The Epistle of Paul to TITUS

Greeting

1 [1]Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect and a real knowledge of the Truth that accords with godliness, [2]in hope of eternal life[1]—which life God, who cannot lie,[2] promised before the ages of time[3] [3]but has manifested by a proclamation of His Word at chosen times, which word was entrusted to me by the command of our Savior God;[4] [4]to Titus, a true son in a common faith: Grace, mercy,[5] peace, from Father God and Sovereign Jesus Christ,[6] our Savior.

Qualifications for elders

[5]I left you in Crete[7] for this reason, that you should set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every town as I directed you [6]—if a man is blameless, a one-woman man,[8] having children[9] who believe and who are not open to the charge of being wild or disobedient. [7]Because as an administrator under God the overseer[10] must be blameless; not self-willed, not hotheaded, not given to wine, not a bully, not avaricious; [8]but rather hospitable, a lover of what is good, prudent, just, holy, disciplined; [9]holding fast the trustworthy Word as taught, so that he may be competent[11] both to exhort with the sound doctrine and to

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[1] Paul frankly states his motivation; he wants eternal life, and the only way to get there is to be a slave of God. Since Jehovah the Son endured the cross with a view to the glory on the other side (Hebrews 12:2), Paul is in good company. We have the same opportunity.

[2] This is one thing that God cannot do, being contrary to His nature, His essence.

[3] How did Paul know this? Presumably it was revealed to him, perhaps when he was caught up to the third heaven. (See also 1 Peter 1:18-20.) Perhaps it refers to a promise made by the Father to the Son. The suggestion here is that 'time' is a concept limited to this planet, being irrelevant to an eternal Being.

[4] Paul is plainly claiming to be in the line of those whom God chose down through the ages to proclaim His Word, the implication being that it is a new proclamation, not just an exposition of what has already been written. The "hope of eternal life" has been proclaimed at chosen times throughout human history.

[5] Some 8% of the Greek manuscripts omit "mercy" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] I take it that "Father God" and "Sovereign Jesus Christ" act here as proper nouns. Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Sovereign" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[7] When was this? We know that Luke and Aristarchus were with Paul on the boat that took him to Rome; he isn't mentioned, but might Titus have been there too? And when the boat stopped at Fair Havens, Crete, Paul may have sent Titus ashore. (Paul already knew that he would suffer shipwreck.)

[8] I take it that Paul is speaking of a quality, a kind of person. Many men have only one wife, but have wandering eyes—they would not qualify.

[9] Presumably adults who have left the 'nest' are not in view here.

[10] If we are going to represent God in an official capacity, we need to be clean.

[11] Unfortunately, this competence in the use of God's Word is in rather short supply these days.

correct those who oppose it.

They must face opposition

10 Because there really are lots of rebels, loudmouths and deceivers,
especially those of the circumcision group, 11 who must be silenced—they
are ruining whole households, teaching things that they ought not, and
for dishonest gain![1] 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans
are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true.[2]
Therefore correct them rigorously,[3] that they may be sound in the faith,
14 not paying attention to Jewish fables or to commands of men who are
rejecting the truth.[4] 15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who
are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; in fact, both their minds
and their consciences are defiled.[5] 16 They profess to know God, but by
their actions they deny Him, being detestable, disobedient and
disqualified for any good work.

Qualities to be taught

2 1 Now you, speak the things that suit sound doctrine: 2 older men are
to be sober, dignified, prudent, sound in the faith, in love and in
endurance; 3 similarly older women are to be reverent in behavior, not
slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of what is good—4 so that
they may instruct the young women[6] to love their husbands, to love their
children, 5 to be prudent, pure, good homemakers, subordinating them-
selves to their own husbands, so that the Word of God not be maligned.

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[1] Apparently those people were not acting out of strong personal conviction, but just for material gain. Pitiful. Unfortunately, such people are still very much with us.

[2] Nothing like telling it like it is! (Paul had evidently not heard about being 'politically correct'.)

[3] Ingrained habits and cultural characteristics cannot be changed with a single rebuke; Paul is talking about a sustained effort to bring about a change in their attitudes and cultural values.

[4] Before listening to someone, you need to check out their presuppositions.

[5] I am reminded of Matthew 6:22-23, words of the Sovereign Creator while He walked this earth: "The lamp of the body is the eye. So if your eye is sound your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" Of course we have two eyes, but the Text has "eye" in the singular. I take it that the reference is to the way we interpret what we see (which is our real 'eye')—two people, one pure and one vile, observing the same scene will give very different interpretations to it. 'Evil' here has the idea of malignant—aggressively evil. Someone with a malignant mind will give an evil interpretation to <u>everything</u> he sees, and in consequence his being will be filled with unrelenting darkness. That is what it says here in Titus 1:15; to someone who is defiled **nothing** is pure. With a defiled mind <u>and</u> <u>conscience</u> such a person is simply incapable of giving a decent interpretation to anything at all in this whole wide world. That is why Paul goes on to say in the next verse that such a person is disqualified for any good work. Surely, if you are full of evil, how can you do good?

[6] Note that the young women are to be instructed by older <u>women</u>, who can do a much better job on that particular front than can male pastors.

6 Similarly, exhort the young men to be self-controlled,[1] 7 in all
things presenting yourself as an example of good works:[2] showing
integrity, dignity and incorruptibility[3] in your teaching—8 healthy
speech, beyond reproach—so that the opponent may be put to shame,
having nothing slighting to say about us.[4] 9 Exhort slaves to subordinate
themselves to their own owners, to be well pleasing in all things, not
talking back, 10 not pilfering[5] but showing total trustworthiness, so as to
adorn the doctrine of our Savior God in everything.[6]

Saving grace

11 For the saving grace of God has appeared for all men, 12 teaching
us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live
prudently, righteously and godly in this present age,[7] 13 looking for the
blessed hope,[8] even the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior,
Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, so that He might redeem us
from all lawlessness[9] and purify for Himself a special people, zealous for
good works.[10]

15 Speak these things, whether you exhort or reprove, with all
authority. Let no one disdain you.[11]

The difference the Gospel makes

3 1 Remind them[12] to subordinate themselves to rulers and authorities,
to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to slander no one, to
be peaceable, gentle, demonstrating true humility to all men. 3 Because
we ourselves were also foolish at one time, disobedient, being deceived,
being enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy,

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[1] Curiously the young men get only one requirement—self-control.

[2] Again, if we are going to represent God in an official capacity, we need to be clean.

[3] Some 17% of the Greek manuscripts omit "incorruptibility" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[4] A significant minority of the Greek manuscripts (20%) have 'you' (as in AV and NKJV), but the majority (including the best line of transmission) has "us". Since Titus' message and authority derive from Paul, it is properly first person.

[5] A slave could doubtless find opportunity to pilfer, and could convince himself that he was justified in so doing. An observant owner could figure out who did and who didn't.

[6] Notice that Paul does not incite slaves to revolt or rebellion. Perhaps it is especially in adverse circumstances that we can "adorn" the doctrine of God.

[7] God's saving grace has been made available for everyone, but most people have not heard of it. If they are to hear, we must live godly lives.

[8] If we are to live "looking", then we regard it as something that could happen in our lifetime (otherwise there is no point in 'looking').

[9] Since any 'law' that God promulgates derives from His character, I take the point here to be that God wants to deliver us from anything and everything that is not in conformity to His character.

[10] There is repeated emphasis on <u>doing</u> what is good, not just professing correct doctrine.

[11] The problem here could be his youth, but as Paul's delegate he represents apostolic authority.

[12] The Text just has the pronoun, but the reference is evidently to the Christians in Crete.

detestable,[1] hating one another.[2]

What a marvelous salvation!

4But when the kindness of our Savior God and His love toward mankind manifested itself,[3] 5He saved us—not because of righteous deeds that we ourselves had done but according to His mercy, by means of the bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit,[4] 6whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7so that having been justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

So let's do good

8The above is a trustworthy statement and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be concerned to take the lead in good works.[5] These things are good and profitable for mankind.[6] 9But avoid foolish arguments and genealogies and contentions and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and useless.[7]

10Excommunicate a divisive man after a first and second admonition, 11knowing that such a person has been perverted[8] and is sinning, being self-condemned.

Farewell

12As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there.[9]

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1 Hey, there is hope! 'Detestable' is repeated from 1:16 above, so if people who are now regenerated were once that way, then they can be changed; there is a way out, through the Gospel. (Actually in the Text the terms are different, synonyms, but the point is the same.)

2 This description is very up-to-date; it fits contemporary society very well. So those who were saved out of that milieu should be gentle with those who are still in it. Those who have always been protected from the world may find it difficult to be gentle.

3 Remember John 3:16.

4 The regenerating and renewing are performed by the Holy Spirit. In verse 6 the "He" who does the pouring is the Father, based on the saving work of the Son—here we have an overt reference to the Trinity.

5 I take that to be the normal meaning of the Text—Christians should take the lead in their communities with projects that are for the common good.

6 If everyone in the world lived according to Biblical principles it would be a much better place! There would be no need for jails, police departments, armies, rehabilitation centers, most hospitals, etc.

7 Some people like to argue for the sake of arguing, but Sovereign Jesus said we will be judged for every idle word (Matthew 12:36).

8 The passive voice indicates that the person was perverted by an outside force, in this context presumably by Satan; but he went along with the process, allowed it to happen (or he would not be "self-condemned"). So now he is on Satan's side, and if he refuses to listen to two warnings, he does not want to change. The next best thing is to excommunicate him, not allow him to work within the community, because of the damage he causes.

9 For Paul to write this, he could not be in prison. Either he was freed after Acts 28:31 or this letter was written before his trip to Jerusalem that resulted in his imprisonment.

13Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way without delay,[1] that they may lack nothing. 14And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet pressing needs, that they not be unfruitful.[2]

15All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in faith.[3] Grace be with you all.[4] Amen.

[1] How did Paul know about those men being in Crete? Believers who traveled would transmit information.

[2] By meeting the needs of God's servants we share in the fruit of their labors.

[3] The Text does not have 'the' faith, just 'faith'. Perhaps the reference is to those who have never met Paul, but love him anyway.

[4] "You all" is obviously plural, so evidently Paul expected that the letter would have a wider circulation than just Titus.