

Sunday, June 6, 2010—Titus: The Practice of Grace—Introduction

Introduction

- Today we are going to begin a study through the book of Titus.
- I have a couple reasons for choosing Titus.
 - It has been at least two years since we have studied through a book in the main Sunday morning study.
 - As a growing church we need to be reminded how the local church is supposed to function Biblically. The Spiritual life of a local church is generated by the saints it cannot be artificially imposed. As one of the Pastoral Epistles to book of Titus provides the perfect context to examine these issues.
 - Titus is shorter than Paul's epistles to Timothy but covers much of the same ground.
- Pastors have selves lined with books talking about how to run the local church. Yet, God the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul reminds us that the focus of the local church should not be programs or organization but cultivating spiritual life.

Writer and Readership

- Titus has: 3 chapters, 46 verses, and 921 words in your King James Bible
- Titus 1:1—states that the Apostle Paul is the author of the book. There is no scriptural reason to think that Paul did not write the book.
- Titus 1:4—the book is clearly addressed to Titus
- Titus had been one of Paul's close companions in ministry.
 - II Corinthians 2:13, 7:6, 8:1-6, 16-17—Titus was sent by Paul to deal with serious irregularities in the church at Corinth, and particularly with their delinquency as stewards of the material wealth God had entrusted to them (Stam).
 - Galatians 2:1-3—He accompanied Paul as the Gentile representative to the great council at Jerusalem, whence Paul had been sent to defend Gentile liberty from circumcision and the Law (Stam).
- Titus was someone who was very near and dear to Paul's heart

Date

- Titus 1:5—Titus is stationed on the island of Crete when Paul addresses this letter to him.
- Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea off the north cost of Africa (see map).

- The island of Crete is 156 miles long and up to 30 miles wide. Its first century inhabitants were notorious for untruthfulness and immorality (Titus 1:12-13) and the expression “to act the Cretan” became an idiom meaning to “lay the liar.”
- Acts 2:11—while there were Jews from Crete present at Pentecost it is unlikely that they are responsible for the founding of local churches on the Island of Crete.
- Acts 27:7-9, 12-13, 21—Paul was on Crete during this Journey to Rome for his first imprisonment.
- It appears unlikely that Paul would have been at liberty to establish churches on Crete at this time.
- Titus 1:5—notice that Paul left Titus on Crete which implies that he went back after his first imprisonment.
- Most people generally agree that the book was written between Paul’s first and second imprisonments. Approximately between 62 and 67 A.D.

Theme/Purpose

- Titus has much in common with the two letters addressed to Timothy. I and II Timothy the emphasis is on doctrine whereas in Titus it is on good works that are produced by the doctrine living in you (Titus 3:8, 14).
- I Timothy—The local “Church” and its “Minister”
 - Charge
- II Timothy—The True Minister and His Reactions
 - Challenge
- Titus—The Local Church—Its Leaders and Members
 - Caution— a strong and urgent reminder that sound faith must be accompanied by good works.
- These three “Pastoral” epistles are really a trinity in unity, exhorting us to “guard” the precious “deposit” of the body of truth committed to the Apostle Paul.
 - I Timothy—we are to protect it
 - II Timothy—we are to proclaim
 - Titus—we are to practice it
- According to Titus the ideal church: 1) has an orderly organization, 2) is sound in doctrine, 3) is pure in life, ready to every good work.

Outline

- As one might expect many outlines have been offered for how to understand and organize the material in this book.

- Consider the following examples. See PowerPoint slides
- J. Vernon McGee presents the following outline:
 - Chapter One: the church is to be an orderly organization (Titus 1:5)
 - Saved by Grace
 - Chapter Two: the church is to teach and preach the word of God (Titus 2:1)
 - Live by Grace
 - Chapter Three: the church is supposed to produce good works (Titus 3:1)
 - Grace motivates believers to produce good works
- All problems in a local church can be traced back to a deficiency in any of these categories.

Canonical Order of Paul's Epistles

- Often times when people come to Paul's epistles they want to study them in their chronological order. That is in the order in which they were written starting with the first and ending with the last.
- This is often said to be preferred way to study the Pauline books because then you can see clearly how Paul's theology developed over time. This is a legitimate way to study the material however I don't consider to be the best.
- If you look at Paul's epistles in their canonical order (that is the order they appear in the Scripture) Romans comes first and Philemon comes last.
- You will notice that the nine books that Paul wrote to the seven churches appear first, followed by the four personal letters that Paul wrote to individuals.
- The traditional understanding of why the Bible was arranged in this way is that the books were just put in the Scriptures from largest (Romans to Thessalonians) the smallest. If one views the arrangement in this manner you will the glorious blessing of understanding the divine curriculum that their order represents.
- The order therefore must present to use the line study marked out for the churches by the Holy Spirit: a complete course which shall begin and finish the education of the Christian, a curriculum which contains everything necessary for the Christian's standing and his walk.
- II Timothy 3:16-17
- Show how the alignment of the Epistles relates to the plan for the establishment of the believer.
- Romans 16:25-26