

# Chapter Summary: Titus

After discovering the issues that were going on in Ephesus, Paul asked Timothy to remain there and "stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth". But around the same time, Paul became aware of another crisis requiring his attention. False teaching was spreading among the believers in the churches on the island of Crete (in the eastern Mediterranean). These churches were most likely young and lacking in strong local leadership. So Paul sent Titus, another of his trusted colleagues, to rein in the "rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others."

Though probably young like Timothy, Titus was another dependable co-worker. He had already played an important role in bringing about reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthians, and Paul had also sent him to help the Corinthians arrange their offering for impoverished believers in Jerusalem. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he used Titus as an example of a Gentile believer who was serving Christ faithfully without having to follow the Jewish Law.

Now Paul needed Titus to take on an assignment every bit as challenging as Timothy's in Ephesus. On the island of Crete, false teachers like those in Ephesus, were disrupting entire households with their emphasis on strange myths and speculative ideas. The fallout from their work included foolish discussions and quarrels about following the Jewish Law, leading to divisions in the churches. So Paul now writes a letter of instruction to Titus.

Like his first letter to Timothy, this letter alternates between instructions for the community of believers on Crete and "charges" to Titus himself. Because this letter is shorter and more general, the shifts between the two are not as pronounced; instead, Paul moves briskly back and forth between them.

Paul opens the letter with an emphasis on the nature of the gospel message and his own clear mandate to spread the Good News about Jesus to all people. Paul then moves immediately to solving the problem of leadership in the churches of Crete by giving Titus guidance for appointing elders. Titus and these appointed elders are called to lead the churches to recommit to living by God's grace as they did when the Good News was first preached to them.

Paul is counting on Titus to influence the believers in Crete to "live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God." After Titus has completed his mission in Crete, Paul hopes Titus can join him for the winter as he prepares for the long-anticipated trip to bring the Good News to the western parts of the Roman Empire.