

## BOOK OF TITUS

1. Titus was Paul's disciple and co-worker. He was also a contemporary of Timothy. Titus was Paul's favourite disciple who helped him settle difficult issues in churches. He was a Greek (Gentile) and was uncircumcised.
2. Titus was in Crete, a Greek Island located near the Mediterranean Sea. It was a strategic place for Paul. He left Titus in Crete to fix the problems in the churches there, and to appoint elders for the churches. There were some problematic church members who behaved in their old habits like pagans.
3. The people in Crete were well known for their violent and unruly behaviours. They were mostly mercenary soldiers who were, to a large extent, strongly influenced by their Greek gods, reputed too for displaying such behaviours. They modelled their behaviour after their gods.

### Chapter 1

1. Titus 1:2. We have a God who never lie unlike Greek gods (who are heroes for lying).
2. Titus 1:4. Titus was a true son-in-faith to Paul, just as Timothy was to Paul. However, when Paul wrote to Titus, it was not as endearing as the way he wrote to Timothy.
3. Titus 1:5. Paul left Titus in Crete to help the church members in the sanctification process. Titus helped put things in order and he appointed church elders.
4. Titus 1:6-9. Paul laid down the same qualifications of an elder, such as having a good character, etc., which he had similarly listed in his epistle to Timothy. The selection of elders should not be based on social status which some modern churches adopt. The best way to train others is through life-on-life discipleship, and not lesson upon lesson and hence this set of qualifications is needed for the selection of an elder.
5. Titus 1:10. Paul warned of deceivers and idle talkers from amongst the Jewish believers who insisted that circumcision was needed for one to be "truly saved". Legalism is common in modern churches too! In Christianity, all it takes is to simply come to God as you are and once you are saved, you will grow step by step. It is not the other way around. Even children in Sunday schools are told that they cannot do this and that like a rule book! Crete churches also have 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians by then as Paul was already old at that point in time.
6. Titus 1:11. There were Judiazers teaching things they ought not, for money. They achieved dishonest gains using religion as a stepping-stone.
7. Titus 1:12. This verse "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons" is a well-known proverb or saying at that time.
8. Titus 1:13-14. Titus was told to rebuke those teachers who were using Jewish myths to lead the churchgoers astray. Jews have more than 600 commandments to observe to make them look pious and holy (see Matthew 15:8-9). These false teachers do not even seek to serve the poor people outside of the church.
9. Titus 1:16 is about being fit for good works. These false teachers denied Jesus by their works and their lives! Their life did not mirror that of Jesus. Jesus did not only teach, He also work sacrificially. However, these false teachers walked in a way that did not match their talk. Jesus was a practical worker. The phrase "good works" keep appearing in the book of Titus.

Chapter 2

1. Titus 2:2-8. This cover practical teachings on how the older women must teach the younger women etc. But Titus 2:1 says “teach with sound doctrine”, which does not mean classroom teaching! It is not about deep doctrine, etc. but about life’s practical lessons. Doctrine is not sound unless it is practical and aims to draw you closer to Christ and make you more like Christ each day. Titus 2:5 focuses on good practical behaviour so that the word of God is not mocked by others. If we cannot live it out, Christians are hypocrites! Their lives make a mockery of God’s word.
2. Titus 2:8. Paul said that we are to be Christians with sound speech so that we cannot be condemned and nothing evil can be said about us, or else, we are like two-faced Christians. Our good behaviour is the best testimony of what is taught in the church.
3. Titus 2:10. All teachings should direct people to see that the doctrines we preach are beautiful. It is our lives that makes the doctrines beautiful. Paul kept telling Titus to focus on the work of these Christians when they are outside of the church, and not just their Sunday behaviour in church.
4. Titus 2:14 says “purify for Himself His own special people, who are zealous for good works”. Christ saved us not to have bible studies, seminars, etc. but to have a zeal for good works. An example is reaching out and helping office colleagues who are in need.

Chapter 3

1. Titus 3:1 speaks about submitting to authorities, and to be ready for every good work.
2. Titus 3:8 says to be “careful to maintain good works”.
3. Titus 3:9-11 warn us to avoid unprofitable arguments with those false teachers and talkers. We are to admonish them once or twice and then reject such delusive men if they refused to repent. We are not to be divided on things that has no foundational truth.
4. Titus 3:14 says that we should spend more energy on good works rather than on delusive arguments. We are to devote ourselves to good works as was written in Titus 3:8.

What was Paul teaching?

1. We are saved for good works only! God’s agape love is sacrificial. Jesus came to do good works.
2. We must teach through our behaviour and by performing good works e.g. healing the sick, etc. We have to “walk the talk”.
3. God is love but He cannot be seen by others as being different from other gods, reaching down to men, unless we as followers of Christ demonstrate this love through serving others. See Matthew 5:16.
4. During Titus’ time, the Cretan church was becoming like a class-room church. But Paul’s epistles were about practical and sacrificial works so that the world will understand who our God is.

May God help us to live a real Christian life pleasing to God! Today, if Jesus comes to our churches, He may not even qualify as an elder because He is always out there, having no place to rest His head and establishing a very low status! Let us imitate Him!