

## *Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

### *Overview Book of Titus*

*8/26/15*

THE VACUUM produced when a strong leader departs can devastate a movement, organization, or institution. Having been dependent on his or her skill, style, and personality, associates and subordinates flounder or vie for control. Soon efficiency and vitality are lost, and decline and demise follow. Often this pattern is repeated in churches. A great speaker or teacher gathers a following, and soon a church is flourishing. It is alive, vital, and effective. Lives are being changed and people led into the Kingdom. But when this person leaves or dies, with him or her goes the drive and the heart of the organization.

People flocked to hear Paul's teaching. Educated, articulate, motivated, and filled with the Holy Spirit, this man of God faithfully proclaimed the Good News throughout the Roman Empire; lives were changed and churches begun. But Paul knew that the church must be built on Christ, not on a person. And he knew that eventually he would not be there to build, encourage, discipline, and teach. So he trained young pastors to assume leadership in the churches after he was gone. Paul urged them to center their lives and preaching on the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and to train others to carry on the ministry (2 Timothy 2:2).

Titus was a Greek believer. Taught and nurtured by Paul, he stood before the leaders of the church in Jerusalem as a living example of what Christ was doing among the Gentiles (Galatians 2:1-3). Like Timothy, he was one of Paul's trusted traveling companions and closest friends. Later he became Paul's special ambassador (2 Corinthians 7:5-16) and eventually the overseer of the churches on Crete (Titus 1:5). Slowly and carefully, Paul developed Titus into a mature Christian and a responsible leader. The letter to Titus was a step in this discipleship process. As with Timothy, Paul told Titus how to organize and lead the churches.

Paul begins his letter with a longer than usual greeting and introduction, outlining the leadership progression: Paul's ministry (1:1-3), Titus's responsibilities (1:4-5), and those leaders whom Titus would appoint and train (1:5). Paul then lists pastoral qualifications (1:6-9) and contrasts faithful elders with the false leaders and teachers (1:10-16).

Next, Paul emphasizes the importance of good deeds in the life of the Christian, telling Titus how to relate to the various age groups in the church (2:2-6). He urges Titus to be a good example of a mature believer (2:7-8) and to teach with courage and conviction (2:9-15). He then discusses the general responsibilities of Christians in society: Titus should remind the people of these (3:1-8), and he should avoid divisive arguments (3:9-11). Paul concludes with a few matters of itinerary and personal greetings (3:12-15).

Paul's letter to Titus is brief, but it is an important link in the discipleship process, helping a young man grow into leadership in the church. As you read this pastoral letter, you will gain insight into the organization and life of the early church, and you will find principles for structuring contemporary churches. But you should also see how to be a responsible Christian leader. Read the letter to Titus and determine, like Paul, to train men and women to lead and teach others.

## **VITAL STATISTICS**

**PURPOSE:** To advise Titus in his responsibility of supervising the churches on the island of Crete

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:** Titus, a Greek, probably converted to Christ through Paul's ministry (he had become Paul's special representative to the island of Crete)

**DATE WRITTEN:** Approximately A.D. 64, around the same time 1 Timothy was written; probably from Macedonia when Paul traveled between his Roman imprisonments

**SETTING:** Paul sent Titus to organize and oversee the churches on Crete. This letter tells Titus how to do this job.

**KEY VERSE:** "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you" (1:5).

**KEY PEOPLE:** Paul, Titus

**KEY PLACES:** Crete, Nicopolis

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Titus is very similar to 1 Timothy with its instructions to church leaders.

## **THE BLUEPRINT**

1. Leadership in the church (1:1-16)
2. Right living in the church (2:1-15)
3. Right living in society (3:1-15)

Paul calls for church order and right living on an island known for laziness, gluttony, lying, and evil. The Christians are to be self-disciplined as individuals, and they must be orderly as people who form one body, the church. We need to obey this message in our day when discipline is not respected or rewarded by our society. Although others may not appreciate our efforts, we must live upright lives, obey the government, and control our speech. We should live together peacefully in the church and be living examples of our faith to contemporary society.

## MEGATHEMES

### A Good Life

**EXPLANATION:** The *Good News* of salvation is that we can't be saved by living a good life; we are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ. But the gospel transforms people's lives, so that they eventually perform good deeds. Our service won't save us, but we are saved to serve.

**IMPORTANCE:** A good life is a witness to the gospel's power. As Christians, we must have commitment and discipline to serve. Are you putting your faith into action by serving others?

### Character

**EXPLANATION:** Titus's responsibility in Crete was to appoint elders to maintain proper organization and discipline, so Paul listed the qualities needed for the eldership. Their conduct in their homes revealed their fitness for service in the church.

**IMPORTANCE:** It's not enough to be educated or to have a loyal following to be Christ's kind of leader. You must have self-control, spiritual and moral fitness, and Christian character. Who you are is just as important as what you can do.

### Church Relationships

**EXPLANATION:** Church teaching must relate to various groups. Older Christians were to teach and to be examples to younger men and women. People of every age and group have a lesson to learn and a role to play.

**IMPORTANCE:** Right living and right relationships go along with right doctrine. Treat relationships with other believers as an outgrowth of your faith.

### Citizenship

**EXPLANATION:** Christians must be good citizens in society, not just in church. Believers must obey the government and work honestly. **IMPORTANCE:** How you fulfill your civic duties is a witness to the watching world. Your community life should reflect Christ's love as much as your church life does.