

# LIVING IN A CRETAN WORLD

## (Titus 1)

### Introduction

- 1) **Titus 1:12** – Paul quotes a writer who made a rather unflattering statement about his own people on the island of Crete – and then he states his agreement with it (v. 13)!
  - a) We are usually try to avoid broad generalizations (“painting with a broad brush”), but some such statements can correctly summarize what is generally true and give needed cautions
- 2) Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea and the ship taking Paul to Rome stopped there at a place called Fair Havens (Acts 27:7-8)
- 3) Cretan Jews were present on Pentecost and later there were local churches on the island (Acts 2:11; Titus 1:5)
- 4) Cretans were well-known for their worldly and ungodly behavior (*see quote on back*)
- 5) Christians then would have to learn how to live in this very worldly environment, just as we must do in our society today

### I) A WORLDLY AND UNGODLY SOCIETY

- A) **Lying** – dishonest, untruthful, selfish (Eph. 4:25)
- B) **Evil Beasts** – speak and act without understanding (2 Pet. 2:10-12)
- C) **Lazy** – not motivated to work or assist others (2 Thess. 3:10-12)
- D) **Gluttons** – serve physical desires rather than spiritual needs (Phil. 3:19)
- E) **Empty, Hypocritical Religion** – profess to know God, but disobedient (1 Jn. 2:4)

### II) WHAT WE NEED WHILE LIVING IN A CRETAN WORLD

- A) **Strong Faith** (1:1-4)
  - 1) The common faith comes from a knowledge of the truth – what God desires (1 Tim. 2:4)
  - 2) Truth must not be just heard, but understood, applied, and practiced (2 Tim. 3:7)
  - 3) Obeying the truth will save us from sin and keep us faithful (Jn. 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:22)
- B) **Strong Eldership** (1:5-12)
  - 1) Local churches need elders that are spiritually mature, godly, and courageous
  - 2) Why they oversee and shepherd the flock – feed with word and protect from evil
  - 3) Dangers can exist inside and outside (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9-11)
- C) **Strong Preaching** (1:13-16)
  - 1) Gives sharp rebukes when necessary about fables and commandments of men (2:15)
  - 2) Strong preaching keeps us sound in the faith according to the pattern of truth (2 Tim. 1:13)
  - 3) Preaching the word of God is exactly what is needed in troubled times (2 Tim. 4:2-4)

### III) WHEN LIVING FOR GOD...

- A) We possess hope (1:2)
- B) We submit to divine authority and instruction (1:1, 5)
- C) We enjoy a sound mind and life filled with sound doctrine (1:9, 13)

### Conclusion

Titus and the faithful brethren on the island of **Crete** could not easily change their address, but they could continue to live faithfully for God while living in a godless and immoral society. In fact, that is exactly what every Christian must do (Phil. 2:15). Hear and obey the gospel today!

Beginning in Titus 1:6, Paul details for Titus the qualifications for elders, one of which is the ability to “encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (verse 9). He goes on to say that in Crete there were many rebellious people and deceivers who must be silenced as they were teaching falsehood for financial gain (verses 10–11). At that point, Paul quotes a famous Cretan who wrote, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons” (verse 12). That writer was Epimenides of Gnossus, a seventh-century BC poet, prophet, and native Cretan who characterized his own people as liars.

Epimenides wasn't the only one to describe Cretans in this way. Other ancient writers and philosophers concurred, and Paul's assessment serves to confirm the Cretans' character to be generally evil. The Roman poet Ovid referred to Crete as mendax Creta, or “lying Crete.” The Greeks used the verb cretize as a synonym for lie. All people are guilty of lying at one time or another, but not all are habitual liars, as it seems the ancient Cretans were. Lying seems to have been a governing vice among them. They were not only guilty of it in certain specific instances, but always. They were, in the vernacular of psychologists, compulsive liars, those who lie even when there is no external motive for the lie. Lying was their fallback behavior in all instances.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/all-Cretans-are-liars.html>

## TITUS: Paul's Partner and Fellow Worker

### Introduction

- 1) **Titus 1:1-4** – Paul's greeting to Titus, his “true son in our common faith”
  - a) “True” (Gk. *gnesios*) = legitimate (of birth), i.e. genuine (Strong) – strongly implies that Titus was converted by Paul (cp. like Timothy, 1 Tim. 1:2)
- 2) Paul called Titus “my partner and fellow worker” (2 Cor. 8:23)
- 3) Titus became a very important spiritual helper to Paul and other brethren in the Lord

### I) Test Case of Gentile Conversion

- A) Paul and Barnabas “and certain other of them” went to Jerusalem concerning the question of circumcising Gentiles in order to be saved (Acts 15:1-2)
  - 1) One of the “certain other of them” was Titus (Gal. 2:1)
- B) Titus was a Gentile [Greek] convert who was uncircumcised (Gal. 2:3)
  - 1) Titus was *not* “compelled” to be circumcised (to make necessary by force or persuasion)
- C) Titus became an example of Paul's unwillingness to yield to the false teachings of men who would impose their own human commandments (Gal. 2:4-5; Acts 15:24)
- D) Titus learned an important lesson of standing firm against false teachers, even when he was personally involved and the truth at stake. Are we willing to take the same stand?

### II) Important Helper with the Corinthian Church

- A) Paul had written a stern, tearful letter (1 Cor.) to the Corinthian brethren (2 Cor. 2:3-4, 9)
  - 1) He had sent Titus to report to him of their reaction, but was troubled that he did not see Titus in Troas (2 Cor. 2:12-13)
- B) Paul finally met up with Titus in Macedonia, which brought comfort to Paul (2 Cor. 7:5-6)
  - 1) Titus brought good news of their earnest desire, mourning, and zeal for Paul (v. 7)
  - 2) Titus was refreshed by the Corinthians who showed repentance and obedience (vv. 13-15)
  - 3) Titus had great affection toward them (Paul smart to send a Gentile to a Gentile church)
- C) Titus encouraged Corinthians to give for ministering to the Judean saints (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2)
  - 1) Titus urged to help church in getting benevolent work done (2 Cor. 8:6)
  - 2) Titus volunteered to go to them because of his “earnest care” and diligence for them (8:16-18, 22-23; 12:18)
- D) Titus was willing and eager to help Paul in this difficult work with a troubled church. Are we as eager to be used in the Lord's service, especially when it is difficult or inconvenient?

### III) Setting Things in Order (Epistle of Paul to Titus – faithful as an evangelist)

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| A) Appointing (1:5)   | E) Avoiding (3:9)      |
| B) Rebuking (1:13)    | F) Rejecting (3:10-11) |
| C) Exhorting (2:1-10) | G) Helping (3:12-13)   |
| D) Reminding (3:1-2)  |                        |

### IV) On to Dalmatia

- A) Titus leaves Paul to go to Dalmatia to continue the work of the Lord (NW of Macedonia on the coast of Adriatic Sea) (2 Tim. 4:10); no doubt this was a joy for Paul in his final days

### Conclusion

Titus is an excellent example of a young man who heard and obeyed the gospel, learned to stand firm for the truth, was a helper and encourager of brethren, set things in order as an evangelist, and remained steady and true in the work of the Lord. How about you? Hear and obey the Lord today!

*Sermon outline by Marc W. Gibson*