

**\*\*READ THE TEXT\*\***

**INTRO-**

*Introductory Illustration*

- **It Was a place FULL of pride!**
- The Cretans believed that their very mountainous island was the birthplace of the majority of the gods: Zeus, the preeminent man became god, was also believed to be buried in Crete.
- Cretans believed that “WORSHIP of the gods (according to them!) began on Crete.
  - In a magnificent island in the middle of the Mediterranean -- approx 181 miles long -- very mountains in the middle but densely populated on the coastal cities, this lush tropical island had citizens who were aggressive, materialistic, worldly, and idolatrous. they earned quite an extensive reputation for deception and vice.
- **For them**, Zeus was a god of 1. **Courage**; 2. **Wisdom** & 3. **justice!**
- Crete was an island that was distinguished & famed for “the CRETAN lifestyle”
  - they were known for their GREED, LOVE OF GAIN AND WEALTH. Cretans were VERY GREEDY for Money. >> they knew it; and had reputation for it.
  - To be a CRETAN was to be a LIAR. A verb in Greek came out of this: “to cretanize” was to be a LIAR.

Talk about a mission field! talk about pressure! Talk about a pagan environment! *What pressure to serve in the midst of such a place!*

- It’s like what Hudson Taylor said to his staff one time: “It doesn’t matter how GREAT the pressure is, what really matters is WHERE the pressure lies — whether it comes *between* you and God or presses you *NEARER* to the heart of God!
  - >> that’s precisely what Paul does for TITUS in this book.
- **Religiously:**
  - THERE were churches on Crete and its island
  - **Now, at the heart of everything for PAUL is the gospel >> the good news of God’s gracious acceptance and forgiveness of sinners. This saving work is ALL by God’s saving initiative.**
  - There’s a need: churches do exist but these young churches *live* in the midst of a very pagan, worldly environment. Titus is basic doctrine [*catechism*] — instructions for new believers, for a young church, in doctrine, in conduct, church life.
- **What does Paul write about? What does Titus need to know?** [nothing about church buildings, staff, budgets, multi-site, music styles, fashion, trends, being accepted by culture, being tolerant of evil, ministries, dramas, conferences]
- **BUT > IN THIS LETTER, Paul will deal with:**
  - spiritual maturity, true leadership, godliness, priority of the home, wholesome, sacrificial relationships, sexual purity, credibility and public testimony, church discipline, silencing false teachers, the importance of your local church, & the gospel of God’s grace!

- ❖ Never have we so desperately NEEDED those issues clarified for us as in our day!!!

### *Background to Titus*

- One of the last books that Paul will write. He's been on his missionary journeys, he's been to Rome, imprisoned for 2 years and then was released and wrote 1 Timothy. Now, he will be imprisoned again (a 2<sup>nd</sup> & last time) where he'll write 2 Timothy & then be killed. But in these final years, he writes to TITUS -- about church life/order/conduct.
  - Key verse of the book: Titus 1.5 (and 3.8)
- **Outlines of Titus:**
  - 1. **Protection** of the gospel & leadership (1) (godly leaders)
  - 2. **Practice** of the gospel & life (2-3) (godly living)

### **THESIS — From the opening Greeting we'll learn about Paul's view of himself & his ministry that God entrusted to him.**

Paul's OBLIGATION - a slave of God

Paul's OCCUPATION - an apostle of Jesus Christ

Paul's OBSESSION - for the faith of the elect

Paul's ANTICIPATION - in the hope of eternal life

Paul's CONVICTION - God cannot lie

Paul's PROCLAMATION - God manifested His Word to me

#### **I. PAUL'S OBLIGATION (1a)**

A. Paul is a *slave of God*

B. The word means "slave" - one who had no rights; totally the property of his master; his existence was determined by servitude and submission to his lord; totally dependent on master for provision & protection.

1. We should all be slaves of God. 1 Thess 1.9 - turned from idols to serve the living & true God. Col 3.24 - it is the Lord Christ whom you serve!

2. Matt 6.24 - you cannot serve two masters; Christ wants you to serve HIM only!

C. Either a slave of sin (John 8.34) or slave of Christ (Rom 7.6)

#### **II. PAUL'S OCCUPATION (1b)**

A. *An apostle of Jesus Christ*

B. An apostle was one who had seen the resurrected Christ & who was personally commissioned by Christ. (Mark 3; Acts 1)

C. An apostle - a sent one with Christ's authority to speak in His name.

1. His occupation was to do what Christ called him to do! ***So must you!***

#### **III. PAUL'S OBSESSION (1c)**

A. *For the faith of those chosen of God & for the knowledge of the Truth*

B. Paul gives the *purpose*, the aim, the goals, the obsession:

1. FOR THE FAITH of the elect - he serves for all those whom God chose to come to faith. He is ***fervent in evangelism***; he is ***crisp in theology***; he is ***reformed in God's sovereign election***. And this moves him to action > serve so they may believe & be built up!

2. FOR THE KNOWLEDGE of the truth - knowledge, real, genuine, intimate, experiential knowledge.
  - a) One responds to Truth in one of 3 ways
    1. you can OBEY IT and slow down
    2. you can IGNORE IT and keep going at same speed
    3. you can DEFY IT and speed up.
3. FOR THE GODLINESS of the saints - wants their piety, their obedience, their good works. (cf. 3:8, 14) >true saving faith produces faith that works!
  - a) Godliness isn't a LIST of dos and don'ts; *it's a LIFE*; it's the life of CHRIST IN YOU which then demonstrates the character of God THRU you for the glory of God!

#### IV. PAUL'S ANTICIPATION (2)

- A. *In the hope of eternal life which God who promised long ages ago*
- B. Here is Paul's *basis*, reason, his foundation > really, an end-times conviction.
- C. He serves for the *hope* of eternal life which GOD promised before eternal times.
  1. He is a man who lives in the present with an eye toward the future!
  2. it's objective, not subjective; it's established, not hypothetical; it's certain, not wishful. He serves in the hope of eternal life (=future) which God promised *before eternal times* (=past)! ***What a sweeping scope of history.***

#### V. PAUL'S CONVICTION

- A. *God cannot lie.*
- B. Who made this hope? **It's GOD -- who cannot lie.**
  1. This is clear OT theme: 1 Sam 15.29 - the glory of Israel does not lie
  2. Ps 31.5 - He is the God of Truth
  3. Rom 3.4 - let God be true and every man a liar
  4. God cannot lie - Heb 6.18
- C. Paul introduces a theme & a biting citation to come -- 1.12-13 - they are liars!
- D. Remember: in the 1<sup>st</sup> c AD, the primary god worshiped was **Zeus** -- Preeminent is Zeus' justice >> he lays down laws to distinguish bad from good behavior
  1. The story is told of Zeus assuming the form of the husband of a woman that he is trying to seduce; so he can't do it so he resorts to DECEPTION to get her.
  2. ancient evidence suggests "Cretans regarded lying as culturally acceptable" (Winter)
  3. it lies behind the coining/creation of the Greek verb: "Cretizo" — meaning to play the Cretan/to Lie"/to deceive.
    - a) GOD WHO DOES NOT LIE >> Paul clearly polemically poking at the character of Zeus who deceived.
  4. Thus >> Zeus is a liar, a deceiver and this forms the perfect backdrop to the characterization of GOD "WHO CANNOT LIE". **\*\*SO >>> when Paul says that God cannot lie — it's loaded with powerful language and overtones**

#### VI. PAUL'S PROCLAMATION (3)

- A. *God manifested His Word at the proper time & entrusted this calling to Paul to preach!*

B.v.3 - in this practical outworking of Paul's role... God *made clear* (shined light upon) the call on Paul in the proclamation of the Word (= *gospel message*).

C. This proclamation speaks of 'preaching' -

- a teacher can teach his own material
  - a speaker/talker can originate his own message
  - a communicator can deliver his own creatively designed content
  - A coach/motivational speaker can emotionally stir people up w/ his plans
    - ❖ but a **HERALD** > he must repeat and explain what has been delivered to him by his master (he's an envoy, an ambassador)
    - ❖ WE are never to be original; we are to deliver God's message.
1. Paul is the **recipient** of the gospel (he is entrusted with the gospel; GOD did the work of calling him; God did the work/action)
  2. Paul locates the source of his commissioning from the '**commandment** of God' (he is under authority // of God!) (why he can speak forcefully in 1.11; 2.1, 15; 3.10)
  3. Paul describes God as GOD OUR **SAVIOR** > the first language of salvation language is a key theme of the letter (1:3, 4; 2:10, 11, 13; 3:4, 5, 6) >> God's salvation is a present reality!
    - a) the word translated savior was used to praise the gods Zeus and Apollo; they were referred to as man's savior (also given to Caesar who was the savior of the world)
    - b) Paul says: I'm gonna tell you the truth >> we may offend the people and the king and the emperor and all your gods, but Caesar isn't savior nor is Zeus or Apollo — CHRIST JESUS IS.

## CONCL-

### *Concluding Illustration*

- During Rome's golden age, Marcus Aurelius was emperor in the early 2nd c AD)
- Christianity was illegal and the spilling of Christian's blood happened frequently.
- To follow Christ meant you could be imprisoned, tortured or even put to death.
- In 177AD, a Christian community existed within the empire in Southern France.
  - a man named SANCTUS was a deacon in the church in the town of Vienne and was on trial for the "CRIME" of being a Christian.
  - He stood before the Roman Governor and his life literally hung in the balance with every interrogating question & answer.
- According to Eusebius, an ancient church historian, SANCTUS was resolved — no matter what — to remain true to Christ.
  - When it was obvious that he would NOT renounce his faith, he was condemned to a public death in the amphitheater.
  - When he was to be killed, he was led into the arena. Whoever he was asked a question, he always had but ONE answer: "I AM A CHRISTIAN."
- Through the whole torture, he was resolute: **I am a Christian**. He was unchanging and he knew his master, and his position before Him. He finally was put to death.
  - But for Sanctus, his entire identity, his name, citizenship, social status, work, and purpose was bound up IN JESUS CHRIST : "I am a Christian."
- What identified him above and beyond everything else was this: '**I AM A CHRISTIAN.**'
  - > not a title only; but a way of thinking, a way of living, a new identity!