

The book of Titus was written between the epistles to Timothy and can be read like a condensed version of them. Paul calls Titus, its recipient, his son in the faith just as he had with Timothy. He is Paul's envoy to assemblies needing direction, in this case in Crete. At the conclusion of 2 Timothy Paul may have sent Titus to Dalmatia (modern Croatia).

Titus does not appear in the book of Acts. He figures prominently, however, in Galatians 2 as an example of a Gentile convert whom some Jewish believers think must be circumcised, so is at the heart of the great controversy. But Titus is not circumcised and the position of trust and authority he occupies in this epistle is a vivid example of the Jew and the Gentile being reconciled in one body.

Later, Titus is a comfort to Paul in 2 Corinthians 7 and his representative in caring for the assembly at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 8. He later takes a lead role in receiving the collection the Corinthians had taken up for the saints in Jerusalem.

There is no indication that Titus is less beloved and trusted than Timothy. Nevertheless, Paul does not

share expansive truths and inner groanings with Titus to the degree that he does with Timothy. It's a hard-headed practical epistle written for a missionary to a hard-hearted people. Few passages in Scripture have such concentrated advice for the conduct of God's house, the assembly.

Notes

1:1 Darby and Kelly agree with KJV that this should be translated "according to" the faith, and according to knowledge, which makes interpretation somewhat more difficult than "for the sake of."

1:2 KJV has "before the world began" but it is more correct to say "before the ages began." In this light, God's promise would have been to Eve after expulsion from the garden, that her seed would crush the serpent's head. This occurred before the opening of God's dispensational calendar.

1:5,7 Verse 5 has *presbuteros* or elder, verse 7 *episkopos* or bishop/overseer. They are the same office. In this and other epistles we see multiple elders in a single assembly but never an elder having authority over multiple assemblies. Titus is delegated by Paul, an apostle, to appoint elders in many cities but not to act as one himself.

Questions for study and discussion:

1. King James, Darby, and Kelly agree that verse 1 should be translated "Paul, an apostle *according to the faith ... and knowledge ...*" What could this mean?
2. How do we see both Paul's submission and his authority in verse 1?
3. What is the relation between truth and godliness? Which comes first?

4. When was the promise in verse 2 made?

5. For what purpose has Paul left Titus in Crete?

6. Why is the behavior of a man's children part of the qualifications for being an elder or overseer?

7. Select one or two of the qualifications in this list and explain why it is necessary for effective leadership in the assembly.

8. If someone is acting as an elder and meets the qualifications, are we obligated to obey him?