

Introduction to Titus

NIV Study Bible

AUTHOR

The author is Paul (see 1:1 and note; see also Introduction to 1 Timothy: Author).

RECIPIENT

The letter is addressed to Titus, one of Paul's converts (see 1:4 and note) and a considerable help to Paul in his ministry. When Paul left Antioch to discuss the gospel with the Jerusalem leaders, he took Titus with him (Gal 2:1–3); acceptance of Titus (a Gentile) as a Christian without circumcision vindicated Paul's stand there (Gal 2:3–5). Presumably Titus, who is not referred to in Acts (but is mentioned 13 times in the rest of the NT), worked with Paul at Ephesus during his third missionary journey (see map, p. 1724). It is likely that he was the bearer of Paul's severe letter to the Corinthian church (see Introduction to 2 Corinthians: Occasion). Paul was concerned about the possible negative reaction of the Corinthian church to his severe letter, so he arranged to meet Titus at Troas (2Co 2:12–13). When Titus did not appear, Paul traveled on to Macedonia. There he met Titus and with great relief heard the good news that the worst of the trouble was over at Corinth (2Co 7:6–7, 13–14). Titus, accompanied by two Christian brothers, was the bearer of 2 Corinthians (2Co 8:23) and was given the responsibility for making final arrangements for the collection, begun a year earlier, in Corinth (see 2Co 8:6, 16–17 and notes).

Following Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment (Ac 28), he and Titus worked briefly in Crete (1:5), after which he commissioned Titus to remain there as his representative and complete some needed work (1:5; 2:15; 3:12–13). Paul asked Titus to meet him at Nicopolis (see map, p. 2487) when a replacement arrived (see 3:12 and note). Later, Titus went on a mission to Dalmatia (see 2Ti 4:10 and note), the last word we hear about him in the NT. Considering the assignments given him, he obviously was a capable and resourceful leader.

CRETE

The fourth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, Crete lies directly south of the Aegean Sea (see map and inset, p. 2308; cf. note on 1Sa 30:14; cf. also Paul's experiences there in Ac 27:7–13). In NT times life in Crete had sunk to a deplorable moral level. The dishonesty, gluttony and laziness of its inhabitants were proverbial (1:12).

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Apparently Paul introduced Christianity in Crete when he and Titus visited the island, after which he left Titus there to organize the converts. Paul sent the letter with Zenas and Apollos, who were on a journey that took them through Crete (3:13), to give Titus personal authorization and guidance in meeting opposition (1:5; 2:1, 7–8, 15; 3:9), instructions about faith and conduct, and warnings about false teachers. Paul also informed Titus of his future plans for him (3:12).

PLACE AND DATE OF WRITING

Paul possibly wrote from Macedonia, for he had not yet reached Nicopolis (see 3:12). The letter was written after he was released from his first Roman imprisonment (Ac 28), probably between a.d. 63 and 65 (see chart, p. 2261)—or possibly at a later date if he wrote after his assumed trip to Spain.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Especially significant, considering the nature of the Cretan heresy, are the repeated emphases on loving and doing and teaching “what is good” (1:8,16; 2:3,7,14; 3:1,8,14) and the classic summaries of Christian doctrine (2:11–14; 3:4–7).

OUTLINE

- Greetings (1:1–4)
- Concerning Elders (1:5–9)
 - Reasons for Leaving Titus in Crete (1:5)
 - Qualifications of Elders (1:6–9)
- Concerning False Teachers (1:10–16)
- Concerning Various Groups in the Congregations (ch. 2)
 - The Instructions to Different Groups (2:1–10)
 - The Foundation for Christian Living (2:11–14)
 - The Duty of Titus (2:15)
- Concerning Believers in General (3:1–8)
 - Obligations as Citizens (3:1–2)
 - Motives for Godly Conduct (3:3–8)
- Concerning Response to Spiritual Error (3:9–11)
- Conclusion, Final Greetings and Benediction (3:12–15)

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