



TITUS

A Verse-by-Verse Commentary

(Originally written one verse per day)

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CHAPTER 1

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,
Titus 1:1

Welcome to the book of Titus! It is the third of the three "pastoral epistles," and it is comprised of a mere 46 verses. Thus, it will take us (one day at a time, just as we rise to begin our daily activities) one and one half months to analyze it. It is hoped that you will be blessed as each verse brings marvelous insights into this beautiful epistle from the mind of God and through the hand of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

His initial greeting of verse 1 is unique. Paul has a knack of changing his introductory comments somewhat at times. In the case of this letter to Titus, he seems to be a bit more formal than in his letters to Timothy. As Timothy was his protege, and his "son" according to the faith, there was seemingly less need to be as formal as he is here with Titus.

He begins the epistle by identifying himself. He is "Paul, a bondservant of God." A *doulos*, or "bondservant," is an individual who is the property of another, having no ownership rights of his own.

This would seem to be a position lacking dignity, but in ironic fashion, it is that of the highest dignity when applied to a person in the New Testament as being in such a relation to God and Jesus Christ. For Paul, he gladly states this position in relation to God.

He next identifies his apostleship with the words, "and an apostle of Jesus Christ." He is a messenger of the Lord, having been called by Him personally to perform this weighty duty which has been so amazingly fruitful for the past two thousand years. This is his one claim to the authority of writing a letter of doctrine, and it is with this authority that he thus writes.

He next notes concerning his apostleship, "according to the faith of God's elect." The words "according to" don't properly convey what Paul means in the Greek. The Greek word isn't speaking of the faith of the individual, but rather of the "norm or standard of faith which is set for God's elect" (Vincent's Word Studies).

In other words, a standard – that of faith – has been determined according to God’s call, and Paul has been selected to reveal that standard. The ESV more precisely translates this, “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect.”

In addition to this standard, Paul then adds in, “and the acknowledgment of the truth.” The gospel contains a message which is truthful, and which can be both understood and applied to one’s life. Paul’s commission is to reveal this truth in a way in which this can come about. This is contained within the purpose of his apostleship, and it is that “which accords with godliness.”

The truth of the gospel which Paul conveys is that which is intended to lead to a right honoring of God through lives which emulate His character. It is unthinkable that one would profess faith in Christ, and then not want to emulate Him. It is He who demonstrated what it means to be holy, righteous, just, and godly. In calling on Christ by faith, believers are accepting the truth of the gospel and are then to live their lives in accord with that high and honorable calling.

Life application: Although believers can ignore their call to godliness, they will lose rewards for doing so. Further, they will set a pathetically poor example for others in the process. This is evident by the great deal of immorality which permeates churches today. The church has adapted the ways of the world, and it is becoming harder for those in the church to even hear the message which can bring them to salvation in the first place.

Be sure to know the gospel; that of salvation by grace through faith. And then, be sure to live out the gospel in godliness.

Lord God, You have not just called Your people to salvation by grace through faith, but You have called them unto godliness. Help us to understand the simplicity of salvation, but to also understand the responsibility which follows our reception of Your gift. May we never attempt to disassociate our lives in Christ from lives honoring of Christ. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,
Titus 1:2

Rather than, “in hope of eternal life,” this better would read, “resting upon the hope of eternal life.” This is evident from the context provided in verse 1. Reading the two as one thought shows this –

“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, resting upon the hope of eternal life.”

Paul isn’t merely hoping for eternal life for the saints. Instead, he is sure of it, and he is resting upon that. It is a “hope of eternal life” which is based upon the surety of God’s word, and it is “God, who cannot lie.”

These words are probably a contrast to what Paul will say in verse 12, that “Cretans *are* always liars.” Titus leads the church at Crete, and he is therefore faced with the idea that those around him are constantly making up falsities or following false traditions or teachings.

In contrast to this, what God speaks is truth. He is the Source of truth, and nothing God says will ever be false. This understanding is key to the reliability of our faith. We do not merely possess a dubious faith, but we possess the word of God which is truth. And in that word is the sure hope of eternal life “promised before time began.”

God created the universe. At the moment of creation, time, space, and matter came into existence simultaneously. Before He spoke the universe into existence, He already knew all things that would ever occur in this created realm. He knew that man would fall, and He knew that a Redeemer would be needed to correct this.

He also promised that He would, in fact, redeem. In this act, eternal life would be granted to those who believed. By purposing, or promising, a Redeemer, it became an absolutely inviolable truth that eternal life would be granted to those whom He redeemed.

It is this truth upon which Paul’s hope rested, and it is this truth that Paul now conveys to Titus (and thus to us!) with his pen and ink. God has spoken, and it shall come to pass just as promised.

Life application: The word of God is not a book of hopeful possibilities, but rather it is the book of truth. What God has spoken shall occur. The Bible is a record of what God has spoken. It is surer that the words of the Bible will come to pass than that the sun will rise in the morning. Be assured and reassured of this. Our hope of eternal life in Christ is a slam-dunk guarantee.

Lord God, why should we fret about the future? Whether we live or die, if we are Christ's, then all will come out for good. Are the words found in Scripture merely hopeful ramblings? Or are they the true, fixed, and firm words from You that all will come to pass as written? Surely, we can trust that there is a good end for the saints. The word is written, and it shall be fulfilled. No fear here! Praise You, O God, for Your sure word. Amen.

...but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; Titus 1:3

Paul now builds upon the words of the previous verse. There he said that our hope in eternal life was, “promised before time began.” Now he says, “but has in due time manifested His word.”

The translation is a bit lacking. The word “time” is not incorrect, but different words are used to express “time.” The Greek word *kairos* signifies specific opportune times, seasons. Further, the word as used in this verse is plural. It more rightly says, “but has in due seasons manifested His word.”

There are certain epochs of time which God has laid out, slowly and steadily revealing His plan of redemption for man. We term them “dispensations.” At a particular point in these seasons, God manifested His word, meaning the gospel – the good news – of Jesus Christ. And how did this occur? Paul says that God manifested His word “through preaching.”

Here he uses the term *en kērygmati*, or “in preaching.” The words signify that the work of Jesus Christ – His fulfillment of the law along with His death, burial, and resurrection – would be brought forth to the world in a proclamation. He then acknowledges that he is a part of that process by saying, “which was committed to me.”

Paul is not claiming that he alone had the message committed to him, but that he is a part of the process. He was selected as one of the men who would transmit this message to the world. However, Paul’s commission was a unique one in that it came by a direct calling from the Lord in a heavenly vision. It was also a calling which was specifically to reveal the gospel to the Gentiles. This entire process is then, “according to the commandment of God our Savior.”

As noted, he was called by a heavenly vision. This is recorded in Acts 9. However, it is Jesus who called him, and it is Jesus who is consistently termed “Savior” in the New Testament.

Thus, these words are a direct reference to the deity of Christ. He is the Lord, and He is the second member of the Trinity. As this is so, then each of the apostles was called by God as well. Jesus called them. Jesus is God. Therefore, they were called by God. The entire process is of God, even before time began.

Paul’s words to Titus show us the importance of man to God. He created man, knowing he would fall. And yet, He still created him. And more, in the knowledge that man would fall, He also determined the entire redemptive process, including the work of Christ. This truth is seen in Revelation 13:8 where Jesus is called, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

Life application: God knew that Christ would have to suffer and die to correct Adam’s fall, and yet He still created man. It shows the importance of man to God. The price for redemption is high, and yet He saw it worth paying the price. The words of David ring out as words which should be uttered by each person, “Lord, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him? (Psalm 144:3).

Lord God, when we consider that You created, knowing that we would fall, and knowing that Christ Jesus would need to come and die to pay our sin debt, it causes us to wonder what high value you have set on Your people. How could that price be worth paying? But Your word shows that You, in fact, paid it. What is man, that You would have been so mindful of him? How can such worth exist? Help us to act in a manner which will return glory to You for what You have done. Truly, You are the God of all glory. Amen.

To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

Titus 1:4

Titus is the addressee of Paul’s final pastoral epistle. Not much is known about him, and he was never mentioned in the book of Acts. He is only referred to in a general way in the epistles. He is mentioned 8 times in 2 Corinthians, twice in Galatians, and once in 2 Timothy.

The most pertinent personal information about him from any of these references is that he was an uncircumcised Greek, not a Jew. That is recorded in Galatians 2:3. Paul also

calls him “my partner and fellow worker” in 2 Corinthians 8:23. He also calls him the more general term “brother” in 2 Corinthians 2:13.

Titus had been with Paul for quite some time and was at one of the church’s important early gatherings though. In Galatians 2:1, we see that he was with Paul at the council in Jerusalem, which is recorded in Acts 15, even though he was not specifically mentioned at that time.

In this greeting, Paul chooses yet another title for Titus by calling him, “a true son in *our* common faith.” The word translated here as “true” is the Greek work *gnésios*. It literally means, “born in wedlock.” Thus, it signifies “legitimate,” or “genuine.” However, it came to carry an affectionate or endearing sense.

Therefore, Paul’s words are not only identifying Titus as a true Christian, but as a true son of his because of their like-faith in Christ. This is the same term he used when speaking to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:2. The bonds were as strong as if Titus was Paul’s own legitimate offspring.

Paul personally took him under his wings, and Titus stayed with Paul while so many others at times had faithlessly abandoned him. The “common faith” spoken of here is faith in the finished and fully sufficient work of Christ. Next, Paul writes, “Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”

This is a similar greeting as that to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:2. The only real difference is that there it says, “and Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is substantially the same greeting as he makes in all his letters, but here, and in his other two pastoral epistles (1 & 2 Timothy), he adds in the word “mercy.” It is widely speculated as to why he adds in the word “mercy” to the pastoral letters. The reason is probably because he knew being a pastor is a job that requires a great deal of mercy from God.

It is a delicate, complicated, often frustrating, always tiring, and very sensitive job. Where those under a pastor often feel it necessary to heap trouble on him, mercy is all-the-more necessary from the other direction. Without this endowment from God, the job will quickly lay low the pastor of strongest faith and resolve.

Therefore, Paul petitions for these things – grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon this beloved son in the faith. And the petition is “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”

This is in line with the petition for grace, mercy, and peace. As a father would grant such things to his own son, so Paul knows that God will grant such things to His sons in the faith, a faith which is grounded in Christ Jesus. And as God is the Father of Jesus, the petition for grace, mercy, and peace will naturally flow from Jesus to the Father’s other true children as well.

Finally, as Savior, it speaks of Jesus’ fully sufficient work which reconciles fallen man back to God, who is our heavenly Father. Paul’s salutation is a great example of a complete understanding of the workings of God towards His ministers who are also His sons by adoption.

Life application: Paul’s addition of mercy to the blessings upon Titus (and thus all pastors) is only as necessary as the congregation he leads fails to understand the nature of the job, and the ability of the pastor to effectively handle that job. Hundreds of pastors every week leave the pulpit due to the pressures of the job.

The more mercy the congregation bestows upon their pastor, the less will be needed from above. In regard to the pastor, show a little mercy when he shows his humanity. After all, he is only human.

Lord God, help us to be attentive to the needs of our church pastors, just as they attempt to attend to our needs. And in the process, help us to not heap too much grief upon them as they attempt to sort through all the difficult issues that come their way. May we be careful to not expect more of them than any other person, knowing that they are men dependent on You, just as we are also dependent on You. Amen.

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you— Titus 1:5

The words, “For this reason,” are speaking of what follows, not what has been spoken. With his initial words of greeting complete, Paul now begins his instructions to Titus for the maintenance of the church. Paul says that it is for those things which will now be presented that “I left you in Crete.”

Titus was given care of the church on Crete, one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea. It is said to be approximately 250 miles long, 50 wide, and about 600 in circuit. The Christian faith which had grown in Crete is not explained in the book of Acts.

The only direct reference to it regarding people of Crete is found in Acts 2:11, where some of those at Pentecost in Jerusalem were from Crete. But to say that they heard and believed and then took the message back to Crete where it spread may be a stretch.

They were Jews who may have gone back to the synagogue to share what they saw, but they would most likely have not gone beyond their own people in evangelism. Further, having a Gentile convert over them seems unlikely as well.

It is probable that Paul evangelized there, and his time on Crete was simply included in a general statement without specifying the island as the spot where he was. However the word got to Crete, it had spread enough where churches had been established. It is this group which Titus had now been appointed over.

It is in this capacity that Paul then says, “that you should set in order the things that are lacking.” The word used by Paul for “set in order” is found only here in the Bible. It signifies to correct, or to further straighten. It is used in classical Greek writings concerning the setting of broken bones or even in the straightening of limbs which are crooked. Those things which were left unfinished in the establishment of the churches was to be taken care of by Titus. Further, he was to “appoint elders in every city.”

The word used signifies to appoint, ordain, make, or set. Thus, Paul is indicating the appointment of men to a ministerial job. There is no note of how this was done, but it probably included the laying on of hands, as was noted in 1 Timothy 5:22 and elsewhere.

Other than this, no specific directions in how to ordain are provided. Rather, only necessary qualifications are given. The fact that Paul mentions “every city” indicates that the Christian faith had grown extensively on Crete. It is a remarkable testimony to the accuracy of Paul’s words in Acts 28:28 –

“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”

Paul finishes the verse with the words, “as I commanded you.” He had given instructions to Titus previously, and he was now following up on those oral instructions with a

written epistle to ensure that Titus would remember everything he had been told, and as a witness to the churches that what Titus was instructing had come from the hand of an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Life application: In order to establish and properly run a church, the necessary instructions are found in the Bible. Nothing should be lacking from its requirements, and the only things that can be added are things which will not interfere with what the Bible instructs already. In other words, there is nothing wrong with having a TV in a church if it is used in line with what Scripture would already specify.

Technology is neutral, but it should be used in accord with that which is already prescribed for a church in the word. Understanding this, there is great allowance for how churches can be run, and there is no “one size fits all” model which must be adhered to.

Lord God, thank You that there is such a wide variety of ways to run a church. You have provided the basic instructions for how a church is to be organized and structured, but beyond that, You have allowed us to form churches in accord with the times, cultures, and schedules of the people who gather to worship You. This is a real blessing as the nations can come before You in a variety of ways, and yet all be united because of the basic guidelines which bond us together in Christ. Help us then to hold fast to those basics, and to rejoice in our differences as well. Amen.

...if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. Titus 1:6

Paul now begins to define those things he is said to have “commanded” Titus in the previous verse. He starts with the qualifications of a bishop (see vs. 7) by saying, “if a man is blameless. The Greek word signifies one who is not convictable when properly scrutinized, as if in a court of law. He is found without reproach and is therefore suited to the job.

Next, Paul says that he is to be “the husband of one wife.” Two major thoughts are to be derived from these words. The first is that Paul is speaking of males. In Christianity, women don’t have wives. A female is explicitly forbidden from such a position, as is stated in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. This then is a further, implicit, confirmation of that fact.

The second thought is that this is not speaking of having been married twice. If so, it would mean that a man in such a position whose wife died would not be allowed to

remarry. This is rather speaking of polygamy. No polygamist was to be considered for such a position.

What this implies, however, is that polygamy was something Paul does not forbid. And he could not. He is the Apostle to the Gentiles. His words have been carried to cultures throughout the world, many of which have practiced polygamy. There is no instruction forbidding this practice anywhere in Scripture, except for church leadership positions.

Further, polygamy was acceptable in Jewish religion and culture. He could not forbid what his own culture allowed. Rather, this prohibition is given to church leaders – no polygamy for them to be accepted. It immediately shows that Mormonism was founded on disobedience to the word of God, and its leaders were not “blameless” at all. Instead, they were false teachers who founded a false religion.

His next command is that bishops are to have “faithful children.” The word “faithful” here is probably better translated as “believing.” They are to be believers in the gospel, just as the parents are. If not believers, this would then set up obvious conflicts for them, as well as for others.

After this, he then says that the children are not to be “accused of dissipation.” It is a word used so far only in Ephesians 5:18, and which signifies “what can’t be saved” or “excess.” Thus, it means a state of “spiritual wastefulness due to excess behavior and the dire consequences it brings” (HELPS Word Studies).

Finally, Paul says that the children should also not be accused of “insubordination.” This speaks of any who are not submissive, but who are rather disobedient, unruly, and unwilling to fall into line with God’s plans. They are uncooperative, have a defiant attitude towards authority, cannot be controlled, and are rebellious.

The idea here is that if a man cannot control his own family, he will then not be able to control order within the church. Thus, it is an obvious disqualifying factor for ordination to such a position.

Life application: Children are a problem at times, and even the best parents may have children who stray. Paul is not looking for perfection in the appointment of church leaders, but he is looking to exclude those who have truly broken homes, beyond what any reasonable attempts to correct such failings would be considered as normal.

Many sound church leaders have had children who have strayed, but who have later come back as great men of God, or fine ladies, within the church. However, for an initial ordination process, careful examination of the home life of the applicant must be very carefully considered.

Lord God, You are aware of how our children act, and how they will act in the future. You also know how our hearts mourn over those who stray into dangerous areas which only harm them. Give us wisdom in such times to know how to deal with these situations and help us to do our very best to counsel them according to Your word. In the end, You have granted us all free-will. So, help our counsel be the very best it can be so that their freewill decisions will be based on what is right and proper. Amen.

For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, Titus 1:7

In verse 1:5, Paul used the term *presbuteros* (from where we get “Presbyterian”), translated as “elders.” Here he uses the term *episkopos* (from where we get “Episcopal”), an overseer. It is then obvious that the two terms are being used synonymously here. The overseer is an elder. Paul says that such a man “must be blameless.”

The Greek word signifies one who is not convictable when properly scrutinized, as if in a court of law. He is to be found without reproach and is therefore suited to the job. As Paul says of this, “as a steward of God.” As his service is to the Lord, and as judgments about the Lord will be made based on His stewards, being blameless is a necessary qualification.

Next, he is not to be “self-willed.” This is a new word in Scripture, to be found only here and in 2 Peter 2:10. It signifies one who sets out to gratify himself; to be indulgent. Such a person is only interested in self, and would use the job to meet that end, not to glorify the Lord.

Paul then says that a bishop should not be “quick-tempered.” This is another new word, found only here in the Bible, *orgilos*. It signifies one who is “prone to anger and harbor resentment, nurturing *long-standing* anger (prejudice, bitterness)” (HELPS Word Studies). Such an overly angry and bitter soul is wholly unsuited to the job of a bishop.

Next, Paul says, “not given to wine.” The single Greek word so translated is used just twice – in 1 Timothy 3:3 and here in Titus 1:7. It signifies one addicted to wine; a drunk. It comes from two words indicating “near” and “wine.” Thus, it refers to someone who is

always consumed with drinking wine. It does not mean that a bishop (an elder) cannot drink. Total abstinence for such a position is never taught in Scripture.

Paul then proceeds to, “not violent.” This is again used only in 1 Timothy 3:3 and then here in Titus 1:7. It signifies a brawler or a contentious person. This person would be quarrelsome, and one who prefers using his fists to settle a disagreement. It would be wholly unsuited to the position of an overseer to always be jumping out of the pulpit and beating up everyone in the church who disagrees with him on doctrinal matters.

Paul’s words of this verse end with, “not greedy for money.” It is another rare word found only in 1 Timothy 3:8 and then again here. However, the principle is found in other verses of Paul’s instructions concerning church leadership. Those greedy for money have their priorities in the wrong place.

If money is the objective in one’s life, then he will never be effective in the ministry. The heart must be devoted first, foremost, and with the greatest zeal to being an effective leader, not one concerned about getting rich off the flock.

Life application: Those chosen for leadership within the church must be carefully evaluated, and they must be held to the highest of standards. The Lord’s name is upon them, as it is upon all Christians, but as representatives of the Lord in the church, these qualifications are especially necessary and important. Having said that, all Christians should strive to meet these high standards as we walk before the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You have laid out high and exacting standards which are expected of those in church leadership positions, but would You expect any less from any of Your people? Help us to consider this, and then to apply the highest standards of morality, fidelity, and uprightness to our own lives. May each of us be faithful representatives of the high and exalted Name which rests upon us. Amen.

...but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,
Titus 1:8

In the previous verse, Paul noted disqualifying factors for the office of bishop. Now in this verse, he gives things that are necessary for qualification. The word “but” shows the contrast between the two. The first qualification is being “hospitable.”

This is a compound word coming from *philos*, meaning “friend,” or “associate;” and *xenos*, meaning “stranger,” or “foreigner.” Thus, it is one who is a friend of strangers. The

word *xenos* is where our modern term “xenophobia” is derived. That speaks of having a phobia against foreigners. The word “hospitable” is then speaking of one’s conduct – being fond of guests, and good towards strangers. Such a person is to be naturally given to hospitality.

Next, Paul says he must be “a lover of what is good.” It is a word found only here in Scripture. It gives the sense of having personal affection for what is inherently good. Thus, it speaks of those who love what God loves. A paraphrase of its meaning would be “One who loves God’s good.” That which is of God, or of which God is pleased with, also pleases him.

Paul then mentions the “sober-minded.” It is a word found four times, all in the pastoral epistles. It signifies soundness of mind. Such a person is to be well-balanced from God’s perspective. It is a person who lives in line with the word of God, setting the boundaries of his life in accord with that word.

Thus, a good definition of this word would be “discreet and discerning.” HELPS Word Studies gives the following example: “An opera singer controls the length (quality) of their tones by their *diaphragm* which even controls the ability to breathe and moderates heartbeat. Hence it *regulates* (‘brings safety’) to the body, keeping it properly *controlled*.”

The next qualification is being “just.” The word signifies being righteous, and thus “just in the eyes of God” (Souter). One who conforms to God’s righteous standards is indicated here. He is an upright individual.

Being just is followed by being “holy.” This indicates that which is sanctioned by higher (divine) law. Such a person lives in accordance with God’s divine truth. Thus, he is set apart as godly.

Paul finishes this verse with “self-controlled.” It is another unique word in Scripture, *egkratés*. It literally signifies “mastered from within.” Thus, it is a person who is temperate, prudent, and able to control his passions and desires.

Life application: Think on the negatives of the words given today. Can you imagine appointing someone to a leadership position who isn’t hospitable toward others; who despises what is good; who is unsound in his thinking and decisions; who is unjust; who is unholy; and/or who cannot control his passions?

Paul's words should be obvious concerning the selection of men to the ministry. And yet, how many times do we read of pastors, preachers, and deacons who live very ungodly lives. It is possible for anyone to slip up, but some appointments are made of those who are just truly unqualified.

This is a great fault in the church, and it has led to entire denominations quickly going apostate.

Lord God, great denominations have quickly fallen away from what is holy, godly, and in accord with Your will and Your word. The vilest of conduct is now being accepted under the premise that it is "loving." In fact, though, it is hateful of You, and of Your word. When will the ungodly be brought to account for this? We pray that You will act and bring about restoration of our churches. Return our hearts to godliness, O God. Amen.

...holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. Titus 1:9

Paul has given the list of things which disqualify a person from becoming a bishop, and then he gave those things which were necessary for such an appointment. Now he continues with another key element necessary for such an appointment with the words, "holding fast the faithful word." This faithful word is explained by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 –

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” 2 Thessalonians 2:15

The traditions are those things which the apostles directly taught to the churches. Personal visits were made and words were spoken. Also at times, letters were written. Those which were directly from the apostles, and confirmed as such, were to be held to without wavering.

Verifying authenticity of these letters was necessary because Paul also said in 1 Thessalonians 2:2 to “not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.”

In other words, people were making false claims (by spirit), or were writing false letters (by letter, as if from us), which would poison the doctrine of the fellowship if accepted and then passed on as doctrine. This is a clear indication of apostolic authority being the only valid source of doctrine for such things. When the final Apostle of Jesus Christ was

gone, the words of authority ceased, the canon was complete, and the Bible alone was to be held as authoritative.

Paul then confirms this with, “as he has been taught.” Nothing is said of additional revelation, or that a bishop was allowed to add to the body of doctrine that had been received. Rather, it was the Old Testament Scriptures, along with the words and writings of validated apostles, that gives the basis for the faith. From this sound foundation, Paul says, “that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

The bishop was to hold fast to the doctrine he was taught, and to not make stuff up out of his own head. Any who spoke against the truth (for example, the Judaizers Paul vehemently spoke against in the book of Galatians), were to be given the sound doctrine of the apostles.

Believers who listened to the false teachers were to be exhorted to leave such aberrant paths, and to come back to the solid doctrine of the apostles. The job of the bishop’s exhortation is to then convict the uninformed, turning him to the truth.

Life application: Nothing has changed in today’s world from the time of Paul’s warning here in Titus. There are countless false teachings, heretical sects, and misguided instructors of the word out there. They have misused Scripture (the Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, who deny the deity of Christ), they have added to the word (the Mormons, for example, who have added in the Book of Mormon), and they have misapplied Scripture (the Seventh Day Adventists and the Hebrew Roots movements, among others, who have mandated a return to the law – in part or in whole – thus diminishing the finished work of Christ).

Where will one go to refute these heresies? The answer is obvious: “To the Bible.” Scripture has been received, it is sealed, and it is all the revelation necessary for life, doctrine, and practice. Let us not add to, or mishandle, this precious body of teaching.

Lord God, in Your word, we have a sure word. We have two testaments which tell of the anticipated Messiah, and then which reveal the Messiah who has come. We have the details of His fully sufficient and completed work. No other revelation is necessary, and none should be expected. Rather, we are to hold fast to this word for doctrine, teaching, exhortation, and convicting of those who have gone astray. Grant us wisdom to study this word daily and apply it to our lives constantly. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, Titus 1:10

Paul has given the requirements for those who are to be ordained as bishops, both positive characteristics they must possess, and negatives that they must not possess. He then followed that up with the note that a bishop must hold fast to the word and must possess sound doctrine which is able to “convict those who contradict.” With that now noted, he next says the reason for this with the words, “For there are many insubordinate.”

He has already used this word in verse 6 as a disqualifying factor for appointment. Now we can see the importance of this. It is because there are plenty of people who fit that very same category, and who must be refuted. The way this will be accomplished is through a proper handling of Scripture. It may not change their minds, but it will be a strong witness to those who might otherwise be seduced by these people who are “both idle talkers and deceivers.”

Both Greek words Paul uses are unique to this verse alone. “Idle talkers” are those who utter empty, senseless things. They may have a lot of words to say, but what they say is complete nonsense. A good example of this is comparing Ezekiel’s vision of God to a UFO encounter.

It is utter nonsense, but the problem is that people may believe this line of reasoning because they don’t understand the connection of the vision to what it is showing us concerning God’s revelation of Himself. Therefore, the man of God must know how to refute such things.

The second word, translated as “deceivers,” is a compound word which gives the sense of a person who leads other people into delusions. This is especially true with those who are narrow-minded. Unfortunately, because they are narrow-minded, they are easily duped by such deceivers.

It is as if they have their door open, waiting for them to come in and tell them something ridiculous to believe. An example would be those who put out conspiracy theories – flat earth, alien invasions, and a constant stream of new and nutty theories about the world around them.

They make stuff up, and there is an audience ripe to listen, absorb, and get their minds misdirected from what is reasonable. The problem with this mentality is that it transfers directly to Scripture.

The deceivers of Scripture make up things by pulling verses out of context, and they completely confuse the minds of those who are uneducated in theology. Paul then identifies a main category of these deceivers by saying, “especially those of the circumcision.”

“The circumcision” are Jews. Paul is a Jew, but he had a proper understanding of the finished work of Christ. Other Jews, however, had been teaching only partial truths about what He did. He warns against these people in most of his epistles, but especially in Galatians.

These are the deceivers who come into a congregation and claim a type of superiority over others simply because they are Jewish. With that supposed distinction being important, they then deceive others into going back under the Law of Moses, in part or in whole. In this, they rob people away from the grace of Christ.

Instead of freedom, they are brought into bondage once again (Galatians 5:1). Unfortunately, this same group of “Judaizers” is still around today in the Hebrew Roots Movement and other cults. True teachers of the word are to be ready to refute these deceivers by properly applying Scripture, in context, and with the completed work of Christ as the main theme at all times.

Life application: How can one know if a teacher is proclaiming the truth about the word or not? In reality, the only way to be sure is to check the word while keeping all things in context. The more you read the word, the better off you will be.

Further, by limiting oneself to a single teacher, you may be completely duped by him, no matter how on-target he sounds. Reading commentaries, and evaluating each doctrine from a multitude of angles, will help you to process the word in a more accurate way. It is incumbent on each of us to study to show ourselves approved.

Lord God, help each of us to be sound in our doctrine by reading Your word, listening to reasonable preachers and teachers, and by personally evaluating each major doctrine in Scripture from as many angles as possible. Your word is truth, but so many have incorrect opinions on it. And so help us to weed through them, and to form sound judgments which are in accord with Your will. Keep us from false paths as we study. Amen.

...whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. Titus 1:11

These words are referring to the “insubordinate” of the previous verse. Paul says that they are “both idle talkers and deceivers.” He then said this was “especially those of the circumcision,” meaning Jews. He now says of them, “whose mouths must be stopped.”

The Greek literally reads, “whom it is necessary to silence.” They are spreading falsities, and what they say can only bring harm to the saved and keep the unsaved from ever knowing the truth. The idea then is to plug up their mouth so that they cannot speak. The imagery is that of bridling a horse, capping a wind instrument, or pigging a pipe to keep it stopped up. And the reason for this is that they “subvert whole households.”

Paul speaks of this in 2 Timothy 3:6 by saying that these ungodly people “creep into households and make captives of gullible women.” The idea is that they normally start with the women, who are susceptible to deception, and then they work their way through entire households.

The faith of these people is overturned, and their foundation is destroyed. To stop this, the bishop is to be trained in Scripture, and he must be able to refute them directly from the word of God. Paul then explains why this so. They are those who are “teaching things which they ought not.”

There is the truth of Scripture, and from that arises sound doctrine. Anything contrary to the word of God, as it is properly handled (in context) is to be rejected. It is a false doctrine. Christ fulfilled the law, and thus we are not under law. What is normally on Paul’s mind at such times (he has already mentioned the circumcision) is a reinstatement of precepts of the law. However, Paul also addresses other heresies in his letters, such as gnosticism.

One would ask why anyone would set aside the grace of Christ and teach such false things. Paul completes the verse with the answer. He says it is “for the sake of dishonest gain.” Here he comes back to the root of the matter.

The lust for wealth is a strong inducement to ensnaring others and holding them in spiritual bondage. When you control another’s spiritual life, you will normally have control over his physical earnings as well. Thus, the teaching is introduced that the ultimate goal of this physical life is to “earn” what comes after it.

And so, they are brought into a type of bondage, passing on their earthly wages to secure what they believe is heavenly surety. But grace is a gift. It cannot be earned.

Life application: Of course, teachers are willing to convey false teachings! The more bondage, the more likely profit will be gained. False teaching is a big and profitable business. Watch out for false teachers!

Lord God, there are so many varied views on doctrines found in Scripture, and yet in each category, only one can be what You intend. Grant us wisdom to pick up Your word, read it, and contemplate it always. In this, we will have a better idea of what is false. This will keep us from those whose doctrines are faulty. And Lord, guide our steps away from them in the first place. Keep us on a straight and sound path in our walk with You. Amen.

One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Titus 1:12

Here we have an interesting verse. Paul has been speaking to Titus on the island of Crete about those who teach things contrary to the truth. Now, speaking specifically of those on Crete, he cites a hexameter line by a Cretan poet – whom he calls “a prophet” – Epimenides, of Knossus. As he was from Crete, Paul rightly notes that he was “One of them, a prophet of their own.”

Epimenides lived around 600BC and was considered by Plato to be a divine man. The reason for calling him a prophet here is because the word “prophet” was quite often applied to poets. Poets were considered to have a breath of inspiration in them that elevated their thoughts to oracles, or prophecies. In this case, Epimenides said that “Cretans are always liars.”

This is known as the Epimenides Paradox. It is a problem of logic. Epimenides was from Crete. The problem, or paradox, then rests on what he said. If what he says is true, then he is also describing himself, as he is from Crete. Thus, he is a liar. But if he is describing himself (being a liar), then his statement must be false because he says that Cretans are “always” liars. It is therefore false. But if the statement is false, then it must be true because he is from Crete and he is a liar.

This may seem trivial, but all our words must square with logic or we are not really making sense. Paul understood this, and so he included the words of Epimenides this verse.

The state of man is confusion. We don't normally think clearly. We attribute design to evolution, but then we confirm that we believe the laws of logic, physics, and the other such principles and laws which deny order can come from chaos. So even in our attempt to deny God, we think in a confused way.

Paul is carefully warning Titus (and thus us!) that man must rely on the word of God and the absolute truth which stems from it. This verse then, which describes those Paul has been warning against in verses 10 & 11, is given in contrast to verses 1 & 2 which spoke of "the truth which accords with godliness," and which stem from "God, who cannot lie."

Along with being liars, Paul then continues the quote concerning those in Crete by saying they are "evil beasts." Crete is an island that was without wild beasts, and so Epimenides, in a most sarcastic way, says that what is lacking in Crete, in reality, is made up for by the human occupants of the island. Instead of being civilized, they ran amok and lived in a ferocious, animal-like way.

Finally, he finishes the line with, "lazy gluttons." Here, two vices are combined into one description. Despite being evil beasts, they were slothful in their work. A beast that will not work for its food will perish. But being gluttons they were "all stomach" in their motivation. Again, it is almost a paradoxical thought for an evil beast to be a lazy glutton. The two ideas contradict. A lazy evil beast cannot survive, even though he lives for his stomach.

Paul will explain the reason for quoting Epimenides in the next verse, but it is already obvious that there was a moral lack in those on Crete which necessitated Titus being all the more ready to refute those who came against the truth of the gospel.

Life application: The world is full of contradictions, and man can devise words which produce confusion in logic and order. As this is so, it will naturally be man's desire to produce confusion in the thoughts and minds of those who pursue God by calling God's word into question.

They can do this by attempting to find contradictions in the Bible, or they can do this by proclaiming doctrines which are contrary to the Bible while calling them correct. Either way, we must be on guard against such attacks. In God, there is no contradiction, and thus in His word there is no contradiction.

The people of God are to be logical, think rationally, and rightly divide the word at all times.

Lord God, you have created man to be a logical being who thinks rationally, and who is to pursue that which is morally correct. And yet we certainly fail in this. Our thoughts are often illogical, we do not think in a rational manner, and our morals fail. However, the cure is found in a careful study and right application of Your word. Help us to emulate You by applying this precious gift to our lives. Help us to emulate You as we walk this path of life. Amen.

This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, Titus 1:13

Here Paul confirms his thought about Epimenides' words concerning Cretans of the previous verse. They, as a culture of people, were liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. Titus would have his hands full with such a group of people. Because of this, Paul will give Titus words on how to deal with them appropriately.

His words here show us that reading and studying about cultures, including their philosophical and religious texts, is a smart plan of action. Paul cites Greek philosophers in Acts 17 as well.

In knowing the writings, and in using them properly, he was able to effectively communicate to the people on the same level as they were, and with an understanding of what they already believed, or how they acted as a people. His example is one worthy of emulation. For example, to talk to a Roman Catholic is helpful when one understands what Roman Catholicism teaches.

Having agreed about the disposition of Cretans, confirming what one of their own says about them, he then says, "Therefore, rebuke them sharply." The word translated as "sharply" is a rare one, being found only here and in 2 Corinthians 13:10. It gives the sense of severely, curtly, or abruptly. In other words, because of the general attitude of those in Crete, Titus would have to be short with his congregation.

He would tell them something once, and then he was to be abrupt in his second address to them. It sounds like a rather unhappy way to deal with people, but we are shown here that we are to handle each encounter according to the makeup of those being addressed. This can be seen in Paul's other use of this word in 2 Corinthians 13 –

"Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction." 2 Corinthians 13:10

The reason for Paul's words there, and his words to Titus here, are for a specific purpose. It is so "that they may be sound in their faith." As evidenced by Paul's letters, there are many who are easily swayed by the winds of various doctrines. They are not well-grounded and they keep coming back with the same question based on having heard the next new and exciting thing, no matter how goofy it is.

Nothing has changed today, and his words clearly show that being abrupt with people who are prone to laziness in their theology is a definite need. They are to be sharply corrected. If not, they will continuously be corrupted by bad influences.

Life application: Kid gloves in teaching theology may be appropriate for the soul who truly struggles with difficult issues, but they are not appropriate for those who continuously listen to crazy things, absorbing whatever nonsense tickles their ears. Paul's approach to such people is to be curt with them.

If you are considering being a teacher of the word, are you ready to handle such things appropriately? Be assured, they will come, and you must be ready.

Precious Lord God, we live in a world which finds offense at every little thing. It is a world where political correctness has taken deep roots, and so it is hard to have any conversation without bruising someone's feelings. This has transferred to the church, and simply teaching Your word, as it is written, is found too difficult for many to stand. Even so, may we never fail to teach it accurately, faithfully, and in its proper context. If offense comes, so be it. Help us never to waffle on its precepts, or in our convictions. Amen.

...not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. Titus 1:14

Paul has just told Titus to rebuke the Cretans sharply in order to keep them sound in the faith. He now explains the necessity for this with the words, "not giving heed to Jewish fables." The church is established upon the finished work of Christ. That work was to fulfill Scripture. Scripture, at that time, consisted of what we now call the Old Testament. It was, at that time, all the word of God revealed to man for doctrine.

And so that, along with any teaching or writing from a duly recognized apostle, was what was needed for sound doctrine concerning the Christian faith. However, the Jews had (and still have) a giant body of "fables" that they hold to and which they teach. The word is *muthos*, and it is the direct ancestor of our word "myth." It signifies "a false account

yet posing to be the truth; a fabrication (fable) which subverts (replaces) what is actually true” (HELPS Word Studies).

The Jewish society had developed so many of these myths that it completely obscured the simplicity of Scripture. Cultural traditions, written traditions, and etc., were heaped one upon another until Scripture itself simply became a side piece of the whole.

Today, a great many of these “fables” are found in the Talmud. In addition to these, Paul adds in the words, “and commandments of men.” These will be further defined in the next verse as things concerning purity.

What this is then saying, is that man had added to the commandments of Scripture their own commandments. Jesus spoke about this on several occasions, such as in Mark 7 –

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

⁶ He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with *their* lips,
But their heart is far from Me.

⁷ And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” Mark 7:5-8

However, Paul’s words certainly go beyond this. Jesus’ words to the Pharisees were spoken to them while they remained under the law. Upon completion of His earthly ministry, the law is annulled through His shed blood (Hebrews 7:18, for example). Therefore, Paul’s warning to Titus is inclusive of any commandment of man which would put us back under that now obsolete law. Any such teachings are from “men who turn from the truth.”

God’s word is truth. When man rejects His revelation, they reject His truth. God revealed the law, and man was bound to that law. However, God continued to reveal that the law was only a temporary steppingstone, leading to the work of Christ. Therefore, when man rejects Christ’s fulfillment of the law, they reject God’s truth. This is what Paul is warning about. As noted, an example of this is coming in the next verse.

Life application: It has become hugely fashionable in Christianity today to add to God's word. Some churches have a "Book of Discipline," or the like, which is held in higher esteem than God's word. Some churches reinsert the law, or add in other Jewish traditions, holding them in as high (or higher) esteem than the word. Both are error, and both are warned against by Paul.

God has spoken. His word is recorded, and it is to be taken in context to the times in which man exists. We live in the dispensation of grace and, therefore, we are to adhere to Paul's writings as our main source of doctrine. From there, other portions of Scripture are to be applied in regard to how Paul explains them to us.

Lord God, help us to take Your word in the proper context intended, and in accord with the times in which we live. The law was given during a certain period and for a certain purpose. It was intended as a temporary tutor to lead us to Christ. Now that He has completed this work, we are under grace. Help us to live in this time with that in mind. Grace is unmerited favor, and we thank You for that which is lavished upon us. Amen.

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. Titus 1:15

Paul now cites his thoughts which are a close match of what he said to those in Rome. Two verses in particular carry the same intent –

"I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean."

-Romans 14:14

"Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense." Romans 14:20

It is probably the same major subject, which is on Paul's mind here, that of foods which are acceptable to eat. The fact is that there is no food which is excluded for the Christian. There were dietary laws under the Law of Moses, but these were temporary in nature. After the flood, everything was given to man as food –

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs." Genesis 9:2, 3

However, at the time of the giving of the law, certain foods were prohibited. In studying these foods, it becomes clear that the Lord chose these, not because they were inherently unclean, but because they pointed to New Testament truths about the work of Christ. To understand this, here is a link to the first of two sermons which explains it quite well: [Leviticus 11:1-23 \(Dietary Laws, Part I\)](#)

With the understanding that Paul is most probably speaking of foods, his words certainly extend to other moral and religious issues as well. And so, he begins with “To the pure all things are pure.” Considering food alone, one could simply think of a nice big pork chop. A person who is cleansed by Christ understands that this is an acceptable food; it is pure. Jesus even alluded to this before His work was complete –

“When He had called the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, ‘Hear and understand: ¹¹ Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.’” Matthew 15:10, 11

Mark 7:19 is equally clear on this issue as well. In the finished work of Christ, the law is set aside. There are no longer dietary restrictions. Paul says that those who are in Christ are pure, and to them all things are pure, “but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure.”

What this means is that a person who does not believe that Christ’s work was effectual for the annulment of the law can’t accept this premise. Instead, these foods remain unclean to him. But even more, he says that “nothing is pure.” To them, everything is a source of defilement.

They are clinging onto this worldly life, trying to please God apart from the completed and all-sufficient work of Christ. In such a state, they will always be defiled, and everything they encounter is likewise impure. The is because “even their mind and conscience are defiled.”

Without a complete faith in what Jesus did, the conscience of any person remains defiled. There are all sorts of laws which man fails at daily. And with a violation of the law comes the imputation of sin. However, when one understands that we are no longer under law, but rather grace (Romans 6:14, 15), he then realizes that sin is no longer imputed (Romans 5:13).

In other words, the person who has a defiled conscience is impure, and to him nothing is pure. But a person who has his conscience cleansed from defilement by the work of

Christ understands that all foods are acceptable. There is no imputation of sin; God has accepted him.

Life application: Pork chop anyone?

Heavenly Father, thank You that we are freed from the constraints of the law because Jesus fulfilled it in our place. We no longer have to worry about dietary restrictions, observing certain days, performing certain rituals, or any of those other things which are now annulled and obsolete, because He has completed them for us. We now have a new direction and are brought into a close, personal, and wonderful relationship with You because of Him. Such freedom! Such grace! Praise You for Jesus our Lord! Amen.

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. Titus 1:16

Paul continues speaking in line with previous verses which highlight those who spread “Jewish fables.” In this, “They profess to know God.” In knowing the Jewish culture, and in teaching from Jewish traditions and writings, these people appear to be sound in their theology. The Christian faith is derived out of the Jewish Scriptures which detail the coming Messiah. Therefore, it seems only natural that those who teach “all things Jewish” must be the most spiritual of all!

As ludicrous as this may sound, it is a theme which continues 2000 years later. If someone is Jewish, no matter how bad his doctrine is, he is held up as a specialist in the church. If someone can read and speak Hebrew, he is almost idolized. If they know Jewish traditions, whether biblical or extra-biblical, they are fawned over.

This is a dangerous attitude to have, and it is exactly what Paul is warning against. Because of all these frills, they do profess to know God, but such is not always the case. Each should be carefully checked, as with any other preacher or teacher, for a close adherence to the word of God. For many, “in works they deny Him.”

What this means is that just because someone brings the Jewish culture into a church, it does not mean that they accept the work of Messiah. The easiest and most obvious tenet is that of dietary restrictions. If a person holds to the Jewish law concerning not eating pork, and teaches that to others, together they deny what God has revealed, and thus they deny Him.

Christ fulfilled the law, including dietary restrictions. To teach others that we are to adhere to such obsolete laws is to deny God. This is true with Sabbath observance, circumcision, teaching non-biblical traditions and fables as if they were Scriptural, etc. Paul says that those who teach such things are “abominable.”

The word thus translated is found only here in the Bible. It signifies that which is detestable, especially idolatrous. Paul uses this word because it is exactly what they profess – that which is contrary to God. It exalts something ungodly above what is of God.

He next calls them “disobedient.” The word gives the sense of a person who is “unwilling to be persuaded.” For them what is correct and obvious concerning what God prefers is rejected. Think of a person (Person A) who is teaching something out of the gospels, and which is based on a proper reading of the Old Testament precepts, and which is clearly laid out in the Gospel accounts as being in line with those Old Testament principles.

However, instead of relying on that, another (Person B) inserts Jewish traditions into his doctrine (something Jesus specifically warns against in the Gospels), and the result is a muddy, convoluted theology concerning these precepts which are being taught. Even after being shown that what he (Person B) is espousing is contrary to Scripture, he continues, being unpersuaded. This is what the word signifies.

Paul says such are also “disqualified for every good work.” The word “disqualified” signifies, “not standing the test,” or “unapproved.” If there is a test of theology, it must be in line with the source of that theology. The ultimate source is Scripture. When these false teachers introduce their “Jewish fables,” they cannot stand the test, because their source material is unapproved.

Their doctrine is worthless, their teachings are castaway material, and they are reprobate. How unfortunate that so many people are following exactly this strange and already-warned-against theology by following traditions rather than Scripture.

Life application: Why is it so important to study the pastoral epistles, even when not a pastor? It is because one can properly evaluate the pastor, preacher, or teacher by knowing what is allowed, and what is forbidden. Paul is very clear that Scripture is to be our source for doctrine.

It is not inappropriate to teach things from Jewish culture, but those things are not suitable to be taught as doctrine unless they are already in accord with Scripture

Heavenly Father, help us to not insert traditions or myths into our theology. You have given us Your word for our doctrine. When we apply cultural traditions or teachings and elevate them to the same status as Your word, we have erred greatly. May we be found approved because of a total adherence to Scripture alone for the basis of our theology. Give us wisdom in this. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: Titus 2:1

Paul has set forth the qualifications for elders, and then explained their necessary tasks, particularly speaking against those who bring in false doctrines. Now, he will relay what the teaching of wholesome doctrine is intended to bring about in the people of the church.

To come to this, he begins Chapter 2 with, “But as for you.” This is the contrast between Titus (and any proper teacher) and the false teachers spoken about in Chapter 1. For a person to be realized as a sound teacher, he says, “...speak the things which are proper.”

The word translated here as “are proper” is *prepo*. We can think of the word “prepare” here. It comes from a verb meaning, “to tower up,” and thus it relays the sense of “to become conspicuous,” or to “stand out.” Those things which have been carefully studied, and which will rightly relay the intent of the Lord are what should be spoken. It is these things which are “for sound doctrine.”

The Greek reads, “for the sound doctrine.” There is an article before sound doctrine. One can have sound doctrine in philosophy, medicine, or jurisprudence, but that is not what Paul is speaking of. He is speaking of the sound doctrine of the church. The word translated as “doctrine” is used by Paul 19 times in his letters. He uses it 15 times in the 3 pastoral epistles. Outside of Paul, it is found only 2 other times in the New Testament. It means “instruction,” or “teaching.”

The high use of the word in the pastorals shows us the importance of proper teaching in the church, and especially regarding those in leadership positions. The other two times it is used apart from Paul, it is seen in Jesus’ words when speaking of those leaders in Israel who teach “as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).

This is what Paul warned about in Chapter 1. The teaching of God’s people is to be from the word of God, and it is to be taught carefully, in context, and according to the proper dispensation. In the case of the Gentile-led church age, the proper doctrine is to be first and foremost from Paul’s epistles.

Life application: Have you ever read a commentary or an article that says proper doctrine is not a main concern in New Testament times? Such writings are actually quite common, and one must ask what the people were smoking before writing them. Sound

doctrine is extremely hard work, and it is also work which often finds the teacher ridiculed or spoken against.

This is because those with unsound doctrine want to do what they want to do, regardless as to what the Bible teaches. If they are shown, clearly and properly, what they believe is wrong, they will rant against the teacher as if it is he that is the heretic. It can be unsettling, but it is always right to proclaim what is sound, and to refute those who are unwilling to do the hard work to show themselves approved.

Lord God, there is often an all-out assault on those who teach Your word properly. It is because Your word is like a mirror on their disobedient lives. It is so much easier to make stuff up to tickle people's ears. But when the truth of the word is taught, it is quickly attacked as "hate speech," "politically incorrect," or "divisive." Who cares? Shall we jump on the train to Heretic Haven just because people are offended? Or shall we stand on Your word and be found approved on that coming Day when we stand before You? The choice is clear. Guard our doctrine, and keep us close to Your word at all times. Amen.

...that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;
Titus 2:2

Paul now states "the things which are proper for sound doctrine" noted in the previous verse. He begins with "the older men."

This is not a category such as the elders in the church. Instead, it is speaking of men of age. His words are especially important in this regard for this category of men because the Christian faith was new to the region. Those who were older had spent their entire lives as pagans, and not only pagans, but such as were described in Chapter 1. They would need to now set a new example. Paul starts the list of that which is proper with the word "sober."

The word is used three times, and only in the pastoral epistles. It indicates "sober" or "not intoxicated." Although there is scholarly disagreement on its meaning, this does not mean that a person in such a position could not drink alcohol at all. That would be contrary to the entire body of Scripture in both testaments.

Rather, it would extend to mean that they are not to be intoxicated from alcohol. As much as the word speaks of sobriety, it is figuratively used to mean "circumspect." It is a warning not against drinking alcohol but allowing any sin to infect his conduct. A person not known for such an attitude was to be rejected.

Next, they are to be “reverent.” The word signifies that which is honorable, or which bears dignity. HELPS Word Studies says that it indicates, “deeply respected because viewed as majestic (having gravity).”

After this, he says they are to be “temperate.” It is a word found four times, and only in the pastoral epistles. It signifies soundness of mind. Such a person is to be well-balanced from God’s perspective. It is a person who lives according to the word of God, setting the boundaries of his life in accord with that word.

Thus, a good definition of this word would be “discreet and discerning.” HELPS Word Studies gives the following example: “An opera singer controls the length (quality) of their tones by their diaphragm which even controls the ability to breathe and moderates heartbeat. Hence it regulates (“brings safety”) to the body, keeping it properly controlled.]”

Paul then says that such are to be “sound in faith.” Those who have called on Christ are to not waffle in their convictions but are to be steadfast in the faith that they profess. When someone comes to them looking for encouragement during tough times, they are to remind him that Jesus had tougher times, and that He endured them for our sake.

Now believers are to be sound in their faith concerning His having prevailed over this life. Further, they are not to tolerate aberrant doctrine which would diminish the faithful life of other believers. They are to hold fast to what is moral, pure, and undefiled. After this, Paul notes [sound in] love. Older men were to possess love and convey that love to all.

There should be a resolute form of volitional love of the body, and for the lost. But even more, they are to possess the love of God in the highest degree, being grateful to Him for the salvation which He granted to those of the faith.

Finally, Paul says that they are to be [sound in] patience. The word gives the sense of “endurance.” Despite the challenges of life, the older men are to exhibit faithful patience (endurance) in and through them. Thus, they would be examples to the younger men of how to persevere through the challenges that lay ahead for them as well.

Life application: Paul’s words to the older men are not cultural, nor are they temporary for the times of the early church. They are prescriptive writings which are given for the duration of the church age. At all times, older men are to exhibit these qualities, because

it is these that reflect what is sound in doctrine. In their example, others should be able to find strength to act in the same manner in their own lives.

Gracious heavenly Father, you have been so very good to us in giving Your Son for our reconciliation to You. Now Lord, help us to respond to that calling, and to live out our lives pursuing sound doctrine leading to holiness. It is holiness to which You have called us, and it is holiness in us which You desire. Therefore, guide us on this beautiful path which You have called us to walk upon. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— Titus 2:3

Paul now turns from “the older men” of the previous verse, to “the older women.” They, likewise, are to “be reverent in behavior.”

Paul uses two unique words here. The first indicates behavior or demeanor. It is a compound word which gives the sense of “settled according to a fixed, exact design” (HELPS Word Studies). The second word indicates a sacred place, such as a temple. Thus, the older women are to have behavior, which is holy, sacred, and befitting of God. He then says, “not slanderers.”

The same words here, when used with an article, would indicate “the Slanderer,” meaning the Devil. Thus, it would be accusers, or those who unjustly criticize and judge others. Such would be backbiters who demonstrate an evil nature as they talk in an ill manner of others.

Next, he says the older women are not to be “given to much wine.” The word he uses indicates “being enslaved by.” Thus, the older women are not to be prisoners to the bottle. They are to be temperate, drink moderately, and avoid drunkenness. They are to remain sober and alert.

Finally, the older women are to be “teachers of good things.” Instead of drinking and being irreverent slanderers, they are to rightly instruct their children, and also any other younger women, in the way to act properly. Their lives and attitudes are to be examples to follow, not examples to quickly avoid.

Life application: We all have choices to make each day. How will we conduct our lives? What words will we speak? What actions will we demonstrate to the world around us? Each thing we do will be seen by those around us, and they will make their

determinations about our character – especially our relationship with the Lord – based on those things we do, say, and live out.

Let us remember this and be careful to conduct our lives with the constant remembrance that our commitment to the Lord is a part of the evaluation of our character.

Heavenly Father, the things we say, the things we do, and the lives we live... these are all being looked at by others, and they are being processed in our relation to You. Are we exalting You with our actions? Are we bringing glory to You with our words? Will people say, "I want to know more about Jesus," because of how they view us? Help us to remember this at all times and help us to be lights which shine out Your glory for others to see. Amen.

...that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,
Titus 2:4

Paul continues to write concerning “the older women” of the previous verse, but it is a verse which then transfers instruction to the younger women. To the older women he exhorts “that they admonish the young women.” Some translations add in the words “to be sober.” In other words, “teach the young women to be sober.” This is not the correct use of this unusual verb. The words “to be sober” should be left out.

Teaching the young women is obviously something that comes after first applying the precepts of verse 3 to their own lives. If they are living unholy lives, it would be best for them to get their lives straight first, and then to admonish the young women. It would be no good for a person who swears all the time to tell the next generation to not go around swearing.

With that understanding, the older women who are acting in accord with what is right are to then pass their knowledge of proper living on to those who are younger than them. They have the life experiences, they know what will bring happiness and contentment, and they exhibit the proper conduct for holy living. It is now time for them to instruct the next generation of young women. In this, Paul tells them to admonish these young women “to love their husbands.”

This is another unique word which signifies a “loving friend.” It is a concept that Paul speaks of elsewhere though. In Ephesians 5:22 & 23, for example. This is especially

important, because in the Bible, the family unit is a crucial element of a properly functioning society.

As the family unit unites properly, the lives of the people will be more likely to unite properly to their jobs, their society, etc. A loving wife is then at the heart of making this happen. It is also the reason why those who hate God and His word set out to destroy this fundamental job of young women. The resulting chaos in the extended society becomes a cancer which quickly spreads.

The next admonition from Paul is that the older women are to train the young women to “love their children.” This doesn’t mean like a person loves a dog or a fun movie. It is a love of both nurturing them through tenderness and through discipline. A mother who will not properly discipline wrongdoing is not acting in a loving manner.

Again, it is the dream of those who hate God to destroy this precept. Properly disciplining children is spoken against as a type of torture. The murdering of one’s own offspring through abortion is exalted as freedom from bondage, and both the family and the society suffers with each young woman’s turn to these despicable avenues of disobedience to the word of God.

Life application: For proper family life, which is in accord with God’s intent, read your Bible and apply its precepts to your life. For a negative example of how to live your family life, watch what those on the left want legislated for our society. One is honoring of God; the other shows hatred towards Him and His word.

Heavenly Father, Your word admonishes us to have a loving family unit. Respect between husband and wife; care for, and disciplining of, our children; and a constant application of biblical precepts to our family life. It is these things which will result in a happy family which is productive, and which is beneficial to society. And more, it results in stable people with content lives. Why is it that this is being so ardently spoken against by those who hate You? It is the family which honors You that is the best model for our society. Help us to realize this, and to live our family lives in accord with Your will. Amen.

...to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Titus 2:5

Paul continues his instructions to the older women about how they were to admonish the young women. The first admonishment is that they are “to be discreet.”

The word signifies “self-controlled.” It is the inner look which regulates outward behavior. This leads to a balance which is godly. Next, they are instructed to be “chaste.”

It signifies holy, pure inside and out, and uncontaminated. This is a state which goes down even to the very heart and center of a person’s being. After this, he says they are to be “homemakers.”

It signifies a “keeper of” or “stayer at” home; and hence, someone who is domestically inclined. After this Paul notes, “good.”

This points to a good nature of the individual whether seen or unseen. He then says, “obedient to their own husbands.”

The idea here is one of submission. Paul explains the family order under Christ in 1 Corinthians 11. As Christ is the Head of man, so man is the head of the woman. The woman is to submit to the husband as is fitting in the Lord. Paul speaks about this in Ephesians 5:22-24 and Colossians 3:18 as well. Paul then says these things are to be adhered to so “that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

Paul always brings things back to the word of God and its importance in the eyes of all people. The Gospel message is contained there, and in bringing discredit upon the word, the good news of Jesus Christ will suffer and be blasphemed. Through a proper application of these things mentioned by Paul, people will see the woman’s conduct and exalt the word of God.

What is thought of in modern society as an ignoble profession, being a wife and a mother, is something ordained by God. It is something that when lived out according to Scripture brings glory to Him.

Life application: The life as a wife in obedience to how Scripture defines it is one of a high and noble calling. It is sad that this has been spoken so vehemently against in our modern world. God is pleased with the faithful, obedient, and submissive wife who tends to her home and cares for her family.

Lord God, thank You for faithful women who are willing to adhere to their role as wives in accord with Your word. You have ordained this special life for them to fill, and it is one in which is honorable and brings You glory when lived as Your word indicates. For those who are faithful to live as is stated there, may You heap an extra special blessing upon them today. Amen.

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, Titus 2:6

Paul now moves from the admonishment of the older women concerning their duties, which included their instruction of the young women, to exhorting “the young men.” He gives them one direct exhortation, which is “to be sober-minded.”

The idea concerns one who exercises self-control. In this, they are to consider what God would do regarding moderation. The young men are to keep away from extremes, and to regulate their lives in a moderate and self-disciplined way.

The Greek word comes from two different words. The first is one which indicates “safe.” The second is the root of the English word for “diaphragm.” It is that which regulates life, and therefore, it is safe regulation. Just as the body is safely controlled by our breathing, so the young man is to control his mind.

Life application: Paul will have more words directed to Titus concerning his life and conduct which are to be examples for the young men to look to. But unless they are first sober-minded, they will not even be willing to look at another person for an example of wholesome living.

We must always evaluate ourselves, turning our minds to that which is good, honorable, and upright. After doing this, our eyes will be opened to examples of others we can properly emulate, thus keeping ourselves from following the wrong crowd.

Lord God, we are faced with thousands of examples of how people think we are to live each day. And the majority of them are not wholesome or proper. And so, unless we first control ourselves through moderation and self-discipline, we won't have a clue as to which examples are proper to emulate. Help us in this Lord. Grant us wisdom to apply Your word, and the morals contained in it, to our lives. After that, we will know to reject the bad and to pursue the good. Be with us in this, O God. Amen.

...in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility Titus 2:7

In the previous verse, Titus was directly instructed to “exhort the younger men to be sober-minded.” Now, instead of asking him to continue to exhort others, Paul directly exhorts Titus. With that understanding, he says to Titus, “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works.”

The reason for his words is still for the benefit of the young men, but it is now one of example by Titus rather than exhortation from him. Titus was to make himself the epitome (in all things) of character. Whatever he did was to be laid down as a pattern (an example worthy of emulation) that others could follow (good works).

The word translated as “pattern” is *tupos*. It is where our modern word “type” is derived from. It signifies a model, which is used to mold other things. In making coins, there is a model which is then repeated in the coin making process. Titus was to be such a model by which he would forge others into the proper mold through emulation of him.

From here, Paul cites three words which are all connected to the idea of doctrine. One of the words is not found in many Greek manuscripts, and the order is not always translated the same, but each will be explained, regardless as to whether the third word is an insert error or not.

Paul says, “in doctrine *showing* integrity. The word signifies incorruptibility, and thus immortality. Titus’ doctrine was to be so pure and undefiled that it would exist at all times and without any change or corruption. It was to lack any capacity to break down. That is a tough call for anyone, but this is what is expected of the elder within the church. They are never to be blown by the winds of doctrinal confusion.

He then says that in doctrine, Titus should show “reverence.” Titus was to have a serious honor for the doctrine he espoused, exalting it because it is noble and good. The man of God is to hold doctrine from the word in high esteem, never diminishing it. Instead, he is to treat it as an august, worthy of respect, matter.

Finally, concerning doctrine, Titus should show “incorruptibility.” Albert Barnes says, “The word here used does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, here, the same as purity - that which is not erroneous, and which does not tend to corrupt or vitiate the morals of others, or to endanger their salvation. Everything in his teaching was to be such as to make men purer and better.”

Life application: For the man of God who is selected as an elder, there is a high calling. The stress in Paul’s word of this verse in Titus is on doctrine. The man of God is to not waffle on his doctrine but is to be sound and always set in it. He is to hold proper doctrine in the highest regard, and to live his life so that others understand that this is his treasure and sacred trust.

Lord God, doctrine concerning your word is a matter that many take lightly, changing their thoughts quickly with each argument that arises. Unfortunately, this shows a lack of respect for the incorruptible nature of Your word. There is one truth in doctrine, and it isn't up for sale to the highest bidder, nor does it belong to the most eloquent orator. Instead, it is for us to seek out, and then to hold fast to. Give us wisdom in this, and may we be fixed, firm, and resolute in our proclamation of what is right and correct concerning the truth of Your word. Help us in this, O God. Amen.

...sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Titus 2:8

Paul's words of exhortation to Titus, which are so that he can be an example to the younger men, continue here. He admonishes him that in doctrine he is to show "sound speech that cannot be condemned."

The word translated as "sound" is *hugiés*. It gives the sense of wholesome or healthy. It is the basis for our modern word "hygiene." The words of Titus were to always be that which would be beneficial. This would include both private conversations as well as his public speaking. Those to whom he spoke should be invigorated and built up by the words which he uttered. In this, his words would not "be condemned."

The thought is that nothing could be spoken against what he said, as if he were to be blamed as a corrupting influence. Paul alludes to this type of thought in Ephesians 5:4 where he mentions filthiness, foolish talking, and coarse jesting, "which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

He then next gives the reason for this with the words, "that one who is an opponent may be ashamed." An opponent of the gospel will search for its weaknesses as found in those who proclaim it. If a pastor or a preacher is found to violate his office by having an affair, an opponent will take pride in heralding this as a failure of the individual.

The same is true with an elder's speech. When he speaks that which is not wholesome and uplifting, it will be a point by which the opponent can boast over him. However, in always being circumspect in his words, Paul tells Titus that this will not be a point of boasting. He will instead be "ashamed, having nothing evil to be spoken of you."

A person who is morally upright, and whose words are wholesome and pure may be attacked in various ways, but his conduct and speech will not be a part of it. One can

think of the attacks against various Christian politicians. They may be the brunt of attacks, but those attacks are often empty.

There is no basis for them, and those who make them are the ones who wind up looking foolish. This is the thought that Paul conveys to Titus, and thus to all who enter the ministry.

Life application: The world is watching. It is evaluating the ministers, preachers, and missionaries of the gospel. The judgments of the people concerning the gospel will be based upon the words and actions of those whose duty it is to spread it. It is therefore necessary for those so appointed to always guard their actions and their tongues.

Gracious, merciful, and exalted God! How good it is to know that You are there watching over us. You watch over a billion galaxies and more, and yet You also carefully watch over Your people here on earth. It is amazing to know that we can reach out to You because of Christ Jesus, and we can open our hearts to You in times of joy and in times of need. Thank You for such close attention to us! All glory to Your name. Amen.

Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, Titus 2:9

This verse is reflective of the words of Ephesians 6:5 –

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;”

The issue of bondservants is also addressed in Colossians 3:22-25, 1 Timothy 6:1, 2, and elsewhere. Now to Titus, who is on Crete, he repeats instructions for this group with the words, “Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters.”

A bondservant is a slave, either voluntarily or involuntarily. His work comes without recompense for his labors. It is a life we no longer have in our world today, and so the closest analogy we can draw is a worker under an employer. The same premise holds true for both. The bonded servant is to be obedient to his master, and the worker is to be faithful to his employer.

Paul then continues with, “to be pleasing in all things.” The labor of the slave, or the work of the employee, is to be cheerfully done, thankfully accomplished, and tirelessly conducted. Jesus, using the same word, *doulos*, or “bondservant,” said the following –

“And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” Luke 17:7-10

Paul is following along in his instructions. The New Testament, contrary to the teaching of many liberal pastors, does not attempt to usurp the governing customs and laws of a given land. Paul does tell bondservants that if they can gain their freedom, that is acceptable (1 Corinthians 7:21), but he never attempts to override the laws of the land in the process. He next continues to explain “to be pleasing in all things” by saying, “not answering back.”

The bondservants (and the employees) are not to set about contradicting their master (or employer), nor are they to be disobedient to them. Instead, they are to accept their instructions, and they are to faithfully carry them out without complaint. This is the standard expected of those who are under the charge of another.

Life application: If you want to get fired, just be belligerent, slothful, or careless in your job. When you are let go, you will normally only have yourself (combined with a refusal to comply with the words of Scripture) to blame. If you want to be considered faithful to the word of God, you will be faithful to the one who has charge over you in your employ.

Glorious God, Provider of all that we have, help us to be thankful for the jobs we possess. It is so easy to complain about where we work and who we work for, but in the world today, nobody is forcing us to remain in our employ. As long as we are there, You would have us act obediently, conduct our duties faithfully, and strive to tirelessly work for those we are under. Give us the desire to fulfill this in our work lives. Amen.

...not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. Titus 2:10

Paul continues to explain to Titus how he should exhort bondservants. He continues his list of admonitions for them with, “not pilfering.” The word used is rare, having only been seen elsewhere in Acts 5:2 and 5:3 where Ananias “kept back” a part of his property which he had devoted to the church.

The idea of the word is to appropriate for one's own benefit, and thus to purloin. A slave, regardless of his status, was to deal with his master, and the others he encountered, in integrity. He was to accept his station as one which did not include a wage, and he was to live within those confines.

Paul continues next with, "but showing all good fidelity." This is a contrast to "not pilfering." Bondservants who are also Christians are to demonstrate the highest trust, so that there would be no question of their faithfulness. There is already such an example for believers, right in the first book of the Bible. Of Joseph, it said –

"So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority. ⁵ So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. ⁶ Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate." Genesis 39:4-6

If anyone had a reason to complain about his unfortunate station in life, it was Joseph, and yet he was a faithful slave to his master, showing all good fidelity. This continued on in his life, even when he was sent to prison for a crime he did not commit –

"And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who *were* in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. ²³ The keeper of the prison did not look into anything *that was* under *Joseph's* authority, because the

Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made *it* prosper."

-Genesis 29:22, 23

Paul then explains why he has so commanded this life for bondservants. It is so "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." As a crown adorns the head so that all can see it and be impressed by it, so bondservants were to adorn themselves with honesty and integrity so that others could look at them and see the epitome of faithfulness, despite their lowly state.

In this, they would bring honor to the name of Jesus, and to also bring attention to the Gospel to which they had become obedient. If obedience to the Gospel meant such a life of character, it would be a true sign of its power.

Life application: Are you in a position of working for another? Even if you work in isolation from others, the quality and timeliness of your efforts will be noticeable. How much more when you are constantly seen by others!

No matter what your job duties call for, do them to the very best of your abilities, not for the sake of being seen by man, but because they will be seen by man who will then evaluate your efforts in light of your profession of Jesus Christ as your Lord. When you proclaim Christ, it is Jesus who is truly being evaluated by others when they watch you.

Heavenly Father, as we go off to work, or to the other things we will do today, help us to remember that we are being used as markers to evaluate the Lord we profess. If we are known by the sacred title of "Christian," then what others see in our life, work quality, timeliness, and conduct will be an evaluation of our allegiance to Him as much as anything else. And so may we perform our daily duties with the utmost faithfulness and care. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, Titus 2:11

The word "For" is given based on what Paul has just said about bondservants. They are to be obedient and show all good fidelity to adorn the doctrine of "God our Savior in all things." Therefore, "For" is based on the conduct of bondservants in relation to the doctrine that speaks of Jesus Christ. Understanding this, translations of this verse fall into one of two categories as seen in these examples:

- For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men
- For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men

Scholars argue whether "has appeared" is speaking of "the grace of God," or "to all men." The translation will support either thought. Whichever way, the thought is one of God's grace being seen through the finished work of Christ. It is this which brings salvation, and all men have the opportunity to respond to it.

Depending on the translation the focus is on either God's plan of salvation being revealed to all men – Jew or Gentile, young or old, black or white, bond or free etc. – so that all are saved in the same way.

Or the focus is that the plan was prepared in such a way that it would make the salvation of all men possible; no person being excluded from His grace. In the end, the choice of

translation doesn't change the overall truth that God has a plan of salvation which is one of grace, and that all men may participate in it.

Paul is explaining this so that the bondservants understand why they are to act in the way he speaks. They are in no way excluded from salvation and heavenly reward based on their lowly station in this life.

Life application: As you can see from this verse, nothing in your life should hinder you from being completely obedient to the doctrine which is laid down for us in the epistles. All should be happy to comply with the instructions which are given, because any and all are accepted because of the work of Christ. If you have received Him, you are redeemed, and your heavenly destiny is secure.

Lord God, help each of us to bring glory and honor to You with our lives. Remind us that no matter what our earthly position is, we all enjoy the same salvation. There is no distinction between cultures, colors, or position within the society in which we live regarding our salvation. We all have the same access to Your wonderful grace which has come through the giving of Your Son. Thank You for this. Amen.

...teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, Titus 2:12

Paul now takes the exhortations of the previous verses, and he explains the reason for them. The last thing he relayed was that "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

Jesus is that grace of God which is offered. In response, we are to act in a manner which is appropriate to the grace we have received. This then is what is intended. It is "teaching us." The word signifies discipline, even punishment. It is the kind of chastening that is intended to train up a child.

Charles Ellicott states the intent. He says it is "educating us by life's sad experiences. God's grace is in truth a stern discipline of self-denial and training for higher things."

Understanding the context, Paul says this process is "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" is for a specific purpose. In our lives, we are to refuse to affirm any actions which would be ungodly. That includes a life of irreverence, wickedness, and refusing to give honor to God. We are also to refuse to participate in any worldly lusts.

This speaks of inordinate desires, passions, and urges. We are to deny such things which are contrary to lives of holiness, and we are to “live soberly.”

Here Paul uses the adverbial form of another word that is found in the pastoral epistles. It signifies acting sensibly and with a sound mind. Thus, it speaks of living moderately and in a manner which is true to our calling.

He then says we are to live “righteously.” This speaks of being judicially approved. It was first used in comparison to Jesus on the cross in Luke 23 –

Then one of the criminals who was hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

In other words, just as Jesus had done nothing unjust and yet was sentenced, the criminals had received their punishment justly. So, we are to walk in a manner like that of Christ Jesus.

Paul then continues with, “and godly.” It is an adverb found only here and in 2 Timothy 3:12. It signifies living piously. Our inward actions are to be exhibited in godly outward conduct.

Finally, Paul says that all of these are to be continued in us “in the present age.” This signifies during our entire time in this earthly walk. We have a time ahead where there will be a different order of things. But now, we are stuck in these fallen bodies and in a fallen world. We are to rise above these things though, and we are to conduct our lives in a manner which is appropriate to our calling based on the grace of God found in Christ Jesus.

Life application: There can be no doubt that the words of this verse are difficult to apply to our lives at times. We face many stresses such as hunger, lack of sleep, noisy neighbors, or whatever. They can cause us to get unhinged and off track. But Paul exhorts us to do our utmost to always live in a manner worthy of our calling.

This is what is good and honorable, and so let us pursue this to the greatest extent possible.

Lord God, we can sure face our limitations at any given time. We get hungry, we tire from a lack of sleep, or we might stub our toe and lose our cool. Help us to continue on in a manner which is right and proper in such times. Help us to think on Your word, and to be ready to keep from failing to act in a way which is right, godly, and proper. Amen.

...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, Titus 2:13

Paul has just said that God's salvation has appeared to all men. This then teaches us how to live in this present age. But the reason for the proper living isn't just based on this life. If it were, what would be the point in living as Paul has directed? He told us that we are to deny ungodliness.

That implies there is a God. He told us to deny worldly lusts. But if this life is all there is, then worldly lusts should be at the very heart of our existence. And he told us to live "soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

If this is our only age of existence, then to conduct ourselves in such a manner would be futile, hopeless, and a ridiculous waste of time. We would squander our one chance at existence, waste the fun we could have had, miss out on the opportunity to try every possible delight, and we would die and dissolve into the nothingness we were before we were born.

It is undeniable that if this life is all there is, we might as well live it freely and go out with a bang. However, Paul tells us that we are to live in these proper ways because we are "looking for the blessed hope."

The words "looking for" cannot be speaking about something we now possess, but something we are in anticipation of. We are waiting for something other than what is found in this present age, and which is apart from the world as we now exist in it.

The "blessed hope" then is that which transcends both the age and the world. Paul explains what is on his mind in 1 Corinthians 15 –

"And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable." 1 Corinthians 15:17-19

As Christians, our hope is not grounded “in this life.” Rather, it is grounded in what comes after this life. This is the main theme of Paul’s words, and it is that which is far greater than this futile existence in which man otherwise finds himself. Therefore, our blessed hope is eternal life in a state and quality that we cannot yet even fathom. This wonderful, promised existence is said to come with the “glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

The “glorious appearing” is speaking of that time when Christ comes for His people. There are various views on when this will occur, but a proper study of the doctrine reveals that for those in the church age, meaning the dispensation of grace, it will be at a point in time known as the “pre-tribulation rapture.”

The term “pre-tribulation” points to a time before the seven years of tribulation, described in both Testaments of the Bible, which will come upon the world. The term “rapture” is a word that is explained in detail by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4. It is a moment in time when the Lord will come and translate His people to the glorious state in which they will forever-afterward exist.

The term “of our God” is speaking of Jesus Christ. God is unseen except as He is revealed through Jesus Christ. We do not see either the Father or the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this appearing will be that of Jesus Christ. This description of Him is then furthered by the term, “and Savior.” Jesus Christ is not only our God, but He is our Savior.

There is one God, and He is the God of all that exists. Whether acknowledged or not, God is the God of all people. However, not all people are saved. This is why Paul limits his terminology to Jesus. He is the God of Christians, and He is also their Savior. What He has in store for His people is the blessed hope that Paul speaks of.

Life application: Instead of “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”, let us look forward to our blessed hope; the glorious appearing of Christ for His people! This is the reason for circumspect living at this time.

We will all stand before Him to receive rewards for our deeds done in the body now. Instead of loss, let us strive for great gain. All deeds that we do now which are in faith shall be rewarded as such.

Lord God, Your word calls for us to live in holiness now because of the anticipation of what lies ahead. If this life is all there is, there is really no reason to live in a right, moral, or circumspect manner. Those who deny God with their lips, but who attempt to live in a

moral manner now, belie in their actions what their lips proclaim. Help us not to be foolish in our lives, but to work them out in holiness as we anticipate the glory which is yet ahead because of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works. Titus 2:14

The words, “who gave Himself for us” are speaking of “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” of the previous verse. Being God, and as we are fallen, He must judge our sin. However, He gave Himself for us, and thus He is our Savior from that fallen state. Paul then further explains “who gave Himself for us” with the words, “that He might redeem us.”

We required redemption; a price had to be paid for our sins, and it is God Himself who took on that debt, coming in the Person of Jesus Christ, and dying on a cross as our payment. The blood He shed was the proof of His death. It is through this precious blood of the Lamb that our redemption is secured (1 Peter 1:19). Thus, He redeemed “us from every lawless deed.”

God has a set law. Infractions of that law are lawlessness. Christ Jesus came to pay the penalty for those deeds. His perfect life was exchanged for our fallen, imperfect ones. But not only did He pay the debt for our lawless deeds, He died in fulfillment of the law. For those in Christ, we also die to law. Thus, sin can no longer be imputed to us. Truly then, the redeemed of the Lord are redeemed from every lawless deed.

But Paul continues. He says that Christ also came to “purify for Himself *His* own special people.” The words Paul chooses here are taken directly from the Old Testament Greek (the Septuagint) when speaking of Israel.

Vincent’s Word Studies notes that the term is found in Exodus 19:5; Exodus 23:22; Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 14:2; and Deuteronomy 26:18. He says that “The phrase was originally applied to the people of Israel but is transferred there to believers in Messiah – Jews and Gentiles.”

We have been redeemed in order that we can become a special people to God, just as Israel was. In this act, and in the use of this term by Paul, many scholars then make the jump in logic that this means the Church has now replaced Israel, thus becoming “spiritual Israel.” This is a category mistake, and it is gigantic error.

Just because we have become a special people to God, it doesn't mean that we have replaced God's chosen people, Israel. We have simply joined into the commonwealth of blessing of which they already participate in.

To understand this, we can think of two baskets of olives. God chooses one basket and draws it out for Himself, Israel. He takes the fruit out of it as needed for His oil. At some point, however, the olives in the basket which are good are so few that He then draws out another basket, Gentiles.

That basket has an immense supply of good fruit, so much so that it becomes the predominant fruit used for oil. The oil runs into the bottles is mixed with an almost insignificant amount of Jewish oil. However, that is still coming from the basket of Israel. The two baskets remain separate and distinct.

Now, over the many centuries, the basket of Gentile fruit is starting to really get crummy. The number of good olives is rapidly diminishing, but the number of Israel fruit is on the increase. The categories have never changed, and one did not replace the other. It simply has become the predominant source of oil for a period.

Although not a perfect analogy, one can see that each basket remained the same. One did not replace the other. While the Gentile basket is being predominately used, Paul then says that we are God's own special people for a reason. It is to be "zealous for good works."

Here Paul uses the word *zélótés*. It is the same as a Zealot as is described in Luke 6:15, and Acts 1:13. It denotes a person who "boils over with passion" and thus is an enthusiast (see HELPS Word Studies). God has redeemed us, and now it is anticipated that we will work out that salvation in good works which are in gratitude for the salvation we have been given.

In all, Paul's words reflect a process which began with God in Christ Jesus which leads to our redemption, and which is then to be acted upon by us. Paul explains this process to Timothy, calling it the mystery of godliness –

“God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,

Received up in glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16

In this mystery, there is an anticipated response from us, which is to continue to share this good news, and to act upon it with lives of holiness, and which are dedicated to accomplishing good works in gratitude for our salvation.

Life application: Care needs to be taken when evaluating verses which are taken from the Old Testament and then applied to the church. It is true that the same term concerning God’s special people is applied to the church that was once applied to Israel. It is false that the Gentile-led church has replaced Israel. Categories matter. Don’t mix up the boxes!

Lord God, how good it is to know that You have kept Your promises to Israel which are found in the Old Testament, and which are repeated in the New. Their faithlessness has not negated Your faithfulness. Instead, You are shown even more faithful as they have carelessly wandered from You. Your word cannot be nullified through our actions. And what a great reassurance for each of us concerning our individual salvation. Hallelujah! We are saved with a guarantee. Thank You for this reassurance. Amen.

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.
Titus 2:15

Chapter 2 ends with a note similar to the opening of the chapter –

- v.1 – But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:
- v. 15 – Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.

In both, Titus is exhorted to “speak.” Paul doesn’t want his appointed leader to merely sit and absorb information. He is to transmit it properly and with all authority. The words here are also very similar to words spoken to Timothy at one time or another as we shall see. He begins the verse with, “Speak these things.”

This sums up everything that has been said concerning the various groups of people in the church – the older men, the older women, the young women, the young men, and the bondservants. The words of instruction for each class are to be relayed by Titus. This is like his words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:2. There he said, “Teach and exhort these things.”

Next, he says, “exhort.” The Greek word gives the idea of, “to make a call.” It refers to teaching things as if offering evidence that will stand up in God’s court. The same word is used by Paul to Timothy also in 2 Timothy 4:2. There he says, “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

In this case, he instructs to “exhort with all authority.” Paul instructed Timothy on how to exhort. For example, to the older man, he is to “exhort *him* as a father” (1 Timothy 5:1). As we have seen, in 2 Timothy 4:2, he is to do so “with all longsuffering and teaching.”

Here, understanding the state of those on Crete (and which carries on even today), he is to do so with all authority. He is to stand on the word of God, not waffle under pressure, and not cave to the fallen desires of those in the congregation. Instead, he is to build them up, drawing them from the worldly life they have been brought from, and into a life of holiness and sanctity. Because of the word of God, Titus has a divine commission, and he has divine authority which he is to use as such.

The reason exhortation is so important is that many times people will hear the pastor speak, and they will apply his words up to a certain point and stop. That point is when it becomes too hard to live by the words of instruction.

At such times, they fall back on God’s mercy, instead of standing in obedience to His word. Exhortation is needed to show them that this is not the proper attitude to display. Paul finishes up with, “Let no one despise you.” To Timothy, he said, “Let no one despise your youth.”

He then followed that up with “...but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” This is certainly the same idea being transmitted to Titus, but without the words being explicitly stated. By being an example, as outlined also to Timothy, he would keep from being despised.

The word of God, and a life honoring of Him, should naturally cause those being led to showing honor for the position. This, however, is not always the case. Some people find it joyous to use up the elders or pastors of a church, and then to walk away from them rejoicing over the person they have destroyed.

This type of person is included in the thought. Titus was to be aware of those entrusted to him, and to handle each according to godly wisdom.

Life application: It is necessary that Paul's words to Titus are to be read, remembered, and applied to the life of all those who are in positions of authority within the church. But they are also to be read, remembered, and acted upon by all those who attend the church. It is the responsibility of all to ensure the pastor is doing his job in accord with the word, but they are also to accept his doing of the job (if done properly) without despising him or his position. The two must work in harmony together.

Lord God, it is amazing to see how people will gladly apply the word to their lives while things are going well. But as soon as things get difficult, they will punt the word, ignore the instructions, and rely on your continued mercy, even in their disobedience. True faithfulness comes when we stick to Your word even to our own hurt or distaste. And so help us to always live and act in accord with what You have stated at all times, even when it means a state of unhappiness may be the result. Help us in this, O Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, Titus 3:1

“Them” here is referring to all in the congregation. It is inclusive of all the categories mentioned in Chapter 2 – older men, older women, young women, young men, and bondservants. Paul exhorts Titus to “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities.”

Paul states this same type of thought in Romans 13:1. There he also includes a reason –

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”

In Chapter 2, Paul addressed issues which were reflective of life in general, especially regarding home and church matters. These words go beyond those more local issues, and they embrace conduct for Christians in the society at large. “Rulers and authorities” speaks of any level of government, from the local town magistrates, all the way up to the Roman emperor. Christians are to be subject to such.

Nothing has changed today except the structure of the government. Wherever members of the church are to be found, whether in Sarasota, Florida or Timbuktu, Mali, Christians are expected to be subject to those in power over them. The form of government may be a republic, a monarchy, socialist, or communist; but Christians are to live within the confines of their rulers and authorities, being obedient to their laws. The exception, however, concerns any law which conflicts with their duty to God.

An example would be abortion. It is legal, and therefore Christians are to accept this (even if working legally to have the law changed) within the culture, not going around blowing up people who perform them.

They are also to pay their taxes, even if some of those taxes are used by the government for such purposes, knowing that taxes are used for a whole host of governmental projects. And yet, Christians themselves may not participate in abortion because it is contrary to God’s expectations for His people; abortion is murder.

When faced with either performing mandatory abortions (such as a doctor or nurse), or being told they must have a mandatory abortion, the Christian is to reject this and hold

God's law above that of man. At times, such decisions may be very hard to evaluate as to what should or should not be done. An understanding of God's word, and a reliance on His direction, is always necessary to help form proper decisions.

Paul next says, "to obey." Christians are to obey their leaders, except in matters contrary to God's law. The word of God must take priority in the believer's life.

He then says, "to be ready for every good work." Jesus said to the Jews that they were to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Likewise, Christians should be ready to perform any "good work" within their nation that the government directs.

If it includes working in the government, serving in the military, or paying taxes, those things are to be accomplished without rebellion. Again, unless the work requested or mandated is contrary to the word of God, the believer is to be ready to accomplish it.

Life application: Happily or unfortunately, we are stuck in this world under whatever government we exist. Christians have a responsibility to do what is required of them while that state exists. This includes, if a part of a society which holds votes, using their vote to effect change within that society. Christians who fail to use their vote for good, are guilty of allowing the lack of their vote to be used for bad. All things in this life are temporary, but if we are living it, we are to live it responsibly, and to the glory of God.

Heavenly Father, as Christians we have the unique position of being under two forms of government at one time. We live in lands where human governments rule, and Your word instructs us on how to live in such a situation. But we also live under Your government, and we are obligated to live in accord with Your word. When the two conflict, we are to hold to Your word and will above all else. Give us wisdom in this. Help us as we seek to do what You would always intend for us. Amen.

...to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

Titus 3:2

Paul's words here continue the previous verse. They are words to Titus concerning instruction that he is to give to all in the congregation. He had just instructed him to tell "them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work." He now adds to that with, "to speak evil of no one."

The Greek reads, “to not blaspheme anyone.” As he has just been speaking of rulers, the idea probably is meant towards them first. It is very easy to speak evil of rulers and authorities. For the Christian, this should not be the case. However, Paul extends it to all.

Not only are we to be subject to the ruling authorities, giving them respect, we are to act in that manner with everyone we encounter. We are not to speak ill of them, slander them, or defame them. Our words should be words of edification, not destruction, towards and about others.

Paul then notes that believers are “to be peaceable.” The word is actually a negative, “not contentious.” It signifies one who abstains from fighting. Instead of arguing or beating others up, we are to use words of encouragement and give a hand of support.

Next, he notes, “gentle.” The word gives the sense of acting in a fair and reasonable manner. HELPS Word Studies says that it signifies “‘gentle’ in the sense of truly fair by relaxing *overly strict standards* to keep *the ‘spirit of the law.’*” In that case, it would indicate not acting in a legalistic, over-bearing way.

The verse then ends with, “showing all humility to all men.” The previous word, gentle, is an outward way of acting. This one, humility, is an inner trait. This word signifies a mild, meek, and humble demeanor. Paul says that believers are to have this quality, and then they are to display it towards all men.

There is to be a gracious nature to our character as we interact with our fellow believers, remembering that we are in the presence of God and thus our humility is as much an acknowledgment of Him as it is towards those we encounter.

Life application: As we look at our fellow believers, we might see the traits Paul has been stating either being put into action, or they might be completely lacking. If we can notice these things in others, then we obviously can apply them to ourselves. Hold fast to what is good, reject that which is contrary to the word, and demonstrate the qualities that have been described to the best of your ability at all times.

Lord God, Almighty Father – You have given us words of how we are to act, and the character we are to display towards others. It is so easy to stray from those exhortations. We get upset at our leaders, we have disagreements with those we encounter, we get hungry or tired and our emotions get sour. Help us to realize our limitations, and to step back from speech or action which would be harmful to our witness of You before others

lest we act in an inappropriate manner. Surely, we need Your continuous prompting in this! Amen.

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Titus 3:3

In the previous verses, Paul spoke of being subject to rulers, and to act in a manner which is right in conduct towards others. In this context, he begins this verse with, “For we ourselves...”

Paul is not speaking merely of himself and Titus, but of all believers. This is clear from the content of the coming verses. He is making a general statement about all people – the life that we live in our fallen human nature. With this understanding, he says that we “were also once foolish.”

The word indicates “not thinking.” Thus, it refers to someone who is unmindful of their actions and who acts in a dense or mindless way. As HELPS Word Studies says it, such a person is “just plain stupid.”

Next, Paul says that we were once also “disobedient.” It speaks of someone who is unwilling to be persuaded and thus acts in a contrary manner. In the case of religion, it would be someone who is unwilling to be persuaded by God. God has revealed himself in certain ways, such as through creation. His self-revelation makes His nature and being obvious, and yet we outwardly rebel against what is obvious, doing what we prefer instead of what He prefers.

We also were once “deceived.” The idea is of one who sways from the proper path, roaming into error, or simply being misled. The Greek word is *planaó*, and it is where the word “planet” is derived from. A planet is a “wandering body,” unlike the stars whose course appears constant and predictable. The use of the word in the Bible almost always describes the sin of roaming from what is proper.

Paul next says that we also were once “serving various lusts and pleasures.” It is stronger in the Greek, indicating slavery to desires and pleasures. Instead of living in a right, circumspect, and moral manner, we as humans participate in that which is corrupt, becoming enslaved to our passions and earthly desires. As slaves, we act in a manner which is obedient to the flesh, honoring it as our master.

In addition to this, he notes that we also once were “living in malice and envy.” The word translated as malice signifies “evil.” Thus, we have an evil bent in our minds which is then worked out in outward evil conduct and in doing harm to others (malice). We are also consumed with envy towards those around us who possess what we desire, but do not have. Together, the malice and envy form a deadly cocktail which can, and often does, result in real harm to those who are the target of our unhealthy attitude.

Paul finishes the verse concerning how we once also were by saying that we were “hateful and hating one another.” The word translated as “hateful” is found only here in the Bible. It signifies people who actively and purposefully hate things that are good. It is an attitude which is repulsive.

HELPS Word Studies says that it is seen “...when ‘self-revealed failure’ is apparent even to the perpetrator of a crime.” In the end, such hatred is a hatred of God. As noted above, He has revealed Himself in a manner which is obvious. But fallen man refuses to participate in loving Him. Instead, we act out in a hateful manner. Paul then combines this with “hating one another.”

In being hateful, we transfer that corrupt state of self outwardly, acting hatefully to others. There is no sense of brotherly love, but of ill-will.

Life application: We all have these negative qualities inside of us, whether we act on them or not. It is a part of human nature. The further we are from a life of godliness, the more these will be acted out. They will be on prominent display in our life and conduct. Eventually, we become like brute animals.

A sufficient example is to look at those who are in gangs. They display most of these traits towards the world around them. Their only allegiance is to self-gain, and there is no regard for the Creator, or for those created in His image. Without Christ, this nature exists and can be brought forward from anyone. The tribulation period will demonstrate this on a global scale.

Lord God, our human nature is one which is fallen, and which is at enmity with You. Without Christ Jesus, life is a bad path which can easily degrade into the vilest conduct towards You, towards others, and towards self. Thank You that we can be freed from the flesh to walk in the Spirit because of Jesus. In this, we can and will become vessels which are holy and acceptable to You. And so Lord, help us to apply Your word to our daily walk always. Amen.

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Titus 3:4

Paul's words of verse 3 spoke of the disobedience of believers prior to coming to Christ, including all of the perverse and hateful things they participated in. Now he begins to contrast that to the greatness of God, and what he has done for us, even while we were in that detestable and unrighteous state.

This contrast begins to be seen immediately with the word, "But." It is Paul's way of saying, "We were this way, BUT! Let me now tell you about the greatness of God's love." And so, he begins with, "But when the kindness and the love of God..."

We were "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Despite this, God was still willing to overlook what we had done because of what He had accomplished for us apart from anything we had done.

It was an act of kindness, and it was an act of love. The Greek word translated as "kindness" is used only by Paul. It signifies "meeting real needs, in God's way, in His timing" (HELPS Word Studies). Our needs were met, and love was poured out by "God our Savior." The Greek reads, "the Savior of us, God."

God, meaning God the Father, is contrasted to Jesus our Savior here. What this means is that God the Father initiated the process of salvation, and He appointed His Son to accomplish the work to be done. It is this kindness and love of God which then was directed "toward man."

This takes us immediately back to the thought of the previous verse. It was not just toward man, but toward fallen man as Paul described. We were in a wretched state before God, and yet God directed His kindness and love towards us anyway. It is this unfathomable display of God's unlimited grace which Paul says has "appeared."

That which has appeared will be qualified in the next verse, and then it will be stated in the verse after that. But we know who it is that has appeared. It is Christ Jesus our Lord. Thank God for Him. The words here are reflective of what Paul says in Romans 5:8 –

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Life application: There is no merit in our salvation. We were as far from God as we could possibly be. The infinite gap could never be bridged, nor could a ladder rise so high. Only God could make the connection once again. As this was an act of His grace, let us never boast that it is otherwise. All glory is to be laid at the feet of Christ Jesus our Lord. God's kindness and love have appeared and saved us.

Lord God, we were in a wretched state; cut off and without hope in this world. And yet, despite this, Your kindness and love towards us were made manifest in the giving of Your Son for our sin. Your love toward us while we were still sinners is marvelous, and we have received it as such. Let us not now squander that glorious salvation which You have wrought. But help us to live out that gift of life with gratitude and thanks which is displayed in honor towards You. Amen.

...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
Titus 3:5

This continues the thought of the previous verse, but it is tied into the whole package of thought since verse 3:1. Paul exhorted the believers through Titus in verses 1 & 2 to be subject to rulers, to obey, to be ready for every good work, and to do so in a peaceable, gentle, and humble attitude.

Then in verse 3, he spoke of the wretched state that we all were in prior to being saved by Christ. That was immediately followed up in verse 4 with, "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared..."

That now brings in the words of verse 5. Paul begins with, "not by works of righteousness which we have done." This is being contrasted to the state we were in, and it is complementing the "every good work" of verse 1. We were in a state of disobedience, living in a manner contrary to what God expects of us. In that fallen state, God initiated the process of our change by sending Jesus.

We had not yet done any good works to merit His favor. Even if people before coming to Christ did good things, they could never meet the high standard of righteousness that God expects. Our deeds were tainted by sin. But even more, they were done in a state of unbelief.

Without belief in Christ (faith), there can be no merit for our works. Our state was fallen, and so nothing we did could meet God's bar of what is considered "righteous." And so

Paul says that our works are wholly excluded from merit before Him. He sent Jesus *before* any such works of righteousness were possible.

Thus, the sending of Jesus was an act of pure grace, unmerited favor. And it was in a condition of needed mercy. We needed to not get the righteous justice that was due to us.

And this is exactly what God provided. God sent His Son to us not in a state of merited favor, “but according to His mercy.” God’s extended mercy implies that we needed mercy. If so (and it is so), then it means that we deserved His punishment. We had not worked our way out of the pit of destruction. Instead, we wallowed in it.

Remember also, Paul was an observant Jew. And not only was he observant, but he was the cream of the crop, a Pharisee. And yet, he includes himself in the equation. He was as in need of God’s mercy as all others. Jesus said as much to the people of Israel –

“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

-Matthew 5:20

Obviously, if the most observant Jews of all could not enter the kingdom of heaven through their own merit, then it shows that something much greater was needed. This is what Paul now speaks of in Titus. God sent Jesus to us as a merciful offering. It is in this act that “He saved us.”

The only way we could be brought out of the pit of destruction in which we lived was for God to initiate the process. In that, and through that, we can be saved. Paul is speaking only to believers here. The words, “He saved us,” are speaking only of those who are saved by God through the work of Christ. However, it is inclusive of all who are saved – past, present, and future. Paul’s words are written as doctrine for the church age.

He then explains how this salvation came about. It was, “through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Reformed theologians say that a person cannot be saved unless God first regenerates them to believe. They then believe, and after that, they are saved.

They then say that being “born again” in John 3:3 is that process. In other words, a person who is born again isn’t yet saved. He is simply regenerated to believe at that

point. Only after that he will then believe and be saved. If that isn't the craziest theology imaginable!

Paul's words here completely refute such illogical doctrine. The "washing of regeneration" literally signifies "water for washing." It is baptism (of the Holy Spirit) that Paul speaks of here. The only other time he uses this term is in Ephesians 5:26. There he says (while speaking of the church) –

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word," Ephesians 5:26, 27

It is first through the word that one is washed. The word is given by the Spirit of God. This then needs to be brought back further to Romans 10 –

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
-Romans 10:16, 17

Paul's words clearly show that "not all have obeyed the gospel." There is a choice (free will) which is involved in the process. That choice is based on the word which has been given by the Spirit of God. In hearing the word, a choice is made (belief). In that choice, faith is exercised. In the exercising of that faith, man receives "the washing of regeneration."

That is the baptism (of the Holy Spirit) spoken of by Paul here, and which leads to "the renewing of the Holy Spirit." This is what Paul means when he said in the previous verse, "He saved us." It takes us again to Romans 10 –

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

The entire process is initiated by God, but it must be acted upon by man (faith). The moment that faith in the gospel is exercised, Paul then tells us what the result is. This is found recorded in Ephesians 1:13, 14 –

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of

promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

The sealing of the Holy Spirit which Paul speaks of in Ephesians 1 is the same thing he is referring to in Titus 3. Through the word, we “hear.” In hearing, we believe. In believing, we are sealed with the Spirit and are saved. The entire process is of God, and not of our own works. Faith is not considered a work (Romans 3:27), and it is something we must exercise as a part of this process.

Finally, the “renewing of the Holy Spirit” means that we are now acceptable to God. Though we are still capable of wrongdoing, that wrongdoing is not imputed to us (2 Corinthians 5:19). Rather, God accepts us because of Christ, and our works are now made acceptable to Him through Christ as well. That is the “every good work” which Paul cited in verse 3:1.

Life application: It seems as if such a long commentary on what Paul says at times is unnecessary. His words are clear and precise. But because so many people have come in and muddied the theological waters, even to the point where there is complete confusion in how Paul’s words are presented, there actually needs to be a highly detailed explanation of his thoughts at times.

Always be ready to dig into the word, keep the waters clear, and accept the basics as they are given (such as free-will) from the start. Once we divert from the obvious, the pure flowing river becomes tainted. In the end, it is all about Jesus who has come to give us the remedy to the state which we are in.

Lord God, thank You for the Holy Bible, Your precious word. Help us to read it daily, apply it to our lives always, and to never muddy its purity with unsound theology. Your word is a wonderful light, and it is the purest of water. Thank You for your precious word. Amen.

...whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, Titus 3:6

Paul’s words of this verse refer to the mercy of God which led to our salvation “through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, specifically, he is referring to the Holy Spirit. As he says, “whom He poured out on us.”

The “pouring out” of the Spirit is something that is referred to in both testaments of the Bible. For example, several prophets in the Old Testament mention this. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Zechariah each speak of it. The example from Joel is then repeated in

Acts 2. Paul refers to the pouring out of the Spirit in Romans 5:5 as well (more specifically the love of God by the Holy Spirit) –

“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

It is this pouring out which was done so “abundantly.” The word gives the sense of “richly.” The precious Spirit is poured into an earthly jar of clay. Thus, the contents are what is of value, and they are what make the vessel holy and suitable to God. The thought of this abundance is referred to by Jesus when He said, “...God does not give the Spirit by measure.”

Instead of doling out the Spirit in small doses, He pours it out on His people in abundance. We are filled to capacity. When a person calls on Christ, they receive the Spirit in His fullness. Just as when a person gets married, they will never get more married, so when a person receives the Spirit, there is a completeness to the reception of the Spirit.

Any filling after receiving Jesus is passive, not active. The Spirit will get more of us as we submit to God. And this process is accomplished “through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

It is the reception of Christ that allows the Spirit to be poured out. It is living rightly before God because of Christ that fills us with the Spirit (passively) after that point. In Paul’s words, we now have a better understanding of the words of verse 4. There he said, “God our Savior.”

Now he refers to Jesus Christ our Savior. God’s work of salvation is accomplished through the work of Christ Jesus. From there, God pours out His Spirit in the believer. All three members of the Trinity are clearly presented in this passage, each fulfilling His own role in the process. Though the word “Trinity” is never used in Scripture, the doctrine is clearly taught, nonetheless.

Life application: Biblical doctrines do not have to be stated by name for them to be valid doctrines. “Original sin” and “rapture” are words not used in Scripture, but both are clearly taught. “Trinity” is not used in Scripture, but the concept is. Don’t be led astray by people who knock on your door and tell you that the things you have been taught are not true just because they are not explicitly named in the Bible.

Instead, open the book up, show them where they are wrong, and tell them to come back when they have received the true gospel; not a false one.

Glorious God; exalted heavenly Father! It is so wonderful to walk in Your presence, knowing You are always there with us. No matter where we go, and no matter what point in history we find ourselves, You are already there. What a comfort it is to know that we are never separated from You, even for a moment. Thank You for this wonderful knowledge. Great are You, O God, and greatly are You to be praised. Amen.

...that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:7

The words, “that having been justified by His grace,” are given to confirm the words of verse 5 which said, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy.”

God granted mercy upon us while we were still in a position of enmity with Him. As there are no works of righteousness on our part which are included in the process, then we are wholly “justified by His grace.” This is a truth which is clearly and precisely stated in Ephesians 2:8, 9 –

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

The process of salvation is given by God, it is an act of grace, and it comes through our faith (belief) in what God has done in Christ. There is no merit on our part in the process. We are simply asked to believe and receive. In doing so, Paul says that “we should become heirs.” The concept of being heirs is dealt with by Paul on several occasions. His words in Romans 8 help explain what he means –

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” Romans 8:16, 17

In the book of Galatians, Paul then says that by faith in Christ we are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (3:26). He says again in Galatians that we are no longer slaves, but sons, and if sons we are heirs of God through Christ (4:7).

And again in Ephesians, he says that the “Gentiles are fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6).

As Paul says “we” in this verse to Titus, it means that Jews were under the same station as the Gentiles. Whether Jew or Gentile, all need Christ, and without Christ we are not heirs. But if we are in Christ, we become “heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

This takes us right back to Titus 1:2 where Paul noted the “hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.” From there he showed that this hope comes through preaching, specifically the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are shown here in chapter 3 that being heirs means the realization of that eternal life.

It isn’t something that we may possess, but rather it is something that we do possess. Because of faith in Christ, we move from one state to another. If we are heirs; we possess eternal life. The deal is done.

Life application: This verse again implicitly speaks of eternal salvation. By an act of faith, we are made heirs. In that state, we are granted eternal life. Nobody ever questions Abraham’s salvation. The Bible speaks of him as the father of faith, and the pattern for those who will follow him.

If we are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise,” then we possess the same salvation as Abraham. If God’s promise to Abraham is true, then His promise to us is as well. Think these things through and stand fast in your salvation.

Lord God, You set the pattern for righteousness in Abraham. The law, which came much later, cannot override what You revealed in that pattern. It simply showed us how desperately we need Jesus, and how sinful our sin is to You. But Christ, having fulfilled the law, now offers us the same promise of righteousness that was seen in Abraham. We become heirs and partakers in eternal life. What a marvelous gift You have given us. Thank You for Your grace which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. Titus 3:8

Paul begins this verse with, “This is a faithful saying.” It is referring to what he has just stated in verses 4-7 concerning what God has done through Jesus Christ for believers.

Understanding this, Paul then takes that thought and shows what our obligation is because of God's grace and mercy towards us.

With this understanding, he continues with, "and these things I want you to affirm constantly." The question then arises, "What things?" Is it something he has already said, or is it what he will say? The answer is "both."

Paul desires that what he will say next is something that those in Christ will stand fast on continuously, and practice constantly. It is certain that his words are directed towards believers, because he then says, "that those who have believed in God should be careful."

Believing in God is something that people all over the world do, whether it is the true God or not. Paul, however, is referring to "God our Savior" noted in verse 4. He isn't simply referring to "God" in a general sense, but to the One true God. The words of verses 4-7 apply to "God" as Paul intends, and thus it is the God revealed in Christianity that he is speaking of. With that understanding, he continues by saying "that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works."

People speak of "good works" all the time. Ten thousand commentaries speak of "works" as proof of salvation – "No works; not saved." That is rather shallow concerning a gift which is "not of works." If works are required to prove salvation, then the salvation was not actually "by grace through faith." So, the question then becomes, "What works?" If we are instructed to pursue good works by Paul here, then what is he speaking of?

The answer is that any work accomplished in faith is a "good work." Any work not done in faith is not a good work. Something as simple as speaking to God is an action which is in faith, and it is a good work. Giving money to the church, if not done in faith, is not a good work. There is no such thing as works proving salvation.

Rather, works done in faith demonstrate salvation, but they are not something that either "proves" or "guarantees" it. And so that leads to completing Paul's thoughts in this verse. He is referring to maintaining good works because, "These things are good and profitable to men." Q: What things though? A: It is the things he said in verses 1 & 2–

“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”

A person of faith will hopefully live in faith, demonstrating his faith in his conduct. This is not the default position though, and it is the reason why we read the Bible, study what Paul exhorts for us to do, and then apply it to our lives. To not do these things in no way indicates a person is not saved.

Man is not the arbiter of who is and who is not saved. God is. However, we can say, “That person is not living out his life in accord with Scripture.” From there, it is our job to call the person to account for his inappropriate behavior, and to be willing to correct him in what is proper.

In the coming verses, Paul will show what inappropriate behavior is, contrasting it with what he said in verses 1 & 2. He will also then give a corrective action which faithful believers are to carry out when improper conduct continues to be exhibited.

Life application: As noted here, it is as common as sunny days in Florida for people to write commentaries about how works prove salvation. But they stop there, failing to explain what this means. Probably one reason for this is because they haven’t thought the issue through to a logical conclusion.

But a second reason is surely that by saying, “Works prove salvation,” the commentator can then judge others for failing to do whatever good works he decides are necessary to meet his own agenda – giving money for a certain cause, cleaning the church bathrooms, or whatever. When a person doesn’t do as he wishes, he can then hold their salvation up like a carrot that must be grabbed for by fulfilling his own wishes.

Let us not get caught in this trap. When someone says, “Works prove salvation,” then ask him, “What works?” If he says anything other than “Works done in faith and as outlined in Scripture,” then tell him to take a hike.

Lord God, being obedient to Your word is not that difficult if we just keep what we are supposed to do in context. We live in the dispensation of Grace, and so we can simply turn to the letters of Paul, and there we can find our doctrine for this age. It is neither complicated, nor is it burdensome. Help us to rightly apply Scripture to our lives, and help us to live in faith, and to demonstrate that life of faith in works of faith which are pleasing to You. Amen.

But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Titus 3:9

Paul now writes words like what he had written to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 1:4, he said –

“...nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.”

Other parts of his letters to Timothy also cover the other points of this verse to Titus. Here he begins with “foolish disputes.” This was specifically addressed to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:23 where he used the term, “foolish and ignorant disputes.” These are any disputes which have no importance in the overall scheme of things.

The Greek word for “foolish” gives the sense of being dull (insipid) or flat (without an edge). It is *móros*, the root of our modern “moron.” It is a person who is mentally inert – a dolt – who speaks that which is moronic or insensible. We might call him “brainless.”

In engaging the mouth without proper brain matter to support whatever comes out of the mouth, these people argue over things that they have no true comprehension of. And worse, they argue it *ad nauseam*. Some argue over political matters, some over whether the earth is flat, some whether we can know reality.

Paul would leave his exhortation solely with spiritual matters. In this, foolish disputes are started and engaged in over when the rapture will occur, why the King James Version is the only “true” version of the Bible, or some will even freely choose to argue over why we don’t have free-will.

These people grab onto a subject that has absolutely no basis in reality, and they suddenly argue as if they have all the knowledge available on the subject, without any proof at all. In fact, when proof is presented, it is immediately rejected, and their line of unreasonable argumentation simply continues, in its same brainless manner.

Paul then mentions “genealogies.” The Bible, particularly Genesis and Chronicles, is full of genealogies. They are scattered throughout other books as well. These genealogies inevitably are twisted and spiritually manipulated to supposedly reveal a Jewish line which is superior to all others. Being a rabbi himself, Paul knew that this was the intent of constantly referring to these genealogies.

By allowing the Judaizers to teach these things, it would effectually end any idea of a church of both Jews and Gentiles who were unified as one. Instead, two distinct classes – one supposedly superior over the other – would develop and flourish. All things Jewish would be considered as the ideal. All things Gentile would be considered as base and contemptible.

He next cites “contentions.” The word indicates a quarrel. It can even be used to speak of those who bear arms in a battle. This is what some people live for, the argument for the argument’s sake. They have no desire to build anyone up, and they have no desire to be truly edified in the word of God.

Instead, they perversely want to be proven right at all costs, and to the harm of any who would dare challenge them. If they can start a fight, it is a sure guarantee that they will do so.

Paul’s next category is “strivings about the law.” A hint concerning this: The law is annulled in Christ. There is no need to dwell on whether we can or cannot eat a pan full of bacon. The matter is settled. But some people will pick out points from Scripture, taking them completely out of the intended context, and they will strive about them.

The Feasts of the Lord are a part of the law. The law is fulfilled in Christ. Thus, the feasts are fulfilled. There is no future application of them for those in the church. But people will strive about these things, charging ahead with something they have stuck in their mind, whether it is based on reality or not. The list could go on all day as to what people will strive about from the law.

Paul then says, “for they are unprofitable and useless.” There is no value in any of the things that such moral minuscules find delight in. If one understands the context of what is being presented in Scripture, then they are to make their point about it, but not get caught in an endless cycle of argumentation about it.

It serves no purpose, and it only reduces the person to the same level as that of the one who wants to argue. There is no profit in such a waste of time, and in the end, nothing will get settled. The dolt-factor is simply too deeply ingrained in the person they are vainly trying to reason with.

Paul will give the cure for this in the next verse. O! If the Christian would pay heed to his words, maybe even citing them after having given their side of the matter, so much less

grief would be found in the world today. There is enough of that outside of Christian circles. We need much less of it among those who are Christians, or who claim to be so.

Life application: Do you want to look like a fool? Then keep arguing with a fool. Eventually, you will have all the foolish appearance that he has. Solomon says as much in Proverbs 26:4. Don't become one!

Lord God, give us wisdom to not argue with fools according to their folly, but to give a reasonable explanation for what we believe, and then leave them to either accept what is proper or to reject it. But arguing with fools will only make us look just like them. It is a pointless waste of time. Instead, give us the wisdom to always seek that which is good, honorable, and right. Amen.

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, Titus 3:10

The Greek word for “divisive” here is *hairetikos*. It is found only here in Scripture, and it is the basis for our word for “heretic.” However, the word doesn't necessarily refer to what we would think of as a heretic in the modern sense. It signifies “a *factious* person, specializing in half-truths and misimpressions ‘to win others over’ to their *personal opinion* (misguided zeal) – while creating *harmful* divisions” (HELPS Word Studies).

In other words, this is the person on social media today who jumps into every post he sees and argues his point without any true knowledge of what he is speaking about, or who purposefully misrepresents an issue or point to simply divide. One might use the word “contrarian” to describe him. Whatever you say, he will take an opposing view and beat it to death.

It is a truth that unlike any other discipline or field on the planet, every Christian seems to be a specialist in theology, no matter how little of the Bible they know. The reason for this often comes down to trust. A pastor, preacher, scholar, or teacher is in a position of trust.

Therefore, when someone hears or reads a comment by such a position, regardless as to whether their analysis is sound or not, that person will forever cling to what they were taught about that issue.

It does not matter one iota if the church has replaced Israel or not, if someone has been told by another who seems trustworthy that the church has replaced them, they will

argue that point to death from that point on. The same is true with any biblical doctrine as well.

If someone is told that Jesus was a created being by a person in a position of trust, they will argue that point until they are blue in the face, denying that He is God. Very few will willingly set aside all presuppositions and honestly evaluate a matter after they have been taught it.

This is why there are so many cults and aberrant doctrines found within churches. “I heard; I believed. I will hold fast to the end. I was told that the KJV is the only acceptable translation of the Bible and all others are of the devil and it must be true.”

The list of such things is almost unlimited. The sad part of this type of thinking is that often people will spend more time trying to prove what is false than they would otherwise spend if they simply put forth the effort to learn the truth.

But not all people are divisive about such things. Some simply believe and refuse to consider other options. Some, however, believe and then push their incorrect ideas upon others again and again and again (and again!). This is the type of person Paul is speaking of in this verse.

His words here are not simply a suggestion. Rather, they are prescriptive words for the entire church age. Such a person is to be shown what is correct. If he refuses to heed, and continues to be divisive, he is to be admonished a second time concerning his wrong stand and belligerent attitude concerning it. After that, he is to be rejected. He should not be responded to or given any credence in the discussion any longer.

Why would Paul say this? The reason is obvious. If someone is so dull that they have believed such a lie or is so treacherous that he would purposefully teach such a lie, then others are obviously susceptible to this doctrine. This is why people really drank cyanide-laced Kool Aid at Jonestown. It is why Heaven’s Gate members committed mass suicide believing that they would be transported to a spacecraft following the Hale-Bopp comet.

If one thinks that adherents to the Jehovah’s Witnesses are simply a bunch of people with screws loose, they have missed the greater point. People’s screws may be loose, but they may also be willing to go further than reaching for the nut in the coconut tree. Allowing crazy ideas to circulate can cause real harm. Allowing them within Christian doctrine can lead to the loss of souls.

Life application: James 3:1 says, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” James goes on to explain why this is. Little errors can turn into major problems. As Paul says elsewhere, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9). Allowing a foot in the door by divisive, uneducated, or simply crazy people can lead to a world of harm.

Lord God, Your word tells us to reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition. You have told us this for a reason. It is not a suggestion, but a command. Help us to be fixed and firm in our doctrine to the point that we can stand up against such people. And surely, the only way to be sound in doctrine is to read, know, and apply Your word to our lives. And so help us in this, O God. Amen.

...knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned. Titus 3:11

Paul now speaks of the person of verse 9 who lives for foolish disputes and the like. In verse 10 he gave his advice, saying to reject such a person after a first and second admonition. The reason for this is that a person like this is “warped.”

The word is unique in Scripture, *ekstrephó*. One can almost hear the meaning from its pronunciation. It signifies “turning inside out,” thus to pervert. He takes what is good and completely pulls the goodness out of it and makes it into something bad.

Think of it! The Bible is a beautiful treasure of God’s word for us to live by, to explore, and to revel in, but some pull it inside out to make it say whatever they wish. They then argue their misdirected use of Scripture till they are blue in the face. This is exactly what Paul has warned against, and it is what he now describes concerning this sort. Not only is he warped, but he is “sinning.”

To sin is to miss the mark. Paul indicates that this person has taken Scripture intended for exalting God, and he has missed the mark. Instead, he uses it to exalt self, misdirect, bring others into bondage, make profit, or whatever other misuse of Scripture is his intent. As incredible as it seems, some have used Scripture to justify sex cults, something that could never be inferred by a normal-brained person. All such misuse of Scripture shows that such a person is “self-condemned.”

The person who teaches such twisted concepts knows very well that what they teach is wrong, but he approves of it anyway to meet his own misguided appetite. His words divide the church, cause strife among believers, and damage the view of Christ in the

eyes of others. Thus, such a person should be removed from the church to bring it back into proper functioning.

Life application: Now that you are aware of those warned against in verse 9, what to do about them in verse 10, and why you are to do it from verse 11, watch out for them on social media, in Bible studies, in conversations about theology, and the like. Understanding what Paul says here in Titus will alert you to this sort. Be ready to defend against their unwholesome ways and warn others of the truth concerning their sinful tactics.

Lord God, there are a lot of people who are more than willing to mishandle Your word for personal gain. With the advent of social media, there is a specialist behind every keyboard, waiting to highlight their smarts, even if their doctrine is horrifying. Help us to be sound in our theology, and to be aware of such twisters of Your word. From there, help us to do as Your word says, and to cut them off after a first and second warning. Give us wisdom in this, O God. Amen.

When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Titus 3:12

Paul seems to have the intent of having either Artemas or Tychicus replace Titus as the main leader of the churches on Crete during the time Titus is gone from that area. This is exactly what he did when he asked Timothy to come to him in Rome from his position in Ephesus in 2 Timothy 4:11-13 –

“Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. ¹² And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.”

Of Artemas, nothing else is known. There are various traditions about him. One is that he was one of the seventy disciples sent out by Jesus. Another is that he eventually became bishop of Lystra. However, these are not certain.

Tychicus seems to be a favorite of Paul's. As noted, he was sent to take over for Timothy at one point, and such is true here. In Scripture, he is mentioned in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and in 2 Timothy 4:12 – always in a favorable light.

Paul then says, “be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis.” There are several cities which bore this name. One was in Cilicia, one in Thrace, and one in Epirus. Despite scholars

choosing a favorite possibility as to which Paul is referring to, it is completely unknown which is the right one.

Titus knew, and that is sufficient. The reason for such a popular name is that *Nikopolis* means “City of Victory.” Thus, each city was probably known for being connected to some battle of times past.

The verse finishes with, “for I have decided to spend the winter there.” Again, no reason for this is known. It could have been a great spot for evangelism, it could be that there was a church needing direction there, or it could be that they had the world’s best shawarma and Paul needed a winter of relaxing (probably not). As he is asking for Titus to meet him there, it is probable that there is some connection to church matters that Paul felt Titus could handle.

Life application: Tychicus has been mentioned several times in Scripture, always in a positive way. Titus is also shown in this light. They were ready to go where Paul directed, and to accomplish those things which they were well-suited for. Regardless as to whether you are in the ministry or in plumbing, you have a duty which needs to be done.

Do others look at you in such a favorable light that you would be first on their mind to be called for special tasks of great importance? If not, get that changed. Become a reliable, faithful, willing employee. Be dedicated to your life’s profession and do it with zeal.

Lord God, each of us has a task to accomplish in this life. Some of us are plumbers, some cut hair, some work at the wastewater plant. Whatever we do, are we known as the most willing to work faithfully and to be noted as the most trustworthy? If not, what kind of an example are we setting for others in our faithfulness to Christ? If we cannot be completely faithful to our earthly job, how is it that we can be considered faithful to our heavenly responsibilities? Help us, Lord, to always be the most faithful, trustworthy, and zealous people that we can be in all matters. Amen.

Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. Titus 3:13

Zenas is believed to be a contracted form of the name Zenodorus. This is like several other people in the New Testament who are called by their contracted names. For example, Priscilla is called Prisca, and Silvanus is called Silas, etc. Zenas is only mentioned here in Scripture, and Paul calls him “the lawyer.”

Two accepted possibilities are given for what this means. The first is that he was a jurist who worked in legal circles under matters of Roman law. The second is that he is a lawyer in the sense of being a scribe, such as is noted in Matthew 12:38. If so, then he is a lawyer under the Law of Moses.

The third-century theologian Hippolytus says that he was one of the seventy disciples, who later became Bishop of Diospolis. Along with him, Paul mentions “Apollos.”

It is reasonably certain that this is the same Apollos who is mentioned twice in Acts as well as seven times in 1 Corinthians. Whether Zenas was a lawyer of the Law of Moses or not, it is with all certainty that Apollos was well-versed in that same law. That is seen in Acts 18:24 where he is called “an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures.”

As “Scriptures” meant the Old Testament, he was well informed in the contents of the Law of Moses. Paul asks Titus to send these two “on their journey with haste.”

The words, “with haste,” though carrying a part of the idea, are not fully sufficient. The Greek can and does imply speedily, but it also includes the sense of diligently, or earnestly. It’s not that Paul is asking that they just be rushed out the door, but to ensure that they are sent properly. This is seen in the final clause. Paul includes the words, “that they may lack nothing.”

Paul wants Titus to ensure that nothing necessary for their journey would be lacking. They were to be supplied with money, letters of introduction, food, etc. This would ensure that they would not be lacking in any way, and they would be more effective in their ministry. Instead of getting to a town and needing to work as day laborers to buy their food, they could spend that time teaching and ministering to others.

Life application: Does the church you attend support missionaries? If not, why not? Are you sure you’re in the right church? If they do, are you helping to support them? If not, why not? What things do you treat yourself to each day, or each week, that they will not be enjoying? Consider your situation in relation to theirs and then act in a way that will demonstrate how much we appreciate them.

Lord God, there are missionaries sent out around the world to spread a message to others. Some are teaching the true gospel. Others are spreading a false gospel. Those who spread the false one are normally well-funded, aggressive, and quick to pounce. Those who spread the truth are often not well-funded but are truly caring about what they are doing. The only thing limiting them from being able to reach more people is

what we are willing to give to support them. Help us to be willing to share what we have with those who are doing this great service in often difficult situations. Give us hearts willing to support them, O God. Amen.

And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. Titus 3:14

In verse 8, Paul was speaking about believers, and the good works they were to maintain. He then discussed those who are divisive and how to handle them. After that, he brought up sending Artemas or Tychicus to Crete. And then he spoke about sending Zenas and Apollos on their journey.

In this verse, he now returns to the believers on Crete with the same thought he had left off with – good work. One final time before closing, he brings this subject up with, “And let our people learn to maintain good works.” Notice the similarity to verse 8 – “...those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.”

The sense is that good works are to show forth from them in all they do, not merely for others to see the works themselves, but that they would see the state of those who do them, and the results of them. Needs should be met, contentment should be the result, and the works should show forth as being the reason for those things.

It is obvious that “our people in this verse” are those who “have believed in God” of verse 8. They are the saved of Crete, but Paul’s words are prescriptive for the church age. All who have called on God through Jesus Christ are included in this exhortation. Further, he says that they are “to *meet* urgent needs.”

This then expands on the words, “to maintain good works.” It follows on with the thought of the previous verse where Paul asked Titus to assist Zenas and Apollos. Their work needed assistance, and this is probably what spurred Paul’s mind onto repeating the need for good works and meeting urgent needs.

Paul’s mind is directed to the state of the church, including those in it, and those who go forth from it. In meeting such needs, he says of the believers, “that they may not be unfruitful.”

Instead of just living out their salvation in a barren, useless way, he would have believers do that which is profitable towards meeting the needs which arise in the affairs of the

church. This would, in turn, bless both the individuals and those who received their assistance.

A church which is unfruitful will lead to a church which is stagnant, lifeless, and filled with moaners. Paul's words are intended to avoid that.

Life application: The church often gets involved in things that are completely useless. Giving for a private jet for the pastor is such a thing. Instead, the church needs to focus on real needs of real people. The building where the church meets needs to be attended to from time to time.

The pastor will normally receive his livelihood from the church. Missionaries cannot go out without funding and support. Such things are needed, and those in the church should be fruitful in attending to those things. To not do so, is to fail in the very word which has been given through Paul.

Lord God, grant us the desire to be more than just seat warmers in our church. Each believer must evaluate, and honestly answer, "What have I done to improve the church and those in it?" If nothing has been given of time, ability, or earnings, but only in the warming of a seat, nothing of value has been added to the church. Help us to give of ourselves as we have been prospered. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace *be* with you all. Amen. Titus 3:15

Paul gives his final words of the epistle for Titus to read, and to act on. He first says, "All who *are* with me greet you."

It is a standard word signifying to greet, wish well, or salute. It is unknown who was with him, and it is also unknown where he was at the time of his writing. Quite often, he would include a named list of those with him. However, that is omitted here. Thus, Titus was obviously aware both who was with him and where he was. Next, he says, "Greet those who love us in the faith."

There is no article in front of "faith," and so it reads, "Greet those who love us in faith." Paul is speaking of the state of faith in which those he is addressing exists. Their love is in that state. It is to those in that state that he sends his greeting to. Finally, he ends as he does in some other epistles with, "Grace *be* with you. Amen."

In Greek, it literally states, “The grace,” and thus he is speaking of “the grace of Jesus Christ” specifically. Paul desires them (and thus us!) to have and live in the grace of Jesus Christ. He then closes with “Amen,” or “So be it.”

Life application: Having read and studied the book of Titus, you are now admonished to continue reading it, along with the rest of Scripture, every day of your lives. Pursue the Lord, cherish His word, and be ready to always share both with others. Always be prepared!

Lord God, how can we be prepared to share Your word with others if we don't know it? Give us the wisdom to pick it up, read it, and contemplate it daily. Open our eyes to its truths, give us understanding of it, and the desire to then share it with others. Help us to be bold in our proclamation of it, and to always stand fast on its truth. No matter where others go, may we hold fast to the truth of Jesus Christ – the Author and Subject of the word of God. Amen.