



First Things First

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How easy is it for you to become distracted, especially from the really important things in life? Can you focus in on something and stay focused on it until the task is completed? All of us like to “chase rabbits” in conversations, and -- I’ve noticed over the years -- especially in meetings of groups of people. With over 36 years of attending faculty meetings and department meetings at two separate schools -- one a graduate seminary and the other an university -- I’ve seen fifteen minutes of legitimate discussion stretched out into two or three hours of largely useless discussion. Something in human tendency comes to the surface in meetings that loves to hear the sound of its own voice, no matter what the content. Seminary and divinity school faculties tend to be far worse at this than other groups in higher education. As a seminary dean once told me, “we have all ‘chiefs’ and no ‘Indians’ on our faculty!” But human nature is similar everywhere. We all constantly face the temptation to divert our attention away from really important things and spend far too much time and effort on things that matter very little. “We major on the minors,” as the saying goes.

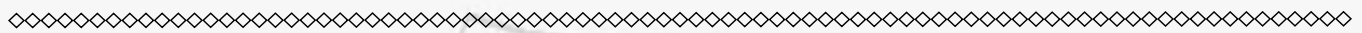
In the language of Paul to Titus in chapter three comes an important emphasis directed both to Titus and to the Cretan churches. Both were to “devote themselves” to the things that really mattered. There were unimportant issues (cf. v. 9) that Titus wasn’t to waste his time dealing with. To be sure, these were thought to be important matters by some believers in the churches, but in the big picture of things they were of no value or importance at all, and Titus had enough to do that was important so that he was not to spend time messing with these other things. Plus -- and it’s an important one -- individuals in the churches that insisted on wasting time with such issues that proved divisive and disruptive were to be ‘shunned’ by Titus (cf. 10-11). That is, they were to be isolated to the edge of church life with little or no permission to continue causing trouble. Their preoccupation with such wasteful issues simply showed their perverse and sinful nature, and raised serious questions about their spiritual relationship with God.

Paul thus had some serious words to say to Titus about getting first things first and keeping that priority in place. We can profit by hearing Paul’s words to the young missionary Titus.



I. Context

As is the established pattern, we will draw heavily from previous studies in Titus for the background materials. New materials will be added to supplement and revise.



a. Historical

External History. Titus stands as one of three letters in the Pauline collection that are traditionally designated as the Pastoral Epistles. The other two are First and Second Timothy. Several factors are at work here. All three letters are addressed to Paul's assistants, Timothy and Titus, who are encouraged to pastor churches effectively either at Ephesus for Timothy or on the island of Crete for Titus. Being written from this slant of helping young ministers do their job better gives them a distinctive place among the letters of the New Testament. Of the twelve letters in the Pauline collection -- Romans through Philemon -- only Philemon is also addressed to an individual, along with these three letters. The other eight are addressed to specific congregations scattered across the north eastern Mediterranean world from Rome to Galatia.

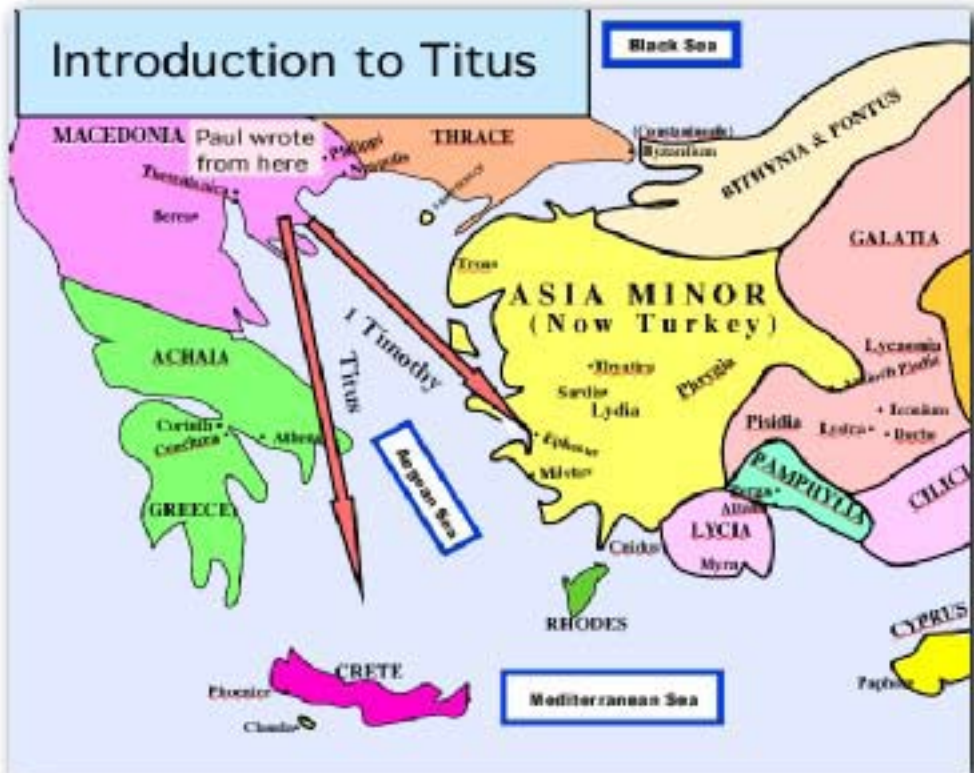
The compositional history of the book of Titus is closely tied to that of First and Second Timothy as a part of the Pastoral Epistles. As such it is a part of the Pauline writings that have been called into question more than any other group of Paul's letters. In the modern era of biblical scholarship since the 1600s, the views on whether Paul had anything directly to do with the writing of these documents has been vigorously debated back and forth. The period of the middle 1800s through the middle 1900s saw the majority of New Testament scholars on both sides of the Atlantic contending that these three documents had no direct historical connection to the apostle Paul. Instead, they arose out of the early second century, some five or six decades after the martyrdom of Paul in the mid 60s. These documents were perceived as attempting to impose a rigid orthodoxy on the Christian communities who feared that the

understanding of Paul's teaching on grace opened the door to Christian libertinism and looseness of practice. The beginnings of early Catholicism were seen in these writings by Protestant scholars who reflected strong anti-Catholic bias.

But in the second half of the twentieth century, a growing number of New Testament scholars have been making strong cases for Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. This trend emerges out of a variety of theological viewpoints, and is far from limited to evangelical scholars who have mostly contended for Pauline authorship through the decades. Thus in contemporary scholarship the question is more open and less settled than it appeared to be half a century ago.

Within the framework of traditional understanding of Pauline authorship, a probable scenario for the writing of Titus emerges as follows.

The book of Acts closes with Paul under house arrest in the imperial capital of Rome awaiting trial before Emperor Nero. This was about the year 61 AD. From inside the pastoral letters as well as from early church father sources, it appears that



Paul successfully defended himself before Nero the first time and was released from imprisonment in late 61 or early 62 AD. He resumed ministry in the regions of the Sea of Adria between Italy and Greece along with the Aegean Sea area between Greece and modern Turkey. Whether or not he realized his dream of preaching the gospel in Spain that he mentioned to the Romans in Rom. 15:24 is unclear. Some early church traditions suggest that he did, but it is not certain.



At the time of writing of the letter Paul is at Nicopolis on the western coast of Greece (cf. Titus 3:12). He was writing to Titus who had been left by Paul on the Island of Crete in order to stabilize the Christian communities on the island (cf. 1:5). Which assistant did the actual writing of the letter is unknown. But as Paul earlier in I Thessalonians indicated that his assistants did the actual writing of his letters, one would assumed the pattern held true as Paul advanced in age. Having been born about

the same time that Jesus was born, he would have been in his middle 60s at this time.

After a couple or so years the apostle faced Roman imprisonment again and this time was caught in Nero's attempt to extricate himself from political charges of having set fire to the city of Rome. He made Christians his primary scapegoat in order to divert attention from himself. Thus in the mid 60s thousands of Christians suffered martyrdom at his hands, including the apostles Peter and Paul. During his time of release and resumed ministry 1 Timothy was written first, followed by Titus -- perhaps at the same time -- and then 2 Timothy was written shortly before execution by Nero in the mid-60s. Some will place the martyrdom of these two apostles shortly before Nero's banishment from Rome by the Roman Senate in 68 AD. But an earlier date in the mid-60s seems more likely.

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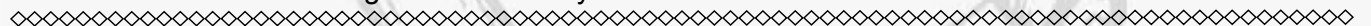
Internal History. With the heavy moral admonition tone, i.e., paraenesis, of these verses few specific time and place markers show up in the text.

The time markers have some significance to the larger sweep of the text with the admonitions addressed to the Cretans (vv. 1-2) and to Titus personally (vv. 8-11) coming in the narrative present. But these, especially in vv. 1-2, are based on the narrative past of the initial readers of the letter (vv. 3-7). This provides an important theological perspective: present obligations for obedience grow out of our past experience of the graciousness and goodness of God in conversion. Life changing transformation nourishes and motivates our service to God. Otherwise a sense of duty to God in the present quickly turns into religious legalism with no spiritual substance or sustaining power. In such a stance we quickly become more like the Pharisees than like Jesus. And spiritual disaster awaits us.

The few place markers, more indirect rather than specific geographic references, will be treated in the exegesis of the text below.

Such a scenario best accounts for the historical allusions inside the pastoral letters, since they will not fit the Pauline chronology established by Acts and the other letters of Paul. It also gives credence to the general thrust of the early church traditions about this period of the apostle's ministry.

Within the framework of the above scenario, the letter to Titus comes sometime in 62-63 AD, or 66-67 AD in the later dating of Paul's martyrdom.



b. Literary

Genre. At the broad genre letter, chapter two comes as a part of an ancient letter. As the chart on the right indicates, the basic elements of an ancient letter includes the Praescriptio, Proem, Body, and Conclusio. In Titus, this can be charted as follows:

- Praescriptio: 1:1-4
- Proem: none
- Body: 1:5-3:13

Conclusio: 3:15

Thus Titus bears most all the marks of an ancient letter, with the exception of a Proem.

In so far as small genre is concerned for chapter three, it falls basically under the didactic label, over against narrative. The teaching material in chapter three moves primarily in the direction of paraenesis, or moral admonition.

The three distinct literary units of text material revolve around paraenesis (vv. 1-2; vv. 8-11) and a conversion depiction (vv. 3-7). The moral admonition material focuses on what Titus is to instruct the Cretan about (vv. 1-2). Then Paul addresses Titus directly in vv. 8-1 with admonitions about how he is to shape his ministry to the Cretans. This section is similar to numerous passages in 1 and 2 Timothy where Paul speaks to the other young assistant, Timothy, who is serving the church at Ephesus during this same period of time. The instructions to Titus about what he is to say to the Cretans in vv. 1-2 is in the same vein of emphasis as the material in chapter 2.

The conversion narrative in vv. 3-7 has similar tones and content to numerous texts scattered across the Pauline letters. Sometimes these narratives relate Paul's own conversion experience, such as Gal. 1:13-17; Phil. 3:2-11. But more often



Ancient Letter on papyrus

they emphasize the conversion experience of the readers of the letters, e.g., Gal. 4:8-10; Eph. 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7 et al. As such these passages become very helpful sources of understanding the concept of Christian conversion as set forth in scripture. They allude to a specific historical experience either of the apostle or of his initial readers.

Literary Context. The literary setting of 3:1-10 can be sketched out as follows. Chapter three, as an integral part of the body section of the

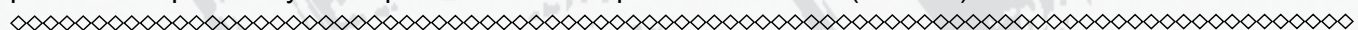
letter (1:5-3:13) comes after the historical narrative material in 1:5-16 and the admonitions to various age groups in the churches (2:1-15). The material in 3:1-11 is more generalized paraenesis. This is followed by the travel plans section in 3:12-14. And then the letter Conclusio comes in 3:15.

Thus chapters two and three contain similar material, but framed somewhat distinctly from each other.

II Message

Literary Structure. The internal thought flow of these verses is easy to determine. The [Block](#) and [Semantic](#) Diagrams, along with the [Summary of the Rhetorical Structure](#) section, in the larger internet version of the study provide a detailed understanding of this thought flow.

The first seven verses target the Cretan believers with the emphasis on living faithfully now (vv. 1-2), in light of their past conversion experience (vv. 3-7). The second section addresses Titus directly with personal responsibility in his pastoral leadership of the churches (vv. 8-11).



a. How believers are to live, vv. 1-7

Greek NT

3.1 Υπομίμησκε αὐτοὺς ἀρχαῖς ἐξουσίαις ὑποτάσσεσθαι, πειθαρχεῖν, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι, 3.2 μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπεικεῖς, πᾶσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πραύτητα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους. 3.3 Ἡμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ

NASB

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in mal-

NRSV

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing

NLT

1 Remind your people to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. 2 They must not speak evil of anyone, and they must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. 3 Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled by oth-

ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακία καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους. 3.4 ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπέφάνη τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, 3.5 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, 3.6 οὐδέξῃ χεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν, 3.7 ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι κληρονόμοι γεννηθῶμεν κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

Notes:

As discussed above, and in the Rhetorical Summary, these verses naturally divide out into two units of material: vv. 1-2 and 3-7. The emphasis falls on living faithfully now on the basis of what God has done in conversion.

Living faithfully now: “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone” (Υπομίμησκε αὐτοὺς ἀρχαῖς ἐξουσίας ὑποτάσσεσθαι, πειθαρχεῖν, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι, 3.2 μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπιεικεῖς, πάσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πραύτητα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους.)

This single Greek sentence begins with an admonition to Titus to help the Cretan believers to remember to do certain things. The verb calls Titus to the ongoing task of reminding them to do what they need to be doing as believers.¹

What is it that they need to be doing? Seven specific obligations are laid out by Paul for Titus to pass on to the Cretan believers.² Clearly a close

¹ὑπομιμήσκω hypomimnēskō remind; pass.: remember* (EDNT).

²Vv 1-2 contain seven commands, some concerned with the effects of a believer’s behavior on outsiders, and others with personal virtues. Grammatically, the infinitives are dependent on ὑπομίμησκε, “remind,” with εἶναι, “to be” (v 2), governing both ἀμάχους, “peaceable,” and ἐπιεικεῖς, “gra-

ice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

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ers and became slaves to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy. We hated others, and they hated us. 4 But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. 5 He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. 6 He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. 7 He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life.

connection with 2:1-15 exists. There the focus was internal, that is, the relation of believers to one another inside the believing community. In 3:1-2, the focus expands to include those outside the believing community where responsibility is also placed upon believers.

Regarding responsibility to governmental authorities, William Mounce (WBC, Logos Systems³) rightly notes:

(1) The first obligation is to be subject to the governing authorities. In light of the anti-emperor use of terminology in 2:11–14, Paul may have listed this obligation first to stem any possible misconception (Hanson, [1983] 189). While it was true that the true God and savior, the true epiphany, was not the emperor but was Jesus Christ, this did not mean that the Cretans could ignore the civil authorities. This instruction may also have carried special weight in light of the stereotyped rebellious character of the Cretans (cf. Polybius Hist. 6.46.1–47.6; Ellicott, 190). Quinn cites Polybius as saying that it was almost “impossible to find . . . personal conduct more treacherous or public policy more

cious” (v 2), while the participle ἐνδεικνυμένους, “showing” (v 2), closes the list but performs the same function as the preceding infinitives. [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 443.]

³William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 444.

unjust than in Crete” (185; Hist. 6.47.5; cf. Ellicott, 190). If there were large numbers of Jews in Crete (cf. 1:10), this command may also have been directed specifically toward them. This injunction agrees with Paul’s teaching in Rom 13:1–7 (cf. 1 Pet 2:13–17), although it is more cursory. Paul would not have wanted these instructions carried out regardless of what the governing authorities were telling the Cretans to do (cf. Acts 5:29). Paul was writing at a time when Rome was not aggressively attacking the church. But as is true throughout Paul and the NT, obedience to God overrides all other concerns, especially the evil demands of an ungodly government (cf. Fee, 201). On ὑποτάσσεσθαι, “to be subject,” see Titus 2:5, 9 and the Comment on 1 Tim 2:11. ἀρχαί, “rulers,” usually denotes angelic and demonic powers (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15), but here it refers to earthly rulers (cf. Luke 12:11; 20:20; G. Dellling, TDNT 1:482–84). The construction assumes a καί, “and,” between ἀρχαίς, “rulers,” and ἐξουσίαις, “authorities” (asyndeton; see Note a).

When believers relate to the outside world, one important area is relating to governmental authorities. Showing respect to them is central.⁴ Praying for them is necessary as well (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Secondly Paul calls believers to “be obedient.” Mounce (WBC, Logos Systems⁵) provides helpful understanding:

The second obligation is that the Cretans are πειθαρχεῖν, “to be obedient” (cf. Acts 5:29, 32; 27:21). While Paul begins the chapter by speaking of civil authorities, by v 3 he is no longer thinking solely of the believer’s relationship to the state. The question is, at what point does he start to shift away from the thought of civil obedience? Here with the reference to obedience, or when speaking of “any good work” in v 2, or not until v 3? There is no expressed object of πειθαρχεῖν, “to be obedient,” and its close association with the preceding implies that Paul is still thinking about being obedient to the governing authorities.

A third responsibility to outsiders is set forth next. Again, Mounce has helpful observations:

The third obligation is that they are πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι, “to be ready for any good work.” Again the object of these good deeds is not expressed, and some have argued that Paul is enjoining the Cretans to be active in civic duties (Scott, Guthrie, Kelly). But good works is a prominent theme in the PE that

⁴Compare 1 Peter 2:13–17 that begins with “*For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right*” and concludes with “*Honor the emperor.*”

⁵William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary : Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 444.

might include civic deeds but is wider in scope (cf. 1 Tim 2:10). That Paul says πᾶν, “any,” good deed confirms that he is speaking generally and not only of good civic deeds in relation to civil authorities. This theme has already occurred twice in the epistle (Titus 1:16; 2:14) in a way that ties the discussions of chaps. 1 and 2 together, and its use here ties those chapters in with chap. 3.

Believers should be involved in civic activities and not isolate themselves from the rest of the world. But readiness to do good is here all encompassing and speaks of a lifestyle commitment.

Next, a series of needed traits follows in verse two. Note Mounce’s comments:⁶

(4) The fourth obligation of vv 1–2 is that Christians are not to blaspheme, not to slander others (cf. 1 Tim 1:13), which of course does not mean Christians cannot evaluate and criticize (cf. Rom 3:8; 14:16; 1 John 2:19; 4:1; Comment on 1 Tim 1:13).

(5) They must also not be quarrelsome but be peaceable (ἄμαχος). Both this quality and the next (ἐπιεικής, “gracious”) are required of Christian leaders (1 Tim 3:3). The simple form μάχος is used in v 9 for “quarrels” about the law.

(6) The Cretans are to be ἐπιεικής, “gracious, gentle, kind” (cf. 1 Tim 3:3).

(7) Finally, Paul enjoins the Cretans to demonstrate complete gentleness toward all people. πραΰτης, “gentleness” (2 Tim 2:25; cf. 1 Cor 4:21; 2 Cor 10:1; Gal 5:23; 6:1; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12), is virtually synonymous with πραΰπάθεια (cf. discussion at 1 Tim 6:11) and denotes a humility, a courtesy (BAGD 699), a consideration of others without being servile. The force of πᾶσαν, “all,” is variously translated (“perfect courtesy” [rsv]; “every consideration” [nasb]; “true humility” [niv]) and conveys a sense of completeness with the following πάντας, “all.” The force of πάντας ἀνθρώπους, “all people,” Christians and non-Christians, is in agreement with the universal thrust of the PE (1 Tim 2:1, 4, 6) and Paul (Rom 13:17; Gal 6:10; Phil 4:5).

Here the focus clearly is upon postures toward people in general, both inside and outside the church. God’s people in Christ must not be a quarrelsome belligerent people always trying to pick a fight with someone, always focused on negative criticism of everyone else. We are to be a people who treat others with respect and always seek to get along with everyone around us. This doesn’t mean compromising our commitment to Christ. In reality, this reaching out in peaceableness is how we express our commitment to Christ.

What God has done: “3 For we ourselves were

⁶William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 445.

once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. “ (3.3 Ἡμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους. 3.4 ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, 3.5 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, 3.6 οὐ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, 3.7 ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι κληρονόμοι γεννηθῶμεν κατ’ ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.).

The foundation for this kind of Christian lifestyle is one’s conversion experience with God (cf. γάρ which introduces vv. 3-7). Here Paul turns to the BC (= Before Christ; v. 3) and AD (= After Christ; vv. 4-7) aspects of Christian experience.

This kind of text is relatively common in the letters of Paul. Sometimes the thrust is a recounting of Paul’s own spiritual pilgrimage: Gal. 1:13-17; Phil 3:2-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-17 et al. But at other times the emphasis falls upon his readers: 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Eph. 2:1-10; 4:17-24; Col. 1:21-23; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7 et al. The decisive change from BC to AD depends on God’s grace revealed in Jesus Christ, and not on personal spiritual accomplishment of the individual. Often the salvific work of the Holy Spirit is closely identified with the conversion of the believer. Almost always a purpose statement indicating God’s intention in the work of salvation. Typically these purpose declarations emphasize the believer living a life filled with good actions growing out of obedience to Christ as Lord. Modern scholarship tends to see in these passages, especially the AD aspect, signs of early Christian confessions of faith, Glaubensbekenntnisse, as pre-formed Christian tradition. Enough ambiguity exists at this point to urge some caution in the conclusions drawn here, although the evidence does generally point this direction.

Gal. 1:13-17

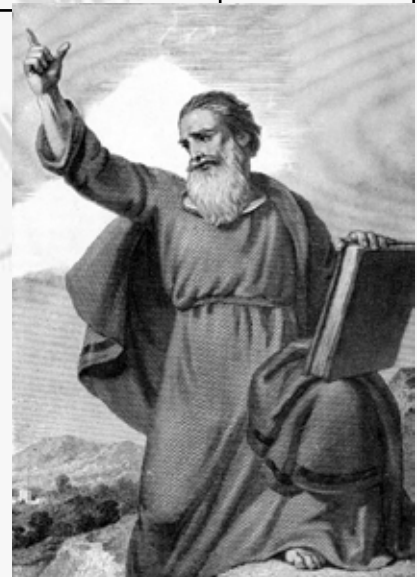
13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. 14 I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. 15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

Phil. 3:2-11

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh — 4 even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

1 Tim. 1:12-17

12 I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the foremost. 16 But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



1 Cor. 1:26-31
 26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Eph. 2:1-10
 1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once lived, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. 3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Eph. 4:17-24
 17 Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. 19 They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 That is not the way you learned Christ! 21 For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. 22 You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Col. 1:21-23
 21 And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— 23 provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

Titus 2:11-14
 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, 12 training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Titus 3:3-7
 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The theological significance of these texts is to provide a major source of biblical understanding of early Christian views on conversion. What was the idea of Jesus and the apostles on how to become a Christian? These texts, along with some narrative text depiction of a conversion experience,⁷ set forth clearly that in the New Testament becoming a Christian centered on a moment of decisive commitment to Christ. It involved a 'turning around' (i.e., conversion) of one's life from paganism (even as a Jew) to devoted commitment to God through Christ. These texts stress both a spiritual status before God and a lifestyle pattern of living. In the BC segment, the status was generally defined as ignorance of God and estrangement from Him. The lifestyle typically was a life following one's own passions into a largely destructive way of living. In the conversion experience, the AD turning point, one's status moves from being lost to becoming a child of God and the resulting lifestyle moves from sinful rejection of God to devoted obedience to God in Christ. Thus Christian conversion is a decisive moment in a person's

⁷Mainly the depiction of Paul's conversion on the Damascus road in Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18. But also that of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) and the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48) are important conversion narratives.

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"I had to have my pacemaker readjusted since I asked Jesus into my heart."

life and produces dramatic changes both in spiritual status before God and in how one lives life.

Don't forget who you were before Christ, v.

3: "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another." (*Ἦμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διαγόντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.*). In verse three, Paul touches on the BC era of pagan existence before conversion. A careful comparison of the above table of conversion passages will show some similarities of Titus 3:3 with the other BC segments, but also it reflects distinctive insight and emphasis.

Paul's use of "we" is somewhat distinctive where he gathers up himself and Titus with the Cretans in characterizing the era before conversion to Christ. This is consistent with the similar thrust in 2:11-14, but in the other conversion passages the focus is upon the readers with the use of "you."

A picture of utter dysfunctionality is painted by Paul of this "pagan" era before Christ. No sensible reasoning was employed; self deception and rebellion against God prevailed; enslavement to one's own passions and cravings dominated; broken and hostile relationships with other people prevailed. Anger toward and manipulation of other people guided relationships. Wow! What a horrible way to live. Did the people realize their despicable life at that point? Most likely not. Pigs wallowing in a mud hole don't realize how much they stink and how ugly they look. But upon coming to Christ and gaining from Him clear insight into spiritual reality, there came realization of how horrible their life was before Christ. The personal discovery along these lines is highlighted in the Pauline conversion passages in the first row of the above table. Paul actually thought himself to be an excellent person and highly devoted to God while he was a non-believer. Not until his encounter with the risen Christ outside Damascus in AD 33 did he begin to discover the awful truth of his lostness.

Most likely this is the case for most of us. Outside of Christ we live in blissful ignorance of our horrible spiritual condition. Occasionally the emptiness of that life, a haunting guilt that something is wrong deep down inside, a sense of futility in living -- these realizations and others become the signals that a better way exists. But only when we come to Christ do we begin discovering just how bad our life

was and what God has provided to take its place.

If you haven't yet made that discovery, my friend, I pray that today the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit will envelope you, and that you will give God a chance to change things in your life.

Realize what you have gained in conversion, vv. 4-7.: "4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (*3.4 ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιlanθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, 3.5 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἀγίου, 3.6 οὐ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν, 3.7 ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι κληρονόμοι γεννηθῶμεν κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.*).

On the AD side of the equation, we can see the dramatic difference that God wants to make in those coming to Christ. As is highlighted visually by the Block Diagram, this single Greek sentence has a simple main clause: *ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς* ("he saved us") as the basis for the expansion elements in the remainder of the sentence. The meaning of this is simple. At the heart of the AD side of conversion is the saving action of God. The particulars of this are then spelled out in the remainder of the sentence.

The time connection of this saving action is linked to the appearance of the goodness and graciousness of God (*ὅτε ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιlanθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ*). The reference here is to the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, which is defined as an expression of God's goodness and graciousness. The irony of a crucifixion being an expression of divine goodness and graciousness becomes understandable only in seeing God's love for sinful humanity going into action in the atoning death of Jesus on the cross. Humanly speaking the tortuous death of Jesus by crucifixion has nothing good or gracious about it. But at the spiritual level his death becomes the greatest expression of divine goodness and graciousness ever manifested.

The source of God's saving action had absolutely no connection to anything meritorious in the sinner's life (*οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς*). Our BC living deserved only God's wrath.

Any supposed righteous achievement in that era played utterly no role at all in God saving us.

To the contrary, the source of God's saving action was God's mercy (*ἀλλά κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος*). The origin of our salvation lies in God's heart, not in us. Apart from His mercy we would still be lost and bound for Hell.

How did that mercy flow from God's heart into our lives? Paul's answer is this: God saved us through the cleansing of rebirth and the renewal of the Holy Spirit (*διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου*). The language of this parallel phrase underscores two sides of the same reality. The channel (*διὰ*) of God's saving action on the one hand is the cleansing (*λουτροῦ*) produced by new birth (*παλιγγενεσίας*). Just as physical birth produces a 'cleansing' of the new infant as it moves from the mother's womb into birth, the saving action of God flows through a spiritual cleansing produced by new birth, or re-birth. On the other hand, this cleansing is also a renewing of life (*ἀνακαινώσεως*), which is produced by the Holy Spirit (*πνεύματος ἁγίου*). Literally *ἀνακαινώσις* means making life brand new. Rebirth / renewal -- these are the same spiritual reality viewed from slightly different angles. And they comprise the channel along which God's mercy flows in abundant measure from His heart into the sinner's life.

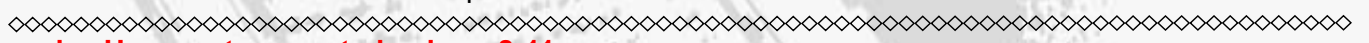
But Paul isn't finished. The mention of the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation prompts another image. In the moment of conversion God 'poured out' the

Holy Spirit into the life of the sinner in rich fashion: *οὐδέχρεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν*. Jesus Christ is now identified as Savior and His redemptive action of the cross is the means by which God is able to pour out His Spirit in salvation of the believer. Thus the Spirit comes into our life as a moving, dynamic force who brings change and transformation.

The objective of all this is then spelled out by Paul: "so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (*ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι κληρονόμοι γενηθῶμεν κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου*). This saving action of God is pointing us to eternity as heirs of God. We stand "justified by his grace" in Christ and consequently then become the recipients of all that God possesses for His children in Heaven. The inheritance is defined as expectation of eternal life with God through the unending ages of eternity.

What a work God has done when He saved us! Our lives are transformed and made new. The Spirit of God has taken up residence in our hearts to help and strengthen us. We are pointed toward eternal life with the Heavenly Father in all of His blessing.

It is out of this transformation that we take on the duties of living as Christians to the outside world. They are not just thrust down upon us with a Heavenly demand for obedience. God puts expectations upon us, and He provides through His saving action the needed resources to live up to His demands.



b. How pastors are to lead, vv. 8-11

Greek NT

3.8 Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιούσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προΐστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῶ· ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. 3.9 μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔρεις καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιύστασο· εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι. 3.10 αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσι-

NASB

8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. 9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a factious man after a first

NRSV

8 The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. 9 But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 After a first and second admonition, have

NLT

8 These things I have told you are all true. I want you to insist on them so that everyone who trusts in God will be careful to do good deeds all the time. These things are good and beneficial for everyone. 9 Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These kinds of things are useless and a waste of time. 10 If anyone

ἄν παραποῦ, 3.11 εἰ-
δὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ
τοιούτος καὶ ἀμαρτάνει
ὄν αὐτοκατάκριτος.

and second warning,
11 knowing that such a
man is perverted and is
sinning, being self-con-
demned.

nothing more to do with
anyone who causes di-
visions, 11 since you
know that such a person
is perverted and sinful,
being self-condemned.

is causing divisions
among you, give a first
and second warning.
After that, have nothing
more to do with that per-
son. 11 For people like
that have turned away
from the truth. They are
sinning, and they con-
demn themselves.

Notes:

In verses 8-11, Paul turns his attention to Titus personally. In vv. 1-7, he provided Titus with instructions to give to the church members. Now he speaks to Titus about the direction and orientation of his own ministry to the Cretan believers. For a church to prosper under divine blessing, both its members and its leaders must be walking in God's paths. A consistent commitment to the Lord must prevail throughout the congregation.

So Titus needed to focus his ministry to the Cretans. These guidelines should shape the leadership of every pastor of a church. They have timeless quality about them. And they represent some of the standards that God will use to assess the ministry of each pastor in final judgment at the close of human history.

Paul lines out three responsibilities of focus for Titus to follow in his leadership of the Cretan churches.

Concentrate on helping the people do good, v. 8: "I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone" (καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαι σε διαβεβαιούσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῶ-
ταυτά ἐστὶν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις).

This focus on doing good had already been taught by Paul and Titus, and possibly others, to the Cretans. But Paul insisted that Titus place primary attention on this central Christian commitment. The emphasis is strong: the Cretans were to "set their minds" (φροντίζωσιν) on "devoting themselves" (προϊστασθαι) to doing good. In graphic language Titus was to concentrate on getting the Cretan believers to place good works before their minds in full view and commitment. The language of "good works" is καλῶν ἔργων, which stresses the outward attractiveness of the good these believers were to do. Sometimes in the Pastoral Epistles, good works

are defined as ἀγαθὰ ἔργα, which emphasizes the inherent goodness of what believers are to be doing. But the shift in adjective modifiers from ἀγαθόν to καλόν here, stresses the beauty and appeal of the good being done. When others see something we do as fundamentally good and appealing, they will be attracted to what it is that produces such action.

The reason for this priority is given in the causal statement at the end: "These things are good and profitable for men" (ταυτά ἐστὶν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις). Such good works are attractive and beneficial to others, Paul declares.

Here is where Titus was to concentrate his time and efforts. And every pastor today should prioritize his ministry with a similar focus.

Don't waste your time with distractions, v. 9: "But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless" (μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔρεις καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιύστασο· εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι).

Mounce⁸ has some helpful observations here: Paul lists four errors to avoid. (1) μωρός, "foolish, stupid," is a typical condemnation of the opponents' teaching (cf. 1 Tim 4:7; 2 Tim 2:23; see Introduction, "The Ephesian Heresy"). ζητήσεις, "controversy, speculation" (cf. 1 Tim 6:4; 2 Tim 2:23; discussion of ἐκζητήσεις, "speculation," in *Comment on 1 Tim 1:4*), emphasizes the lack of substance in the opponents' teaching and explains why Paul does not address the heresy theologically. It is vacuous, a quibbling about words. (2) The opponents view it as teaching drawn from the genealogies of the OT (cf. 1 Tim 1:4), but Paul views it as "Jewish myths" (Titus 1:14) that only produce (3) strife (cf. 1 Tim 6:4) and quarrels about the law. (4) μάχη, "quarrel," can be used of physical combat but in early Christian literature is always used of battles without weapons (BAGD 496; cf. 2 Tim 2:23; cf. 2 Cor 7:5; Jas 4:1, and the discussion of ἄμαχος,

⁸William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 453.

“peaceable,” which is a requirement of elders [1 Tim 3:3] and all Christians [Titus 3:2]). The law is the opponents’ interpretation of the Jewish law (cf. 1 Tim 1:7, 8–11), their use of it to regulate daily life (Oberlinner, 185); the Jewish nature of the heresy has already been established (Titus 1:10,14). περιϊστάναι in the middle voice means “to go around so as to avoid, avoid, shun” (BAGD 647) and is used in the same context in 2 Tim 2:16 (also used in the active voice in the physical sense of “to surround” in John 11:42 and Acts 25:7).

Had Titus attempted to address every dispute that arose over these senseless speculations, he would have lost sight of the things that really matter in ministry. A large part of ministry ‘burn out’ develops when pastors loose focus on the things that really matter in leading a church. They quickly get bogged down in trivial matters that ultimately have little significance or impact. Eventually these trivial details pile up and overwhelm the pastor.

In a day when increasing numbers of church members have ‘itching ears’⁹ that are more interested in speculative nonsense about the Christian faith than they are about biblical basics, pastors can get trapped in having to address all this stuff to their own detriment and that of the church.

Just as concentrating on doing good had a fundamental value and benefit, the opposite described here had a destructive impact: “for they are unprofitable and worthless” (*εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνοφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι*). For this reason, Titus was not to waste his time and energy messing with such stuff.

Avoid troublesome people, vv. 10-11: “After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned” (*αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἀμαρτάνει ὧν αὐτοκατάκριτος*).

Finally, and closely linked to the second admonition, Titus was to give no more than two warnings to the people pushing all the speculative nonsense. Paul labels these people as a *αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον*.¹⁰

⁹2 Tim. 4:2 (NRSV): For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires,

¹⁰The adjective αἰρετικός** (a NT hapax) is used here of one who has chosen to follow the false teachings and practices described in v. 9 over against the apostle, Titus, and others in the Christian community who embrace the true teaching and its good deeds. Thus it may properly be rendered “heretical,” as long as we do not read later ideas back into the text (cf. BAGD, Lock, and the use of αἵρεσις in 2 Pet.

They were troublemakers whose actions and teachings divided the believers into quarreling groups. Paul also sees these individuals as perverted (*ἐξέστραπται*) and sinning (*ἀμαρτάνει*) in what they were doing. Consequently they condemned themselves (*αὐτοκατάκριτος*) by their actions. Titus was expected to be spiritually insightful so that he also could recognize the serious problems resident in the lives of such people in the church.

After two warnings, which these people ignored, Titus was expected to “shun” (*παραιτοῦ*) these individuals. The sense of this action is defined by George Knight as¹¹

παραιτέομαι (PE* 4x: 1 Tim. 4:7; 5:11; 2 Tim. 2:23; here imperative παραιτοῦ) is used here in the sense of “reject” or “dismiss,” i.e., remove from the fellowship of the Christian community (cf. 1 Cor. 5:11–13; 2 Thes. 3:14; Mt. 18:17–18).

Such people will eventually kill a church and thus action should be taken against them if they prove unwilling to change their ways.

Early Christianity rigidly practiced church discipline and took action in extreme cases where member’s attitude and actions posed serious threat to the spiritual health of the congregation. A redemptive goal guided the actions taken against various individuals, but where stubborn unwillingness to repent was present the church was left with little alternative but to exclude them from the fellowship of the congregation.

Every pastor in today’s world is challenged by these basic guidelines set forth by Paul. Fragmentation of ministry, dealing the fringe thinking, and trouble making people in the church remain problems to today’s minister. But under God’s leadership and empowered by God’s grace and compassion, each minister must determine to stay focused on the important issues and not allow himself to be sucked into divisive issues.

2:1). Since this choice with regard to teaching and practice sets the one so choosing against apostolic teaching, it also makes such a person “factious” and one who is “causing divisions,” which are also meanings of αἰρετικός, Paul uses this adjective in a pleonastic construction, perhaps for emphasis, including the noun ἄνθρωπον, the word used generally in Greek and in the NT for “human being,” rather than using a simple substantive adjective. [source: George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 354.]

¹¹George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 355.

Greek NT

3.1 Υπομίμησθε αὐτοὺς ἀρχαῖς ἐξουσιαῖς ὑποτάσσεσθαι, πειθαρχεῖν, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι, 3.2 μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπεικεῖς, πάσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πραῦτητα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους. 3.3 Ἦμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισούντες ἀλλήλους. 3.4 ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπέφανη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, 3.5 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, 3.6 οὐ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, 3.7 ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι κληρονόμοι γεννηθῶμεν κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

3.8 Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιούσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῶ· ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. 3.9 μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔρεις καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιῦστασθαι· εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι. 3.10 αἰρετικὸν

NASB

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. 9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a factious man after a first

NRSV

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. 9 But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 After a first and sec-

NLT

1 Remind your people to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. 2 They must not speak evil of anyone, and they must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. 3 Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled by others and became slaves to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy. We hated others, and they hated us. 4 But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. 5 He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. 6 He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. 7 He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life.

8 These things I have told you are all true. I want you to insist on them so that everyone who trusts in God will be careful to do good deeds all the time. These things are good and beneficial for everyone. 9 Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual

ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, 3.11 εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἀμαρτάνει ὡν αὐτοκατάκριτος.

and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

and admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, 11 since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.

pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These kinds of things are useless and a waste of time. 10 If anyone is causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with that person. 11 For people like that have turned away from the truth. They are sinning, and they condemn themselves.



Greek NT Diagram

1 3.1 Ὑπομίνησκε

αὐτοὺς ἀρχαῖς ἐξουσίαις ὑποτάσσεσθαι,
πειθαρχεῖν,
πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι,
μηδένα βλασφημεῖν,
ἀμάχους εἶναι,
ἐπιεικεῖς,
πᾶσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πραΰτητα
πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους.

3.3 γάρ

2 Ἥμεν ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι,
ἀπειθεῖς,
πλανώμενοι,
δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις,
ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες,
στυγητοί,
μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.

3.4 δὲ

3.5 ὅτε ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ,
οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς

ἀλλὰ

κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος

3 ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς

διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας

καὶ

ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου,

3.6 οὗ ἐξέχεεν

ἐφ' ἡμᾶς

πλουσίως

3.7 διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν,

δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι

ἵνα... κληρονόμοι γενηθῶμεν

κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

4 3.8 Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος·

καὶ

περὶ τούτων

5 βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιοῦσθαι,

ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προΐστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῷ·

6 ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα

τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

3.9 δὲ

μωρὰς ζητήσεις

καὶ

γενεαλογίας

καὶ

ἔρεις

καὶ

7 μάχας νομικὰς περιΐτασο·

γὰρ

8 εἰσὶν ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι.

9 αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον...παραιτοῦ,

μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν

εἰδῶς

ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος
καὶ
ἁμαρτάνει
ὣν αὐτοκατάκριτος.

Semantic Diagram

		(3:1-2)					
I--	A-----	1	Pres	Act	Imp	2	S (σύ)
	1-----	2	Impf	---	Ind	2	P ἡμεῖς
	B--						
	2-----	3	1 Aor	Act	Ind	3	S (ὁ θεός)
			---	(3:8)			
	A-----	4	(Pres	---	Ind	3	S ἐστίν)
II-	a-----	5	Pres	Dep	Ind	1	S (ἐγώ)
	1--						
	b-----	6	Pres	---	Ind	3	P (αὐτὰ)
	B--						
	i-----	7	Pres	Dep	Imp	2	S (σύ)
	a--						
	2--	8	Pres	---	Ind	3	P (αὐτοί)
	ii-----						
			---	(3:10-11)			
	b-----	9	Pres	Dep	Imp	2	S (σύ)

Summary of the Rhetorical Structure

The clearest signal of thought flow comes with the dominate frame of reference in these verses. In the first section (vv. 1-7; #s 1-3), the third and first person plural references serves as the primary points. But in the second section (vv. 8-11; #s 4-9), the second person singular reference dominates.

Inside the first unit of thought two subunits are clearly present. Titus is given an ongoing responsibility to constantly remind the Cretan believers to live out their Christian commitment in specific lifestyle patterns (# 1; vv. 1-2). Then a justifying basis for this is introduced by the causal coordinate conjunction γάρ. The foundation for their Christian living rests upon their conversion experience (#s 2-3; vv. 3-7). Here Paul uses a frequent early Christian pattern of the BC / AD contrasts to describe conversion. The long vice list in statement 2 (v. 3) highlights the pagan lifestyle before coming to Christ. This is followed by a lengthy treatment of conversion in statement 3 (vv. 4-7). Of importance to note is that this BC / AD depiction is framed by “we” (first person plural), rather than “they” (third person plural) as in statement 1. Paul sees in not only the past of the Cretans, but also his own past and that of Titus a pagan tendency.

Inside the second unit of thought (vv. 8-11; #s 4-9), the thought flow revolves around two key structures. Statement 4 is an axiomatic saying that serves to bridge the thought flow from the first section to the second section, and to tie them together. The heart of the second section is then the series of admonitions directed specifically to Titus (#s 5-9). These naturally group themselves in three units.

First comes the indirect admonition in statement 5 (“I intend for you to...”) followed by the supporting declaration of the positive value in these things that Paul wanted Titus to devote himself to doing (# 6). Secondly, there comes the more intense direct admonition to shun destructive side tracking issues (# 7), and this is followed with the supporting characterization of the danger in these things (# 8). Closely related to the second admonition is the third one (# 9) to have nothing to do with Christians who want to side track the churches by dabbling in these useless debates. This destructive preoccupation becomes divisive and disruptive to the fellowship and unity of the churches.