theology nearly always come from the prosperous churches of the West, and not from the poor unto whom the Gospel is preached and willingly accepted.

1:13 *This testimony is true-* But not every Cretan was like that. Yet Paul doesn't worry to cover his back, he accepts that this is the general spirit on the island, and it had affected the believers- and they needed to be rebuked for it. We can deduce from this that many of the converts were local Cretan Gentiles. At first blush it may seem strange that such people, still very secular and worldly in their outlook, could be attracted to Judaism and Jewish fables (:14). But this is the huge attraction of legalism; it enables a fleshly mind and lifestyle to be respectably maintained under the guise of deep religiosity.

For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith- Soundness in the faith doesn't refer to purity of correct doctrinal understanding. Rather does it refer to the practical issues of not lying, not indulging the flesh in gluttony etc.

1:14 *Not giving heed to Jewish fables-* To the false doctrines of Judaism which were being

pedalled *within the ecclesia*. Yet the spirit of our day generally is to be more and more tolerant of doctrinal deviants, rather than 'giving heed', 'watching' against them. There is a telling play on words here. The Greek for "giving heed" is normally used concerned taking heed, being ware, of false teachers (Mt. 7:15; 16:6; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 1:4; Tit. 1:14). Paul's implication is: 'Instead of giving heed to the *danger* of these people within the ecclesia, you gave heed to them in the sense of listening to them'.

And the commandments of mere men who aim to turn away others from the truth- This is further evidence that there was a consciously organized Jewish plot to infiltrate the early ecclesias and break down the faith of the Gentile Christians. Despite this, never once does Paul advocate dealing with the problem by closing the doors of the church or fencing off the Lord's table. Instead his method is repeatedly to ensure that the teaching ministry is sound. If access to the Lord's table is indeed based on qualification, we would for sure have expected Paul to talk about this in these pastoral letters, and in addressing the problem of known infiltration of the church. Note that it was Jewish fables which were being used to turn believers away from the truth- which is in Jesus. Not everything Jewish must be automatically accepted and glorified by Christians- there is a tendency that way in some quarters. It was Jewish fables and ideas which actually led to Gentile Christians in Crete losing their faith.

1:15- see on Lk. 11:41.

To the pure, all things are pure- The reference is surely to the Jewish food laws. The parallel in Timothy would be the comment that all food is to be accepted now (1 Tim. 4:4,5), which in turn alludes to the statement to Peter that all foods are to be seen as pure (Acts 10:15). All foods have been declared clean in Christ (Mk. 7:19). Indeed, food is not of itself morally pure or impure (Rom. 14:20). Paul's argument is that things are not of themselves impure- in contrast to the Judaizing arguments referenced in the preceding verse. What makes the usage of those things pure or impure is the attitude of heart which we bring to them. The legalists had tried to bring every issue of human life to the point of being pure or impure. It was a matter of atoning for one's endless impurities by ritual- rather than a heart matter. Seeing Crete was an island, this was only possible by paying for sacrifices to be made at the Jerusalem temple. This may explain the strong financial element to the false teaching noted on :11.

But to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; both their minds and their consciences are defiled- This element were within the church, but effectively unbelieving in Christ. Everything was potentially impure- because the Judaists thought that their laws covered every possibly part of human experience. It may seem strange, at first blush, that the easy going, morally lax islanders of Crete would be attracted by this kind of thinking. But actually, this kind of purchased legalism is very attractive to worldly Christians with a niggling conscience. They can buy in to the whole idea of a superior spirituality and understanding, and as it were purchase legal righteousness which makes no demand upon their heart or private behaviour. And the niggling conscience is apparently appeased, to the point that it is actually "defiled" and ceases therefore to function.

1:16 *They profess that they know God-* There are so many parallels with the letters to Timothy. The equivalent of this is the reference to those who have "a form of Godliness" but deny its power (see on 2 Tim. 3:5). The 'profession' of knowing God may refer to some confession of faith, perhaps of a standard "form of Godliness", made at baptism.

Tit. 1:16 AVmg. speaks of those who "profess that they know God" but are "void of judgment". The same word is used in Rom. 1:32 about those who know the judgment of God;

they know it will come. But they have a mind “void of [an awareness of] judgment” (Rom. 1:28 AVmg.). We can know, know it all. But live with a mind and heart void of it. We can know Him, but have no real personal sense of judgment to come. These are sobering thoughts. There is a theoretical knowledge of God, and the knowing of God in ongoing fruitful relationship. Thus those who do not understand will ultimately be condemned by God (Rev. 1:16-18 cp. 14:10).

But by their works they deny him- The same word is used in 2 Tim. 3:5; some had "a form of Godliness" *denied* the power thereof. The power of that form of Godliness issued in good works. But the legalism of these Gentile law-keepers was such that they disallowed themselves from doing good works, and their legalistic obedience actually made them "disobedient".

They are detestable, disobedient- See above. Paul the carefully obedient Pharisee, spotless as to legal righteousness, described himself at that time as being amongst the disobedient (3:3). The essential law is not about acts of commission; it is a heart issue, obedience to the spirit of Christ.

Unfit for any good work- Just as everything was impure to them (:15), so their mentality resulted in an inability to do anything good. Because the good works the Lord seeks are those which are done from a motive of gratitude for His total grace. "Unfit" translates a Greek word commonly used for 'rejection'. It's as if the Lord seeks people to do His good works in this world; but he rejects these types. Their apparent emphasis on works rather than faith left them unable to perform good works. For the heart motive is all important, and legalistic obedience stops this.

TITUS CHAPTER 2

2:1 *But you-* Despite the presence of other, false, teachers, Titus was to focus on teaching which promoted spiritual health or 'soundness'.

Must teach what accords with sound doctrine- His teaching was to accord with sound teaching; presumably referring to the basic teachings which comprised the Gospel message. The argument suggests that “sound doctrine” is a body of material against which subsequent teaching can be compared. Being unsound in the Faith is another way of saying that in works a man is denying Christ; to be "sound in the faith" is to tell the truth and not be lazy nor gluttonous (Tit. 1:13,16). Good behaviour "adorns the doctrine of God", i.e. the basic doctrines of the Gospel (Tit. 2:10); the practical commandments of Tit. 2:2-10 are "the things which befit the sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1 RV) which Titus was to teach. It's almost as if Paul is telling Titus to bring out the practical implications of the doctrines which he was teaching. “Doctrine” refers to a code of behaviour, not just a set of correct propositions concerning God and His plan with men. Thus we don't read about "*pure* doctrine" anywhere in the AV; but rather "*sound* doctrine": living, active doctrine. The things which become sound doctrine are soberness, etc. (Tit. 2:1-4).

2:2 *That older men-* This may refer to old in age, or to elders. The way the commands proceed to younger men (:6) may suggest it is older people who are in view.

Be sober-minded, dignified- This and other characteristics which Paul is appealing for were not inculcated by obedience to Jewish food laws and rituals which form the context of these exhortations (1:15). A number of these characteristics are mentioned in :12 as being inculcated instead by living under grace. Realizing that we are saved in spite of ourselves actually provokes in us a desire to be spiritual in response to that grace. For we cannot be passive to knowing that by grace, I shall

indeed live eternally.

Self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, in patience- This appeal is made to old men [elders?], old women and young men (:5,6). It was obviously a very needed exhortation in the context. And yet the ecclesias in Crete were prone to be attracted by hard core Judaism, according to our notes on chapter 1. This is proof for all time that legalistic obedience and keeping Jewish food laws (see on 1:15) is not the same as self-control. Indeed it would seem that by attempting legalistic obedience, these Gentile converts were justifying a lack of self-control in their lives in other areas. Col. 2:23 makes precisely the same point- that obedience to Jewish rituals is of "no value" in the battle against self-gratification. By contrast, living under grace is what teaches us to overcome the flesh (:12).

2:3 That older women likewise be reverent in demeanour- Vincent: 'as those who are engaged in sacred service'- an allusion to priestly service. The idea is that the rank and file also live out the spirit of priesthood. The Greek means 'on sacred duties'. This could mean that these older women were elders in some kind of spiritual office in the church. But the allusion may be to priesthood, which was the domain of males under the old covenant. But now the entire church were to see themselves as a "holy priesthood", including older women, who were otherwise excluded from religious duties in most religions including Judaism. True Christianity opens up opportunities for service to those whom society would generally consider as unqualified to serve or be useful. Elderly women were particularly in that category in the first century, and there are many such groups within societies today. But the Lord has use for everyone because He has given each convert unique talents and callings to service- and not just to the visible leadership of a church.

Not slanderers- The same word usually translated "devil". This is proof enough that the word *diabolos* simply means a slanderer and does not necessarily refer to any cosmic being. But the 'devil' is often used as a personification for the Jewish opposition to the Christian movement in the first century. These women had perhaps been influenced by Jewish thinking, just as in 1 Tim. 4:7 we noted that the older sisters in Ephesus were teaching Jewish fables.

Nor enslaved to much wine- The incidence of alcoholism amongst elderly females is not something which receives much attention today, and we can be sure that this was a radical area to address in first century Crete. The older women were liable to just be overlooked in society and in any pastoral program. But Paul sets a great example in showing that each and every believer, in whatever situation they are in, must be valued and cared for. And he puts the finger on a weakness which many would've just shrugged off as irrelevant to the main thrust of church life and just a personal matter. But if they were teachers, it was not right that they were also alcoholics.

Teachers of that which is good- These women had a teaching ministry- something unheard of in most contemporary religions. This is one reason for thinking that the 'older women' and 'older men' here could refer to elders rather than necessarily those older in age. We see here the immense value of the human person. In an age when old women were considered irrelevant to the functioning of any religious group, Christianity had a unique place for them. They are not criticized for teaching; as we saw in commenting upon 1 Timothy, the female teachers are rebuked for the content of their teaching rather than the fact they were teaching at all. The pastoral letters

repeatedly focus upon the need for correct teaching, rather than suggesting that troublesome individuals be excluded from the church or the breaking of bread. The lack of such commands is significant. It is a silence that is deafening. These churches were threatened by serious false teaching and immorality; but Paul's inspired answer is to control the platform, the teaching ministry, rather than throwing people right out of the church or the symbols of the Lord's patient, saving love.

2:4 So that they may train the young women- This could suggest that there was a specific women's ministry intended, after the pattern of Miriam teaching the women of Israel.

To love their husbands, to love their children- In an age of arranged marriage rather than love marriage, this was a required exhortation. And it shows that 'love' as God intends is an act of the will. It is not something which comes and then can leave. It can be practiced in response to a command like this. The 'love' they were to show them was not, therefore, the natural love of a woman towards her children; but the conscious act of Christian love. They were living in an age, as we are, where people were "without natural affection" (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3). There was to be a resurrection of love, and a break with the spirit of the age in regard to feelings and family commitment. It could be that there was a specific reference here to not practicing abortion or infanticide, which were common.

2:5 To be self-controlled, pure, working at home- The Greek in all these verbs suggests a moral, sexual tendency towards immorality which was to be guarded against. Again we note that the attraction of legalistic Judaism had not influenced them for good. Rather were they perhaps feeling justified in immorality because of a few acts of legal obedience.

Kind and submissive to their own husbands- This is written in the context of church life where both husband and wife were believers. For wives in Eph. 5:22 and Col. 3:18 were to submit themselves to their own husbands as unto the Lord Jesus. The context of Titus is that there were many false teachers around, demanding submission to them. But the women were to not submit themselves to them, but to their husbands who were hopefully leading the family in sound teaching. Likewise believing slaves were to be submissive to their believing masters, who also were intended to be teaching them rightly (:9). The force of "their own" suggests to me that there were competing claims for submission; and the context is of false teachers seeking submission to themselves. This I suggest is the first context for the 'submission' which is in view here and in :9.

That the preaching of the word of God may not be mocked- The pastoral letters continually reflect a concern that there was a watching world outside the churches, eager to slander and mock the Christian movement. And no reason must be given for this to be legitimate. He assumes that all believing men and women would be preachers of the word, yet if the wives were disorderly in their behaviour they would bring mockery upon the message preached. See on 1 Tim. 6:1.

2:6 The younger men likewise exhort to be self-controlled- See on 2:2 *self-controlled*. But the Greek is literally 'sober minded', and the "likewise..." suggests this may be a continuation of the criticism of the older women for being alcoholics (:3). The soberness in any case is a required characteristic of all believers because of the

immense gravity of the issues with which we constantly deal with- eternal life and eternal death, living in the shadow of the Lord's crucifixion death for us. These things can only issue in a sober, serious mindset.

2:7 In all things show yourself as an example of good works- This suggests a conscious self exhibition, of the kind Paul makes in 1 Tim. 1:13-15. This is not posing or posturing; it is a realistic acceptance of the fact that actions speak louder than words. In a largely illiterate congregation, the real teaching of the Christian life was by example, and not by appeal to words on scrolls or ancient manuscripts which were inaccessible to the majority.

In your teaching show integrity- Lack of integrity in teaching is found in telling people what we perceive they want to hear, rather than what they need to hear from God.

Dignity- The spirit of first century Crete was what we have today- a love of entertainment, light hearted joking and enjoyment. This is not to feature in teaching. We are dealing with ultimately serious issues, of eternity. And if we have grasped them, our teaching will likewise be with an appropriate dignity and soberness. The continual appeals for soberness [NEV "self-control"] were obviously needed in Crete and they are in our age no less.

2:8 Sound speech that cannot be condemned; so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us- Again we have the impression of the Christian churches being surrounded by critics, who had infiltrated them, and who were ever seeking to slander the Christian movement. The context requires that there were within the churches such 'opponents', eagerly grabbing hold of the words and behaviour of Christian leaders in order to speak evil of the Way of God in Christ. We recall how the Jewish opposition "spoke evil of the Way" in Acts 19:9. The opposition were going to do this no matter how careful Titus was. Therefore the "put to shame" may refer to how they would ultimately be silenced at the day of judgment, where it will supremely be manifest that the true Christian "cannot be condemned". Speaking of the sudden destruction of the wicked at the future judgment, David reflected: "So they shall make their own tongues to fall upon themselves" (Ps. 64:8). Unsound speech will be condemned, or perhaps [will lead to our] condemnation.

2:9 Encourage servants to be submissive to their masters- See on :5 *submissive*. The implication would be that their masters were also believers; see on :9.

And to be pleasing to them in all things- The other 8 occurrences of the Greek word are all about being well pleasing to the Lord. This confirms my suggestion that the masters were believers "in Christ", and they were to view their masters as the Lord; all service done to them was done to Christ. This was an incredibly liberating concept for those locked into slavery, just as it is to those locked in to the slavery of working on minimum wage or other forms of modern slavery. One of the most obvious issues faced by Christian slaves was that they were often treated as the sexual property of their masters or mistresses. Should they resist or not? We could read Paul's inspired position here as assuming that what is in view is "all things" which are not contrary to the Lord's way. And he is only addressing that. But that would be an assumption. So we must at least allow the possibility that he is here allowing believers in difficult circumstances to follow one principle [obedience to masters] whilst breaking another.

Not argumentative- The slave owned nothing, not even his or her own body. There was a chronic search for meaning and self value, a desire to preserve identity, define boundaries and keep self-respect, and secret ownership over at least some things, however small. These needs reflected themselves in arguing back with masters over requests made, and in petty theft of objects (:10). All these psychological needs were met in Christ, and according to contemporary references to Christianity, it was very popular amongst the slave population for precisely these reasons. The Lord likewise knows exactly our needs, emotionally and psychologically. And if we will accept it, there is the ultimate answer in Christ.

2:10 Not petty thieves- See on :9 *Not argumentative*. The believers who were in slavery were told no to 'purloin', not to steal little bits of property and money in the hope that one day they would save enough to buy their freedom. And yet we in our century with our mortgages and pension schemes are in just the same desperate, petty, small minded position! The ultimate freedom has already been paid for and given us. In Christ we have "all things" that really matter. The Greek word is only used elsewhere in describing how Ananias and Saphira "kept back" part of the price (Acts 5:2,3). This implies they were guilty of similar 'petty theft'. They only kept back a small part of the price, lest their story lack credibility. But for this they were condemned; just as false weights and measures were so condemned under the Law, when the falsity would have been very small in order to appear credible. God is in the small things and watches our attitude intently; small things and attitudes to wealth in petty matters are clear indicators of our real spiritual level. The word is used in the LXX for how Achan stole quietly from the spoil of Jericho (Josh. 7:1). So small scale dishonesty is being connected with the behaviour of the likes of Achan and Ananias which led to their immediate condemnation. Such small scale dishonesty by slaves was extremely common, and is often mentioned by contemporary writers; to the point that a servant was called a 'thief' in Latin slang. No matter how common a sin may be, this doesn't change how seriously God sees it. That's a simple take away from all this.

But showing integrity in everything; that they in all things may make attractive the doctrine of God our Saviour- The psychological breakout from the awful mental trap of slavery... this was a huge advertisement for the teaching of the Gospel, and of the practical success of God's plan of salvation in Christ.

2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men- "The grace of God... bringing salvation to all men..." is an allusion to the great commission to *preach* salvation to all men. But here, grace is said to do this. The conclusion seems unavoidable: grace and the preacher are inextricably linked. The experience of grace is the essential motive behind all witness, and the witness itself is about God's saving grace. That salvation is by grace enables us to look forward with eagerness rather than uncertainty to the second coming, and our lives are thereby changed. "The grace of God... teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts... looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:11-13). The word 'appearing' refers both to the appearing of grace now, and the appearing of the Lord at the second coming (:13). The ultimate outworking of grace will be at the Lord's return, when we shall be raised from the dead and this mortal shall put on immortality. The basis for our confidence at His appearing is that it is grace which will appear.

The Greek for “all men” suggests that God’s grace that brings salvation to all has appeared; but we have to take that salvation to others and they must respond to it. “All men” and “us”, we who have heard it, are paralleled (:12). Or we could conclude that potentially all men could be saved, but they will not be because the preachers haven’t taken the message of God’s grace to them and they haven’t all responded to it. See on 1:3. In the context, Paul has just addressed various categories- old men, old women, elderly female alcoholic Christians, young men and slaves. God’s grace has appeared to “all men” in the sense of all kinds of people; and His desire to save teaches all people, of whatever type and station, the transformation of their lives which is appropriate in their situation.

2:12 *It trains us*- “Teaching us”, although the word is elsewhere often translated ‘to chasten’. Feeling and experiencing God’s grace does chasten us, far more strongly than direct discipline in terms of punishment. Just as God’s grace is likened to a king in Romans, reigning over us, here it is likened to a teacher. From the time of our spiritual birth at baptism, we are trained up by grace. The contrast is with how Paul was trained up from a child in the things of the Law (Acts 22:3); Titus was up against converts who were prone to influence by legalistic Judaism, as noted on chapter 1. If we grasp the wonder of salvation by grace, that we are saved by status, counted as righteous right now, we can’t be passive to it; we have to respond by living a spiritual life. Knowing we are saved by grace can alone enable us to look forward eagerly to Christ’s return (:13). The initial aim of the letter is to guide Titus as to how to teach and who to appoint as teachers. But he is reminded that the most powerful teacher is the experience of grace. The Gentile converts on Crete were tempted by Judaistic legal obedience; but as noted on chapter 1, this wasn’t achieving spiritual characteristics in them. It is grace which teaches them.

To renounce ungodliness and worldly passions- “Worldly” is only used elsewhere about the Jewish world (Heb. 9:1). The lusts or passions of the Jewish world were those provoked by living under law, believing that obedience to commandment and avoidance of sin is the way to salvation. Paul’s autobiographical section in Romans 7 describes this in his own experience; obsession with law bred lust and sinful desire. Living under grace is the way to ‘deny’ those lusts; believing that we are saved by grace, already in the status of ‘saved’, totally independent of our obedience or disobedience. Our response to that will be so powerful that we reject or overcome the passions of the flesh.

And to live self-controlled, upright, and Godly lives in this present age- These are all internal, mental characteristics brought forth by God’s “grace”, or gift. That gift is the work of the Holy Spirit within our spirit.

2:13 *As we look for the blessed hope*- Grace and faith in the forgiveness of sins teaches us to look for the blessed hope and the appearing of Jesus. It is not the apparent fulfilment of Bible prophecy in geopolitical events which makes us look for the blessed Hope. Rather it is God’s grace and the certainty of salvation which makes us look for it the more eagerly. The same word is used in Jude 21, “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”. It is confidence in this which allows us to be as men who wait in constant expectation of our Lord’s return (s.w. Lk. 12:36 “men that wait for their Lord”). We look not simply for His coming, but for the Hope of salvation. The Greek *elpis* doesn’t mean a ‘hope for the best’ kind of hope but rather refers to a solid certainty. If we aren’t sure of salvation at His return, we can hardly look forward to it. A firm grasp of salvation- definite salvation- by a real grace alone

means we can look to that day with confidence and expectation. See on Col. 1:5. The 'blessed' hope is literally 'the happy hope'; and we "look for" this, or as the Greek suggests, we admit it, we accept it. God's grace therefore gives us the joy of certain salvation and joyful anticipation of the return of the Lord Jesus. The good news of the Gospel really is of joy and peace and security. But too often the only real message seems to be 'Learn to read the Bible effectively, understand a package of true doctrines, then you will be responsible to judgment, and hopefully, you may be accepted for eternity'. This is a non-Gospel. It is hardly good news, which brings joy and peace along with it.

The manifesting of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ- The same Greek word used in :11 for 'the appearing' of God's grace. The point is that when grace appeared in our lives, we were assured of salvation at the Lord's return- in the sense that we should be able to say that if the Lord comes now, or we die now, then we shall surely be saved. If God's glory is to be eternally revealed, we are to live that same glory within our own minds now; in this sense we "have eternal life", the kind of life we shall eternally live begins now.

2:14 *Who gave himself for us-* The phrase 'to give self for' is used several times in the NT; it doesn't necessarily have to refer to the crucifixion, although that is surely largely in view. The Lord's 'giving of Himself' resulted in purification and redemption, according to this verse. But those things are elsewhere predicated upon the Lord's blood, shed on the cross.

That he might redeem us from all iniquity- "Redeem" or 'ransom' suggests that we are bought out of slavery to our master- "iniquity". As Romans 6 puts it, we are no longer slaves of sin once we accept the Lord's death in baptism. We are totally forgiven of all sin once "in Christ"; by grace and not by our works. The Lord's death didn't simply redeem us from all kinds of sin because we are forgiven those sins; but rather, because the grace shown us results in us quitting sin.

And purify to himself a people for his own possession- There is another aspect attaching to the fact that the Lord obtained our freedom from our sins. Because we are forgiven, not because of our works of repentance but simply by grace are placed in a status of 'saved', we cannot be passive. We respond to this by allowing ourselves to be 'purified' by His Spirit, and zealously responding in good works. This purification, whereby He possesses / dwells within us, is by the Spirit. And thus we become His very own personal possession. We are His, and He thereby abides in us. The argument is so similar to that in Romans. "Purify" translates a Greek word often used about ritual, legal purification. The reference is to the fact that Jewish false teachers had been pressurizing these Gentile converts with their various theories of purification (1:15). The Lord is now at work to purify *us*, rather than us having to perform rituals to purify ourselves. We are to respond to His actions by purifying ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1). But the Biblical emphasis is upon *His* cleansing / purifying action, which we respond to. The gift of the Spirit is described as God purifying our hearts in response to our having believed the Gospel (Acts 15:9). The Holy Spirit is a holy mind / disposition, a working within us, rather than any external ability to perform miracles. The sacrifice of Christ means that our conscience, our mind, is "purged from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Believing we are totally redeemed from sin means that we wish to respond in good works of service. And we are empowered to do so by the conscience being purified. The language of Heb. 9:14 is very similar to what we have here in Titus. There are many parallels between Titus and the letters to Timothy; in them we read of the pure / purified heart and conscience of the believer (1 Tim. 1:5; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3;

2:22). This purifying of the heart is a reference to the Lord's work through His spirit, in the hearts of all those who have accepted His redemption of them by grace. All this is in pointed contrast to the way the Jewish false teachers in Crete were offering sinful Gentiles a conscience about sin which was defiled rather than purified (1:15,16).

Zealous of good works- As noted above, these good works arise from believing that we have been redeemed from sin by grace and not works. The wonder of that is so great that we can no way be passive to it. The Greek for "zealous" is usually used about zeal for the Mosaic law, which was an attraction for the group on Crete. But the "good works" in view are not works of obedience to legal statutes, but the good works planned by God from the foundation of the world (Eph. 2:10). Everything was set up for us; to encounter God's grace in the cross, and His forgiveness of us for our specific sins; and therefore our response to Him will be of a uniquely personal nature, doing specific, unique good works which were prepared for us to do. And we are never better than when living in response to the cross in the way intended.

2:15 *These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority*- The authority was the Spirit-guided word of Paul in the letter to Titus. The "things" refer to the wonderful message of salvation by grace, and transformation in response to it. These things were what should be taught from the platform, and not Judaistic legalism. And they were to be a comfort to the hearers [the idea of 'exhort'].

Let no one despise your teaching- See on 1 Tim. 4:12 *Let no man despise your youth*. People did despise the teaching; but we allow others to despise us. It is our choice whether we allow them to despise us. The Judaists would have mocked the message of salvation from sin by grace; they were arguing for purification by ritualistic obedience rather than by the Lord's work in our hearts by the Spirit. But Titus was to be unashamed of the message.

TITUS CHAPTER 3

3:1 *Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities- to be obedient, to be eagerly ready to do every good work*- These terms could refer to authority figures within the church i.e. elders. But they more naturally refer to local magistrates etc. The picture presented of the Cretan congregations is very negative. There were problems with alcoholism, slander, aggression, laziness, in trouble with the law and not obeying court judgments. They were keen to obey Mosaic Law, but not the civil law around them. They needed to be exhorted not to be "disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another" (:3). And yet never is there any talk about restricting the breaking of bread to these folks or casting them out of the church. Rather the focus is on having the right teaching mechanisms to try to improve these folks.

"Every good work" continues the thought from Tit. 2:14, where in response to the Lord's death for us, we are to be zealous for good works. The Greek for "zealous" is usually used about zeal for the Mosaic law, which was an attraction for the group on Crete. But the "good works" in view are not works of obedience to legal statutes, but the good works planned by God from the foundation of the world (Eph. 2:10). Everything was set up for us; to encounter God's grace in the cross, and His forgiveness of us for our specific sins; and therefore our response to Him will be of a uniquely personal nature, doing specific, unique good works which were prepared for us to do. And we are never better than when living in response to the cross in the way intended. This is why this same chapter will go on to encourage us to "devote ourselves... to good works" (:8,14).

"Eagerly ready" means 'prepared'. A related word is used in Eph. 2:10. Good works were prepared for us to do from the beginning. And we in our turn are to be eagerly ready to do them. "Beforehand prepared" suggests we were prepared for the performing of our good works from a specific beginning point. And that surely was at 'the beginning'. Our entire genetic history, the nature of our early childhood experiences and surrounding family, was prepared so that we would be born with the wiring required to do the works intended. To turn away from those works, through disinterest, laziness, wilful lack of perception... is to waste so much. We on our side must be prepared unto every good work (2 Tim. 2:21); "be ready [s.w. prepared] unto every good work" (Tit. 3:1). We are to be on the look out, prepared, for those good works. We were "beforehand prepared to glory" (Rom. 2:10, the only other usage of the Greek word). We were intended for salvation, the Kingdom and our place at the Messianic wedding banquet were "prepared" (a related word; Mt. 22:4; 25:34). But not all shall be saved, because they have wasted God's intention and not responded to it. We note the word "intention" in Eph. 2:7. By sitting at the Lord's table now we show our willingness to go along with His intention that we shall sit there eternally. We note the usage of the same word, repeatedly, about how the last supper [breaking of bread] was "prepared" ("Where will you have us *prepare* for you the Passover to eat?... he will show you a large upper room *prepared* and ready; there *prepare* it for us. And the disciples went into the city and found as he had said to them. And they *prepared* the Passover", Mk. 14:12,15,16). The first breaking of bread was prepared for them ahead of time [just as our good works were "beforehand prepared"], although they had to prepare it. This all speaks of how our place at the final Messianic banquet is prepared for us, but we must accept the invitation; and we show that by sitting at the banquet now.

3:2 *To speak evil of no one, not to be contentious, but to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men*- One theme of Titus is that God's amazing grace and the certainty of salvation should be perceived so strongly by us that we will not argue about words and have strife with others (:9,10; 2:12). Those who trigger divisions amongst brethren over strife about words and meanings are reflecting their own insecurity concerning their personal salvation by grace alone. The Greek is literally 'not quarrelling', using the same word as we will meet in 3:9 for "quarrels about the law". As observed on chapter 1, the Cretan converts were generally worldly and still very influenced by alcohol and the laid back, lazy life. But they were tempted to get involved with endless strivings about Jewish legal interpretation... And that makes psychological sense. They thought their uncommitted Christian life could be made right by a few acts of legalistic obedience, and getting involved in argument about abstract matters of interpretation. And the same has been seen so often in conservative Protestant circles.

Titus was to teach the Cretan brethren that because they had been washed and regenerated in baptism, therefore they were not to speak evil of others, because it was *in the past* that they used to be like that (Tit. 3:2-6). But they still *were* acting like that, even after baptism! They are called upon to remember the implications of their baptism, and live out the status they thus attained before God.

3:3 *For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another*- Paul says that this catena of poor behaviour was *him* before his conversion. Yet he was legally obedient to the Law. But it didn't elicit a spiritual person within him. So he holds up his own conversion as an example to those on Crete who were tempted to turn to the

Law as a means of spirituality. Legalistic obedience just would not elicit spirituality, and Paul was the parade example of that. He wished them all to follow his pattern (:4), just as he wrote to Timothy of his being a Christ-appointed model of conversion (1 Tim. 1:13-15).

3:4 But when there appeared the kindness of God our Saviour- Paul refers to the Lord's appearance to him on the Damascus road, and sees this as programmatic for each believer. "God our Saviour" reflects how God's kindness was manifest through the Lord Jesus, Yahoshua, 'Yah's salvation'. Eph. 2:7 clarifies that the path of expression of God's kindness is through the Lord Jesus: "His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus". His kindness is "in Christ Jesus". And we cannot be passive to that, for we are often exhorted to show "kindness" (s.w.)- in response to His kindness towards us in Jesus. The "kindness" of God is "His love toward man" which was shown on the cross (Jn. 3:16). His kindness is therefore "in Christ" and more specifically in the death of Christ. We are therefore to be "kind" to each other because God forgave us- in the cross (Eph. 4:32 s.w.). The goodness [s.w. "kindness"] of God [displayed above all through the cross] leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4), which is why we naturally examine ourselves at the breaking of bread or whenever we engage with the cross.

And His love toward man- See on :3 *For we also...* . God's love towards man was specifically manifest, or 'appeared', in the cross. This is the continual reference of the love of God or Jesus. God so loved the world, He loved the world in this way, that He gave His Son, as the serpent lifted up on the pole in the wilderness. The Lord appeared / was made manifest to take away our sins- which was achieved on the cross.

3:5 Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us- This is a warning against the tendency towards Judaism in the Cretan congregations which we noted in chapter 1. The idea was that by doing works, there was a chance of future salvation. Paul's point is that we have been saved, we are in the 'saved' status, in that every believer should be able to say that if the Lord returns now, or we die now, then by grace we shall surely be saved. Hence the significance of the past tense: "He saved us". God forgives men on the basis of their *faith* in the blood of Christ, and association with it by baptism; *"not by works of righteousness, which we have done"* (Tit. 3:4-8). God's basis of salvation is *not* works. We must be careful not to insist on 'forsaking' sins in physical terms to the extent that we too preach justification by works. Just one sin deserves death. No amount of forsaking that sin can change that sentence. God's way of escape is for us to be in Christ, so that He looks upon us *as if* we are Christ, imputing Christ's perfect character to us. Therefore forsaking sin is not in itself the basis of salvation; rather is it faith in Christ. Of course, true faith shows itself in works. But none of us has the degree of faith which we ought to have, and therefore none of us does the amount or type of works which we should. To insist that someone shows their faith by specific works, e.g. certain changes in their marital status, is to insist that there is a direct, definable relationship between faith and the precise type of works which that faith leads to. Yet we are not so strict with ourselves. The faith and works of each of us are far from complete. Exactly because we are not saved by works but by God's mercy, *therefore* Paul wished to "affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Tit. 3:5,8). In this sense, as Paul says in Romans, grace reigns as a King. It has power over every department of human life and thinking.

The grace of God guarantees our salvation. Yet we find it so hard to believe- that I, with all my doubts and fears, will really be there. Israel were warned that they were being given the land (cp. salvation) "not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart... for thou art a stiffnecked people" (Dt. 9:5,6). These words are picked up in Tit. 3:5 and applied to the new Israel: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing (baptism) of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit"- by His grace alone. The spiritual life renews (Tit. 3:5), giving us that *newness* of life, that ongoing baptism and resurrection experience, which Rom. 6:4 promises. This way of life, as it develops, creates its own momentum for further change.

Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit- "Washing" is literally 'the laver', suggesting that through baptism we come closer into the sanctuary to offer sacrifice. It is a clear reference to how baptism saves us; not, as Peter says, by the simple ritual in itself, but because it unleashes within us the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. When Paul says that after baptism, we walk in "newness of life", he has the same thought in view (Rom. 6:4). But here Paul explains the mechanism of how that works. The making new, the regeneration, is through the Holy Spirit. The only other usage of "renewing" is in Rom. 12:2, where we read of our being "transformed by the renewing of your mind". The idea is that this renewing is being done to us; it is not an appeal to renew our own minds by our own steel willed efforts, but rather to allow the renewing process to operate. Our own steel will isn't enough to renew our minds; we are to allow the process enabled at baptism, the laver of regeneration, to have its work in us. This renewing is an ongoing, daily process ("the inward man is renewed day by day", 2 Cor. 4:16); the renewing is unto the knowledge of the image of Christ (Col. 3:10 Gk.). The purpose is to actually create the mind of Christ in us, to make us after His image; for this is what we are counted as being, and Christ through the work of the Spirit within our spirit / mind is seeking to make us like Him in reality. Romans 8 expounds this in more detail. The "regeneration", or re-birthing, spoken of here has obvious connection with Jn. 3:3-5, which speaks of water baptism giving rise to a spiritual rebirth; and here Paul is filling out the details. This renewing by the Spirit comes about "through Jesus Christ" (:6), perhaps meaning 'on account of our baptism into Jesus Christ'.

Baptism is a washing away of sins (cf. Acts 22:16). The descriptions of the believers as being washed from their sins in the blood of Christ therefore refers to their doing this by means of baptism (Rev. 1:5; 7:14; Tit. 3:5 [NIV] speak of this as "the washing of rebirth", referring to our being "born of water" at baptism [Jn. 3:5]). "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5) connects with Christ washing the church with the water of the word (Eph. 5:26). Baptism is therefore done by Him, in a sense; His washing of us then speaks of His ongoing psychological renewal of us afterwards.

3:6 Which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour- This term is used for the shedding of the Lord's blood (Mt. 26:28 etc.) as well as for the outpouring of the Spirit. As noted on :4, the Lord's death and what it achieved is never far away from Paul's inspired thought. It is the Lord's death which compels us forward, from *behind* as it were, more powerfully than ever dangling *in front of us* the carrot of future salvation in the Kingdom. The Spirit was given as a result of the Lord's death (Jn. 7:39; symbolized by the Lord's breathing His last breath in the direction of His people, and water gushing from His smitten side). It's not only that

His sacrifice enabled our salvation, and that salvation in practical terms involves our transformation by the Spirit in this life. He there on the cross is to be the inspiration for a truly spiritual, Spirit filled life. The Spirit was poured out on Pentecost (Acts 2:17,18,33); but that gift was the purifying of our hearts (Acts 15:9; see on 2:14). The Holy Spirit gift results in the love of God being shed into our hearts / minds (Rom. 5:5). We must pause to consider how the converts on Crete were a rough lot, and apparently were still the same. Paul is saying that the Spirit has been poured out richly into their minds. Why then were they not transformed? Because the Spirit does not force spirituality; we are enabled to be spiritual, we have now this huge potential for transformation. And here we are all being urged to make far fuller use of it.

3:7 This was so that being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life- The gift of the transforming Spirit was so that we might receive eternal life. Our salvation involves change now; that is why when the Lord's death enabled our salvation, the Spirit was given and made available for all who would believe. So being *made* heirs speaks of the Spirit *making* us appropriate to be heirs- by grace, for of our own strength we shall never conform our minds and lives as is appropriate. We are "made heirs" by baptism into the Lord Jesus, the seed of Abraham who is the singular "heir"; but the whole process doesn't end there. We are "made heirs", made in practice who we are by status, by the ongoing operation of the Spirit after our baptisms. Hence the NT emphasis that it is baptism which results in the gift of the Spirit. It is therefore too simplistic to argue that baptism alone makes us heirs (on the basis of Gal. 3:27-29). Baptism effects this only in that it symbolizes and demonstrates our faith in God's work, by grace through the Spirit, which will 'make us heirs'. By status, we are made heirs of the Kingdom by baptism into the Lord Jesus, Abraham's seed. But we must allow the Spirit to work in us to make us who we are by status- people with the actual faith of Abraham. The wonder of certainly having the Hope, the certainty of eternity, lays the basis for the subsequent warnings against wasting time with fruitless questions; and the simple advice to avoid heretics, literally 'schismatics', those who force a choice (Gk.) and thereby divide us. If we are truly rejoicing in the Hope, we will keep away from anything which distracts from this- even if those things are apparently connected to 'religion'. Ignore the divisive and their fruitless issues, in the light of the wonder of certain salvation. Those who do waste their times on those people and issues are in fact reflecting their own insecurity about their personal salvation. For if you have the certain Hope, your sphere of thought and action will simply be different.

The connection is clearly with Heb. 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned concerning things not seen as yet, moved with Godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith". The ideas are the same as here- "being justified by His grace ['given righteousness by grace through faith'], we might be made heirs [s.w. 'became heir'] according to the hope of eternal life". Noah was 'made an heir' of imputed righteousness through building and entering the ark, which Peter says represents baptism.

3:8 This teaching is trustworthy- AV "A faithful saying", one of the collection of "faithful sayings" Paul often refers to, which perhaps formed a corpus of pastoral material for the illiterate church to commit to memory, and meditate upon.

And I want you to insist on these things- The teaching about the Spirit in the preceding verses is not just a nice theological extra. This is utterly fundamental to Christian life

in practice; the 'insistence' was because of the desire to justify themselves by legalistic obedience to Jewish laws. We too must insist on the ministry of the Spirit and acceptance thereof. This is not just a nice idea, to be casually meddled with on the level of exposition or interpretation. This is the essence of Spiritual life and is the path towards our salvation. No wonder it was part of a "faithful saying" to be firmly committed to memory and meditated upon.

So that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works- The whole message of salvation by grace and not works is what actually provokes good works in practice; in thankful response to the salvation *without* works which we have received. The wonder of it is such that none who believe it can be passive to it. Paul told Titus to affirm the faithful sayings "confidently, *to the end* that they which have believed... may maintain good works" (Tit. 3:8 RV). The congregations' spirituality was related to the confidence of their pastor's presentation. Those "good works", as ours, have been "afore prepared" in the Father's plan for us to perform (Eph. 2:10); but we have to be inspired to live up to the potential which He has prepared for us. Num. 14:20 records how the Father forgave Israel according to Moses' word. And in just as real a sense, He has placed the reconciliation of this world in the hands of our ministry. The belief that we will be saved is the only real anchor in life's uncertain storm. "When the kindness of God our saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us... that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life... and concerning these things I will that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they which have believed God may be careful to maintain good works" (Tit. 3:4-8). The confident, regular reassurance of other believers was to be part of the ecclesial diet with which the Cretan brethren and sisters were constantly fed. And this assurance was to be the foundation of ecclesial growth as members individually developed the mind of Christ.

These things are excellent and profitable for people- The key issue in teaching is being helpful to others; and not simply talking about what we want to talk about.

3:9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the law- The controversies and genealogies were therefore related to Jewish arguments. Compared to the wonder of transformation by the Spirit spoken of in the preceding verses, arguments about interpretation are to be seen as distractions which are to be avoided. The 'avoiding' in practice meant not allowing this kind of thing to be taught in the early churches.

For they are unprofitable and worthless- Compared to the teaching about the Spirit, leading to good works; which are "profitable" and "excellent" (:8).

3:10 A divisive person, after a first and second warning, reject- The context is of divisions caused by teaching about the Jewish law, and any provocation of argument about interpretation which distracted from the path of Spirituality outlined in :5-7. The rejection was not from the church but from the pool of teachers. A teacher was not to provoke endless questions, doubts and arguments about interpretation; but to positively inculcate spirituality and following of the Spirit.

3:11 Knowing that such a one is perverted and sins- "Perverted" is better "subverted"; taken over and used as an agent of the Jewish program of infiltrating and subverting

the early churches, by distracting them from the essence of Christianity by arguments about interpretations of Jewish law.

Being self-condemned- If we examine / judge / condemn ourselves now in our self-examination, God will not have to do this to us at the day of judgment. If we cast away our own bodies now, the Lord will not need to cast us away in rejection (Mt. 5:30). There is a powerful logic here. If we pronounce ourselves uncondemned, we condemn ourselves (Tit. 3:11); if we condemn ourselves now, we will be uncondemned ultimately. See on 1 Cor. 11:29.

3:12 *When I shall send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, give diligence to come to me at Nicopolis, for there I have decided to winter-* Paul wanted the personal presence of Titus, but he was sending others to replace him in Crete during his absence. And when the replacements arrived, then Titus was to leave. We recall Paul's later begging for Timothy to personally come to him. Paul needed his brethren, very deeply. He was no self-motivated maverick.

3:13 *Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing-* A Jewish lawyer who had converted to Christ? Perhaps such a person was needed to address the Judaistic influence on Crete. But maybe he was indeed a secular lawyer who had been converted.

3:14 *Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, to help those in urgent need, and not to be unfruitful-* The call for good works is frequent here and in the letters to Timothy; but the works, as explained, were to flow from the experience of grace, and not as acts of isolated obedience which it was hoped might give a better chance of salvation.

3:15 *All that are with me greet you. Greet those that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all-* There was a difference between those who loved Paul, and the "all". Yet for all of them, including those who didn't accept Paul's authority, he wished the experience of God's gift / grace of the Spirit. If some do not accept us personally, we are still to follow Paul's example and treat them as brethren and wish them God's grace.