

# *Inscribe These Words*

## BIBLE STUDY

### **Titus**

Lesson 3: Titus 3

Handed out Jan. 31 for discussion on Feb. 7

### **Review from Chapter 2**

In Chapter 2, St. Paul gave instructions about Christian behavior and duties. He highlighted that we all need role models in the Christian life; they give us direction, challenge, and inspiration. These can be the Saints or they can be people we know personally, or both. In any case, regardless of our age, we all need Christian role models.

Paul highlighted his concern about the effect of the Christian witness on the non-Christian world. In two places in Chapter 2, he referred to Christian doctrine, which is salvation doctrine. He gave instruction to people in the Church who are at different stages of their lives. In their own ways, all of them are to provide evidence of their salvation by Jesus Christ. Paul highlighted that our lives can bring either adornment or discredit to the gospel. If we live the virtuous lives that we are called to live, giving good evidence of salvation by living a manifestly saved life, the gospel shines. People will be drawn to our Lord. If we do not live virtuous lives, the gospel is tarnished, and people are turned away.

### **Truth in the World**

“The church is full of hypocrites.” “Christians aren’t any different from the rest of us. So why would I want to become one?”

These two statements are major excuses people give for rejecting Christianity. Unfortunately, our behavior as Christians sometimes gives unbelievers cause for ignoring the salvation God offers. Paul dealt with this problem in the third chapter of Titus. Having given Titus directions about doctrine and duty in the church (chapter 1) and in the home (chapter 2), he then

developed the same theme in regard to the world (chapter 3). Paul thus moved purposefully from the inner circles of home and church to the outer circle of secular society.

### OPEN

1. If someone followed you around for a week, how would that person describe your relationship with the world?

Read Titus 3:1-2. Paul began this section by telling Titus to “remind the people” of something they already knew but apparently forgot—their social relationship in the world. The churches had heard it before. But there are many warnings in Scripture of the dangers of forgetfulness and many promises to those who remember.

2. How should we relate to rulers and others in authority over us? Give an example of each instruction.
3. Paul moved from our Christian responsibility toward leaders to our relationship with everybody in the community. How should we relate to unbelievers in general? List the instructions in verse 2 and give examples of ways to live them out.

Instructions	Example

4. Why are these instructions important?

The emphasis on “whatever is good” not only clarifies our responsibility to government but limits it. We cannot cooperate with the State if it reverses its God-given duty, promoting evil instead of punishing it and opposing good instead of rewarding and furthering it. We should work to make sure laws that promote the common good are in place and we must work against laws which do not support it.

5. Read Titus 3:3-8. How is the person who does not know Christ described?

Paul gave a condensed but comprehensive account of salvation. In the original Greek text, verses 4-7 are a single long sentence that he may have taken from an early Christian creed. The whole sentence hinges on the main verb “He saved us” (v. 5). It is one of the most beautiful statements of salvation in the New Testament. Yet whenever the phraseology of salvation is dropped into a conversation today, many people’s reactions are predictable. Some treat salvation as if it were a joke. Thus the devil, whose ambition is to destroy, not to save, succeeds in trivializing the most serious question we could ever ask ourselves or put to anybody else. For Christianity is essentially a religion of salvation.

6. According to these verses, how did he save us?

7. In these verses Paul is giving the theological reason we can expect Christians to have a social conscience and to behave responsibly in public life. The only reason we dare instruct others in social ethics is that we know what we were once like ourselves. Why is this important to recall?

8. Verse 8 begins with the fourth “trustworthy saying” of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. What is the content of this saying? Why is it significant?

Note what a balanced and comprehensive account of salvation this is. For here are the three persons of the Trinity together engaged in securing our salvation: the love of God the Father, who took the initiative; the death of God the Son, in whom God's grace and mercy appeared; and the inward work of God the Holy Spirit, by whom we are reborn and renewed. Here, too, are the three tenses of salvation. The past is justification and regeneration. The present is a new life of good works in the power of the Spirit. The future is the inheritance of eternal life that will one day be ours.

So far in Titus 3, St. Paul has done two things. First, he told Titus to remind the Christians in his care to be conscientious citizens and to live consistent lives of peace, courtesy, and gentleness. Whatever their national character or individual temperament, that is their calling. Second, Paul elaborated the doctrine of salvation and so gave Titus a ground for confidence that the people in his charge can be changed so as to live the new life to which they were summoned.

Paul concluded his letter with a cluster of miscellaneous messages with requests or instructions for Titus to do something.

9. Read Titus 3:9-15. After telling Titus to stress the truth of salvation (v. 8), the apostle then told him to avoid other things. What errors did Paul say to avoid? Give an example of each.

10. Why is it important to avoid these?

11. Paul then gave specific instructions regarding a divisive person, or some bibles translate this as a "heretic." Describe such a person. How should we treat them? Why?

As Paul ended this letter, he mentioned a number of people by name. Of Artemas we know nothing. Tychicus came from proconsular Asia, perhaps from Ephesus, its capital, like Trophimus, with whom he was bracketed. He was one of those chosen to take the collection for the poor to Jerusalem. Paul called him a "dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:21) and evidently had great confidence in him. He sent him to Colosse, perhaps with his letter to tell the churches about him. Later Paul sent him from Rome to Ephesus to free Timothy to go visit him.

We know nothing of Zenas except that Paul called him a lawyer. Apollos may well be the learned and eloquent Alexandrian who had “a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24) and who exercised a fruitful ministry in Corinth. It seems likely that Paul had entrusted to these two men the task of carrying his letter to Titus on Crete.

12. Why are believers to learn to devote themselves to good works?

13. Why did Paul emphasize greeting “those who love us in the faith”?

14. How do the actions Paul encourages here contrast with the actions he condemns in verses 9-11?

Having now studied the three chapters that make up this short letter, it is evident that “doctrine and duty” is an appropriate title for it. For in the church (chapter 1) Christian leaders, in contrast to false teachers, are to pass on the apostolic faith and practice what they preach. In the home (chapter 2) members of the household are to go about their different duties in this present age, motivated by the past and future appearances of Christ. And in the world (chapter 3) conscientious Christian citizenship is to be a spontaneous overflow of that great salvation that God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has won for us.

Thus doctrine inspires duty, and duty adorns doctrine. Doctrine and duty are married; they must not be divorced.

## APPLY

15. How can you guard against becoming a divisive person?

16. Paul wrote to both Timothy and Titus to encourage them as well as to instruct them. Who can you be a "Paul" to this week? Who in your life might be your "Paul"? How can you engage that person more deeply?

17. What is the most important thing you have learned from this study of Titus?

## PRAY

Thank God for His saving grace and ask for His help to live out your salvation in a way that attracts people to Him. Pray that your attitudes and actions will bring unity, not divisiveness, to your church. Ask God to help you continue to live out the truths you've learned from this study.