

Titus

1:1 Paul, a slave of God and apostle of Jesus the Messiah in accordance with the belief of the chosen ones of God and the knowledge of truth which is in line with godly living,¹
1:2 on the basis of the hope of eternal life, which the never-lying God promised in the ancient times.² **1:3** And He has revealed His story in the suitable season by means of the proclamation, with which I was entrusted in accordance with the commandment of God our Savior.³

1:4 To Titus, my genuine child in line with our common belief—Grace and shalom from God the Father and the Messiah Jesus, our Savior.⁴

1:5 For the following reason I left you in Crete, to tie up some loose ends and to put elders in charge in each city—just as I instructed you,⁵ **1:6** if someone is blameless, a one woman man, having dependable children who are not accused of loose living or rebellion.⁶ **1:7** It is necessary for an overseer to be blameless as God's manager, not self-willed, quick-tempered, an alcoholic, a bully, or greedy.⁷ **1:8** Instead, he is to be friendly to strangers, loving goodness, self-controlled, upright, pleasing to God, and having his passions under control.⁸ **1:9** He is to be devoted to the message that is in accordance with the teaching of belief with the result that he is also able to exhort with correct teaching and to expose those who communicate an opposite message.⁹

1:10 For there are indeed many rebellious people, windbags and deceivers, especially ones from the circumcision,¹⁰ **1:11** whom it is necessary to silence. They are upsetting entire families because they teach things that are not fitting, and for the sake of filthy gain.¹¹ **1:12** One of them, one of their own prophets, has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil wild animals, and lazy gluttons."¹² **1:13** This attestation is true, for which reason correct them rigorously so that they may be correct in the faith,¹³ **1:14** not following Jewish false ideas and the teachings of men who reject the truth.¹⁴

1:15 In regard to those who are clean, everything about them is clean. But in regard to those who have been polluted and are unbelievers, nothing about them is clean, but both their mind and their understanding have been polluted.¹⁵ **1:16** They confess to know God, but by their deeds they deny him. They are repugnant to God—disobedient and unapproved when it comes to every good deed.¹⁶

2:1 Now as for you, speak the things that meet the standard of correct teaching.¹⁷ **2:2** Older men are to be level-headed, dignified, self-controlled, and healthy with respect to their belief, their love, and their perseverance.¹⁸ **2:3** Older women are to be likewise in their behavior—reverent, not adversarial, not enslaved to much wine, and teaching what is good,¹⁹ **2:4** with the result that they instruct the young women in prudent behavior—to be loving towards their husbands, loving towards their children,²⁰ **2:5** self-controlled, pure, carrying out their household duties, good, and following their own husbands—so that the message of God does not lose its dignity.²¹ **2:6** Likewise, exhort the young men to think and live well.²²

2:7 In all things, present yourself as an example of good deeds in the midst of teaching integrity, reverence,²³ **2:8** and a message that is uncorrupted and beyond reproach so that the opponent may be put to shame because he has nothing bad to say about us.²⁴

2:9 Exhort slaves to obey their masters in everything, to be pleasing to them, not complaining,²⁵ 2:10 and not stealing, but demonstrating all good belief, with the result that they will adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in everything they do.²⁶

2:11 For the grace of God has appeared and brought salvation to all men.²⁷ 2:12 It has educated us with the result that we repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires, and we live prudently, righteously, and in a godly manner in the present age.²⁸ 2:13 We are waiting for the happy hope and the appearance of the glory of our great God and our savior, Jesus the Messiah,²⁹ 2:14 who gave himself on our behalf so that he may redeem us from all lawlessness and cleanse for himself a people chosen to be special, zealous for good deeds.³⁰

2:15 Speak these things, exhort, and correct with all authority. Let no one disregard you.³¹ 3:1 Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey them, to be ready for every good deed,³² 3:2 to slander no one, to be peaceable, allowing people to be in process, and demonstrating humility towards all men.³³

3:3 Formerly, we were indeed foolish, disobedient, deceivers, enslaved to our passions and various pleasures, living in a state of evil and envy, and hating one another.³⁴ 3:4 But when the kindness and love for mankind of our savior, God, appeared,³⁵ 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in a state of righteousness, but on the basis of His mercy through the washing of rebirth and renewal brought about by the Holy Spirit.³⁶ 3:6 He poured him out richly on us in view of Jesus Christ, our savior,³⁷ 3:7 with the result that we were declared justified by means of His grace, and we became heirs in accordance with the hope of eternal life.³⁸ 3:8 This is a trustworthy statement.

And I want you to speak confidently concerning these things, so that those who have believed in God may be intent upon showing themselves as caring about good deeds. These things are good and beneficial to men.³⁹ 3:9 But avoid foolish controversies, ancestral errors, and conflicts and quarrels pertaining to the Covenant, because they are useless and worthless.⁴⁰ 3:10 Decline a divisive man with a first and second warning,⁴¹ 3:11 knowing that such a man has been corrupted, is sinning, and has condemned himself.⁴²

3:12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, hasten to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there.⁴³ 3:13 Earnestly help send on their way Zenas, the expert in the law, and Apollos, so that they lack nothing.⁴⁴ 3:14 Let those who belong to us learn to give aid with good deeds to pressing needs, so that they may not be unfruitful.⁴⁵

3:15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.⁴⁶

¹ Παῦλος δοῦλος θεοῦ, ἀπόστολος δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ κατὰ πίστιν ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν – In characteristic fashion, Paul identifies himself as the author of this letter by pointing out that he serves God as obediently as a slave would obey his master in a 1st century Roman Empire household. Whatever God commands, Paul does. He is also an authoritative spokesman for Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, who is both the eternal king of the Kingdom of Israel/God and the eternal priest of its inhabitants who require God's mercy in order to gain life within it (cf. Acts 9, the story of Paul's conversion). His apostleship in the created reality is in line with the belief of those whom God chose before He brought the creation into existence, because Paul proclaims a message which authentic believers who acquire eternal salvation believe.

His apostleship is also in line with the knowledge of biblical truth which itself is consonant and commensurate with the kind of living to which God has called the people who authentically believe the truth of Jesus as the Messiah. Thus, Paul's responsibility, the information he conveys, the belief which people employ as their response to this information, and the lives which he and they live are all inextricably tied together so that none of these can be missing if both Paul and those who embrace his message are genuinely going to be recipients of God's promise of eternal mercy and life. Paul probably wrote this letter from Nicopolis (3:12), northwest of Corinth and Athens on the Aegean Sea, to Titus on the island of Crete (1:5ff.) around A.D. 66 after his release from his first imprisonment in Rome.

² Ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αἰωνίου, ἣν ἐπηγγείλατο ὁ ἀψευδὴς θεὸς πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων – Paul also says that he is an apostle on the basis of there being people who expect with absolute confidence that God will grant them eternal life. And God promised this eternal life (which is why people can legitimately wait for it with complete confidence) long ago in ancient times. Paul is probably referring to God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 to bless with eternal life him and anyone who chooses to associate with him by having the same kind of belief in God (cf. Hebrews 11). And for Paul to label God as the “never-lying” God is the same as saying that God promised eternal life to people of genuine belief. In other words, God is exactly this faithful and loyal to His promises. If He says He is going to do something, then He will definitely do it.

³ ἐφανερώσεν δὲ καιροῖς ἰδίους τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ἐν κηρύγματι, ὃ ἐπιστεύθη ἐγὼ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ – God also planned to make known to the world the information regarding Jesus the Messiah and eternal life which comes through him at just the right time in human history, and He planned to make this known through the public and oral proclamation of people like the apostle Paul. This information is the same as the story of God which He has been writing, is writing, and continues to write by sovereignly directing the creation exactly as it is going, so that the story of God is the information of God, specifically regarding how Jesus the Messiah fits into the story and is central to the proclamation by the apostle Paul whenever he speaks to mainly Gentiles, because their hearing this information is his gift and responsibility from God.

Thus, Paul says that God entrusted to him this story and information through a commandment which God specifically gave him, and this is the same God who is the Savior from eternal condemnation and destruction for both Paul and Titus.

⁴ Τίτῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινήν πίστιν, χάρις ἔκαστῳ καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν – This letter is to Paul's associate Titus, whom Paul knows was someone who heard the gospel from him and became a genuine believer in it like him. Paul's desire is that God, the source of all things (Father) and the Messiah Jesus who rescues Paul and Titus from God's wrath and destruction, continue to grant His grace (inner strength to believe and obey, albeit not perfectly) and a degree of shalom-like life, i.e., a life that is characterized by being blessed by God, even if it is mainly inwardly as persevering, genuine belief with some outward moral obedience, to Titus.

⁵ Τοῦτου χάριν ἀπέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ, ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ καὶ καταστήσῃ κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διατάξάμην – Paul begins the body of the letter by repeating what he must have said to Titus when he left him on Crete, that his purpose for doing so was for him to take care of certain things that would complete the process of the Christian community acquiring the potential to remain stable and healthy. One of these things was the appointment of “elders,” men who would watch over the teaching, belief, and behavior of the Christians on Crete with the correct information from Paul who had proclaimed the message of Jesus as the Messiah to all of them.

⁶ εἴ τις ἐστὶν ἀνέγκλητος, μίᾳς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ, τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα – The first qualities of an elder that Paul lists here are 1) having a genuine belief that is matched by outward behavior that for the most part is in line with God's moral commandments for us as human beings, so that no one can say where and if the elder is really messing up in his life, 2) being committed to his wife and not employing the common pagan practice of either temple prostitution or general infidelity, 3) having children who are generally in line with the gospel in its intellectual truth and outward behavior as a reflection of his ability to manage his household well as he would manage the Christian community well (as Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:5). But what if the children willfully disobey their father and the gospel out of their own moral rebellion against God, and what ages are these children to whom Paul is referring? The general principle seems to be that an elder's family should all be exercising a healthy level of self-control in order for him to provide good help to the Christian community in their pursuit of growing in their understanding of the gospel and of obeying God's moral commandments.

⁷ δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ ἀθάδῃ, μὴ ὀργίλον, μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, μὴ ἀισχροκερδῆ – Paul moves on to other qualities of an elder, whom he also labels an “overseer,” i.e., someone who watches over the community of believers. These qualities are 4) the same as #1 in the previous verse, but with the

added information that he is managing God's household in a manner similar to managers in 1st century Roman households, where probably this person is a very reliable slave who is entirely obedient to his master, who in this case is God. The elder/overseer is also 5) not self-willed, i.e., deciding for himself what is right vs. wrong, but looks entirely to God for the question of exactly what is moral, 6) not quick-tempered, but willing to be patient with people when their poor behavior impinges upon his well-being, 7) not an alcoholic, addicted to wine (most likely in the 1st century Roman Empire) to deal with the pain which the difficulties of life bring into every person's life, 8) not a bully, who uses some manner of coercion, even subtle and passive-aggressive to motivate people to follow the gospel, rather than respecting every person's individuality and trusting God to work in people's minds and hearts to direct them towards belief and proper obedience, and 9) not greedy for wealth or financial gain, which would reveal a lack of trust in God for his and his family's physical well-being in the present realm.

⁸ ἀλλὰ φιλόξενον φιλάγαθον σώφρονα δίκαιον ὅσιον ἐγκρατῆ – Paul goes back to listing positive qualities of elders, 10) able to relate well and lovingly to people outside the community of believers, in other words, personable, 11) committed to morality as defined by God and the gospel which Paul has taught on Crete, 12) for the most part capable of keeping his sinful passions in check so as not to follow through on them, 13) basically doing what is right in his outward behavior, 14) doing that which pleases God, i.e., what is moral and good in line with the biblical message, and 15) like #3, not allowing his sinful passions to get the most of him.

⁹ ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδασχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου, ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾗ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν – Paul lists more positive qualities of an elder, 16) committed to the apostolic message which Paul has taught, along with the communication skills to repeat this message and discern the difference between it and that which others might try to put forth as the gospel and yet is actually the opposite of it. This last quality probably implies that people who teach something different couch it in such a way that it sounds as though they are saying the same thing as Paul, which they may outwardly, but perhaps their attitude and behavior reveals that they are “saying” and communicating the opposite, e.g., they lack appropriate grace and mercy in dealing with other Christians (cf. Galatians).

¹⁰ Εἰσὶν γὰρ πολλοὶ [καὶ] ἀνυπότακτοι, ματαιολόγοι καὶ φρεναπάται, μάλιστα οἱ ἐκ ὁτῆς περιτομῆς – Paul states that there are both Gentiles and Jews who are presenting false ideas within the Christian community on Crete. And it seems that most of them are Jewish.

¹¹ οὓς δεῖ ἐπιστομίζειν, οἵτινες ὅλους οἴκους ἀνατρέπουσιν διδάσκοντες ἃ μὴ δεῖ αἰσχροῦ κέρδους χάριν – Paul says that it is important not to allow these people to disseminate their ideas which are antithetical to the gospel. Indeed their teaching is disrupting the belief and behavior of entire families. In addition, these people are simply trying to make money from proclaiming of their ideas.

¹² εἶπεν τ τις ἐξ αὐτῶν ἴδιος αὐτῶν προφήτης Κρήτης ἀεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί – The question here is whether Paul is simply quoting the 6th century B.C. Cretan poet and religious performer Epimenides and likening him to the false teachers of his day or Paul is saying that one of the false teachers of his day is quoting Epimenides for his own purposes of gaining more influence over the Cretan Christian community? It makes more sense to see Paul as simply quoting the ancient poet so that he is agreeing with this assessment of the Cretan society in the next verse by saying, “This attestation is true,” which is as much to say that the people on the Island of Crete are particularly drawn towards evil as demonstrated by the sheer number of them who are causing problems with false ideas within their own Christian community.

¹³ ἡ μαρτυρία αὕτη ἐστὶν ἀληθής, δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἔλεγε αὐτοὺς ἀποτόμως, ἵνα ὑγιαίνωσιν ἐν τῇ πίστει – Paul more likely is saying that Epimenides was right, and therefore it is important for Titus to be diligent to make sure that anyone who wants to put forth ideas which are opposite to the gospel should not be allowed to do so.

¹⁴ μὴ προσέχοντες Ἰουδαίκοις μύθοις καὶ ἔντολαῖς ἀνθρώπων ἀποστρεφομένων τὴν ἀλήθειαν – Because both Jews and Gentiles are involved in promoting false ideas in the Christian community of Crete, Paul states explicitly that they both need to be corrected so that no one is led astray by them, either the “Jewish false ideas” or “the teachings of men who reject the truth,” this latter referring to Gentiles.

¹⁵ πάντα τ καθαρά τοῖς καθαροῖς· τοῖς δὲ μεμιαμμένοις καὶ ἀπίστοις οὐδὲν καθαρὸν, ἀλλὰ μεμιάσονται αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις – Paul also states explicitly that authentic believers, those “who are clean,” are entirely “clean,” most likely referring to the fact that the Spirit of God gives these people who are changed inwardly sufficient desire and motivation to know the truth of the Bible and to live it out so that God is definitely pleased with their lives overall, in spite of their continuing to be morally depraved sinners. This latter fact does not make them dirty in the final analysis, because they still qualify by their Spirit-produced desires, thinking, and actions for God's mercy and eternal life. Therefore, Paul is not using “clean” to refer to moral perfection but to divinely changed inwardness and its results as caused by the Spirit of God. And this is true even for Cretan Christians who may have formerly had an even greater propensity and demonstration of evil than was true of other cultural groups in the 1st century Roman Empire. In contrast, unbelievers are polluted and completely unclean, not because they never do anything which can be categorized as morally good, but because they are committed to rejecting the truth of the gospel and God. Their minds have no problem thinking that false ideas about reality are good and right and ought to be promoted among other people. And this is even more true for Cretans in line with Epimenides' statement.

¹⁶ θεὸν ὁμολογοῦσιν εἰδέναι, τοῖς δὲ ἔργοις ἀρνοῦνται, βδελυκτοὶ ὄντες καὶ ἀπειθεῖς ὡκαὶ πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ὀγαθὸν ἀδόκιμοι – These unbelievers of the latter part of v. 15 are on the island of Crete and claiming to believe in the biblical God. Most of these are probably Jewish unbelievers, and their actions are not lining up with the apostolic message of

grace, morality, and forgiveness. Paul goes so far as to say that God is thoroughly offended by them, even when they do “good deeds,” i.e., deeds of obedience to the Mosaic Covenant that are not coming from a genuinely changed heart.

¹⁷ Σὺ δὲ λάλει ἃ πρέπει τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ – Here Paul is not exhorting Titus to proclaim the gospel *per se* of God’s mercy towards sinners, but the implications of the gospel in believers’ lives.

¹⁸ Πρεσβύτεας νηφαλίους εἶναι, σεμνοὺς, σώφρονας, ὑγιαίνοντας τῇ πίστει, τῇ ἀγάπῃ, τῇ ὑπομονῇ – First, Paul wants Titus to urge older men to live in a manner commensurate with the good news of God’s mercy, which involves their taking the wisdom they have acquired over the years and using it in situations where people may be overreacting one way or another. The older men’s level-headedness should help people act in an appropriate manner. They should also act with dignity, where their behavior is worthy of respect in its moral content and being in line with the gospel. They should control their emotions and passions so that they pursue morality with all the grace which God supplies them. Their belief in Jesus as the Messiah should be healthy and strong, not wavering from the truth of God’s mercy and the outcome of their lives, which will be to live in the eternal Kingdom of God. Their love and perseverance of belief should be as healthy as their belief itself.

¹⁹ πρεσβυτίδας ὡσαύτως ἐν καταστάματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους ἢ μὴ οἶνω πολλῷ δεδουλωμένας, καλοδιδασκάλους – Older women of belief should be like the older men of belief. They should display a reverence towards God, a willingness to submit to God’s moral commandments, drinking wine without becoming inebriate, and teaching the younger women the gospel and its implications.

²⁰ ἵνα ἴσῃ ὡφρονίζωσιν τὰς νέας φιλόανδρους εἶναι, φιλοτέκνους – The result of the older women’s teaching the younger women should be seen in the latter’s behavior, specifically their being loving towards both their husbands and their children.

²¹ σώφρονας ἀγνάς ὀικουργοὺς ἀγαθάς, ὑποτασσομένας τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἴβλασηται – The younger women should also work hard at controlling their passions so that their behavior aligns with the moral commandments of the gospel and they follow the teaching of their husbands in the salient points of the good news of God’s mercy. In this way the ideas of the gospel from God retains its honor and deserving respect among all people. In other words, it is important to God’s honor that His worshippers lives coincide with His promise of eternal life and mercy for the sake of this demonstrating His own character.

²² Τοὺς νεωτέρους ὡσαύτως παρακάλει σωφρονεῖν – The last group whom Paul mentions are young men whose lives should also match as much as possible the ideas of the biblical message as specifically described in the NT with respect to the gospel.

²³ περὶ πάντα, σεαυτὸν παρεχόμενος τύπον καλῶν ἔργων, ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ ἄφθορίαν, σεμνότητα – Paul turns the spotlight on Titus and urges him to act in such a way that his behavior matches his teaching of the gospel of God’s mercy, in others where his actions are as moral and good as possible—since it is because of the very opposite of morality and goodness which resides in human beings that makes God’s mercy necessary in order for them to acquire eternal life. Thus it is not by greater demonstrations of their need for mercy that people receive mercy, but by greater demonstrations of their desire to be different from people who need God’s mercy that they receive forgiveness.

²⁴ λόγον ὑγιῆ ἀκατάγνωστον, ἵνα ὁ ἐξ ἐναντίας ἐντραπή μὴδὲν ἔχων λέγειν περὶ ἡμῶν φαῦλον – By presenting a message of pure grace in the light of sin and pursuit of morality in the light of mercy and forgiveness, Titus provides anyone who opposes God and Jesus’ role as Messiah and advocate with no ammunition to criticize Christians. The result, if the opponent is really listening to himself, is that he can feel nothing but ashamed of opposing such a wonderful message of divine mercy and goodness where God’s love for undeserving, sinful human beings is at the heart of this message.

²⁵ Δούλους ἰδίοις δεσπότηαις ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἐν πάσιν, εὐαρέστοις εἶναι, μὴ ἀντιλέγοντας – Because slaves were a regular feature of the Roman Empire and many of them had become Christians, Paul wants Titus to urge them to behave towards their own masters in a manner that corresponds to the gospel of God’s mercy through Jesus, i.e., with genuine, biblical goodness. Thus, they should obey their masters, because this is just what slaves have to do in the midst of their own station in life. As a result, they will please their masters, which is a good thing. And by not complaining of their situation in that they are slaves, they will show that they are trusting God for not only their role in His overall story now, but also for something much, much better later, eternal life.

²⁶ μὴ νοσφιζομένους, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν πίστιν ἐνδεικνυμένους ἀγαθῆν, ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν ὡς τῆν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πάσιν – Certainly, slaves should not be thieves within their own houses but respect the property of their masters. Their actions should demonstrate their belief and its goodness and appropriateness since they are counting on God’s mercy to them as sinners just as much as any sinner is counting on this. By acting with good belief and morality, Paul says that they will be placing beautiful elements on the ideas of God who is our Savior from His wrath, condemnation, and resultant destruction. The word “adorn” (κοσμῶσιν) is used in Revelation 21:2 to refer to “the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.” So we can imagine the gospel as a bride whose beautiful clothes are the moral and loving actions of these slaves, so that just as one would not expect a bride to be without her adorning clothes which are appropriate for a wedding, so also we should not expect the gospel of God’s mercy to be without its believers’ moral and good actions.

²⁷ Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις – Because grace, God’s sovereign choice to extend mercy to undeserved sinners, is the foundation of their salvation, Paul can call Jesus’ appearance to qualify as people’s advocate the grace of God. The two cannot be separated from one another. And this salvation is available to everyone. God is ready and willing to be eternally merciful to all those who embrace Jesus as their savior.

²⁸ παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι – Paul now refers to the information or message regarding God’s salvation through Jesus, that it teaches not only that God is merciful, but also that He calls those who desire His mercy to avoid evil and pursue goodness and righteousness, which are in line with God’s moral commandments, in this present world before God brings about the eternal Kingdom of God. Paul admits that evil desires reside in Christians, but God wants them to behave in an opposite manner from their desires as those who are properly educated by the gospel.

²⁹ προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Paul also refers to the future where Christians can expect God’s awesomeness to make itself known and obvious when Jesus returns. Indeed, it is this moment for which Christians wait, and wait, and wait, because it will basically be the culmination of all human history when God sets up the millennial kingdom of the Messiah on earth.

³⁰ ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα λυτρώσῃται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας καὶ καθάρσῃ ἑαυτῶ λαὸν περιούσιον, ζηλωτὴν καλῶν ἔργων – Now, Paul describes Jesus as the one who offered Himself to God on behalf of undeserved, sinful human beings like himself (Paul), so that Jesus could rescue them from their immorality and bring forgiveness to (cleanse) them, who were chosen by God in eternity past before the beginning of the creation to be a special group who would receive God’s mercy and salvation from His condemnation and destruction. In addition, Paul says that this group of people are characterized by their inner desire to be moral and pursue moral actions during even this life prior to the completion of their salvation when Jesus returns.

³¹ Ταῦτα ἑλάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγε μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς μηδεὶς σου ἑπιφρονεῖτω – Paul urges Titus to continue to proclaim all the gospel, the message of God’s mercy and His morality, with all the authority which Titus is permitted as one of Paul’s apostolic co-workers. This authority is clearly more than anyone else in Christian history after Paul and the apostles died and no longer were on the scene to be joined personally by others in their work of presenting the apostolic message to people. And the reason is that Paul had been able to verify personally that Titus was always correct in what he said about the gospel. Thus, Paul trusted Titus, but it is unreasonable to think that Paul can trust anyone else after he dies. Therefore, no Christian after the death of apostles can claim any kind of real authority to proclaim the NT message, regardless of their intellectual ability and education.

³² Ὑπομίμησθε αὐτοὺς ἀρχαῖς ἡ ἐξουσίαις ὑποτάσσεσθαι, ἡπειθαρχεῖν, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοιμοὺς εἶναι – While it may seem logical that Christians who worship the ultimate ruler of the universe and His proxy, the Messiah Jesus, should feel free to disregard other authorities and governments, Paul says that the opposite is the case. Christians should submit to all governments (obviously, with the proviso that their actions do not contradict biblical morality) as a key way in which they demonstrate their willingness to wait for the eternal Kingdom of God with Jesus as its king. In other words, every human government before the millennial kingdom is merely a stepping stone towards this final, earthly kingdom.

³³ μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπεικεῖς, πᾶσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πρᾶξτετα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους – In the midst of submitting to all governments, Titus’ listeners should also refrain from saying anything false and evil about others as a way to guard their reputation, which is a good and right thing to do. They should also live as peaceably as possible with all others and be very patient with them, allowing them to be in the process of becoming believers or certainly more mature believers if they are already believers, because all human beings are at different points in their earthly journey, and from a spiritual perspective, need to be allowed to be where they are and not where anyone else thinks or would insist that they be.

Finally, Paul wants all the Christians not to think of themselves as more important than they are. God is the important “character” in this story that He is writing and producing. We are His instruments within the story and have really no right to demand anything of Him or of others. Nevertheless, we can count on God to be true to His promises, so what our prayers and requests can and should be in line with these.

³⁴ ἡμεν γὰρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἡ ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους – This statement by Paul explains what people are like before they become authentic Christians through the inward work of the Spirit of God, and Paul includes himself in this description with the plural pronoun “we.” He says that all unbelievers are foolish, because they are more apt to believe lies in regard to God, themselves, and reality. This is clearly foolish in the light of God’s justice whereby He will condemn and destroy those who commit themselves to lies instead of truth.

They also ignore and even pursue actions that are contrary to God’s moral commandments. In addition, they intentionally spread lies as a means to keep people from thinking correctly about reality. And they cannot help themselves but respond to their evil passions and desires by following and fulfilling them. Their moral state can be described as one of evil, and they are driven by envy of others who appear more successful than they are in life. Finally, they “hate” each other, meaning that they ultimately do not genuinely work towards doing what is best for each other, which would be to encourage each other towards the truth of God and His mercy through Jesus as the Messiah and their advocate. Therefore, even though they talk about feeding those in need and providing help to them with respect to their physical health and emotional well-being, these are less than authentic love which would include promoting understanding of and belief in Jesus and the biblical message.

³⁵ ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ – Just as Paul had used the “grace of God” in 2:11 to refer to Jesus’ appearance on the scene of human history, now he uses “the kindness and love for mankind” to refer to him. Jesus appeared as the very personification of God’s kindness and love, because he is the only

means to escape God's wrath and condemnation, which God lovingly and kindly provides sinners who do not deserve His love and kindness.

³⁶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς, διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως Πνεύματος Ἁγίου – In this verse Paul uses the explicit words “He saved us” (ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς) to refer to the effects of God's kindness and love as personified by Jesus. Paul also says that the basis of God's salvation through Jesus is not any human beings' actions (even Paul's as a good Jew who was pursuing obedience to the Mosaic Covenant as though by doing so he had established himself as being in a state of doing what is right in order to make it true that God was granting him eternal salvation). Instead, the basis of God's salvation is His mercy, i.e., His sovereign choice to grant and extend mercy and forgiveness to undeserved sinners where the next step with respect to the actual existences of these sinners is to invade them with His Spirit and change their inward commitments to be oriented permanently towards God and the things of God. Paul calls this a rebirth and renewal of these human beings. They are born again to have a different inwardness and heart from what they had when they were first born. And they are given a new way of being human whereby they now desire to follow and obey God with genuine humility and a willingness to accept His mercy on His terms rather than on theirs.

³⁷ οὐ ἔξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν – Just as Paul talks about God's pouring out His Spirit in human beings' hearts in Romans 5:5, here he refers to God's richly and greatly pouring Him out on people, which is to mean the same thing that the Spirit changes their hearts and makes them fundamentally desirous of receiving God's mercy and obeying Him. And this makes sense and is line with what God is doing with the Messiah, causing him to be people's savior and advocate before God, so that they may receive His eternal forgiveness and mercy. In other words, the basis of God's salvation, His sovereign choice to provide mercy to sinners along with writing Jesus' life, death, and resurrection into the story of the creation, requires also the condition that human beings' meet by having hearts which are different from that with which they were originally born.

³⁸ ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι, κληρονόμοι γενώμεθα κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου – The result of God's choosing to grant people mercy, Jesus' becoming their advocate, and the Spirits' changing their inwardness is that they enter into a state of being declared by God as those who will receive His eternal mercy. In addition, they can confidently be those who are waiting to inherit the blessing of Abraham, eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Finally, everything that happens to people so that they ultimately acquire eternal life is because God is gracious. He sovereignly decides to grant people who do not deserve to be saved His salvation. As Paul says, this salvation does not come to them because of anything they have done to motivate God positively towards them. It happens only because God chooses to overlook what they deserve and give them what they do not deserve.

³⁹ Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαι σε διαβεβαιώσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῷ· ταῦτά ἐστιν ἡ καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις – Paul ends the last paragraph with the statement that everything he has said in it can be trusted to be true.

He goes on to imply that Titus may sometimes be reluctant to speak the truth of the apostolic message because of the negative reaction that it may produce in some people, but he exhorts him to speak it anyway. By doing so, the true believers will find themselves committed to revealing their orientation towards God by their moral actions. Paul ends this thought with the fact that the gospel and its implications really do benefit people, especially believers. It is a life devoted to true belief and morality that qualifies a person for God's blessing of eternal life.

⁴⁰ μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ ἡγευαλογίας καὶ ἔρις καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιῖστασο· εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι – Here Paul indicates that he knows that Jewish “believers” within the Christian community on Crete will cause problems (as they have elsewhere during Paul's travels; cf. Galatians) by insisting on promoting an incorrect view of the Mosaic Covenant. Paul wants Titus to take what he has learned of the apostolic message of Jesus as the Messiah and thereby decide not to go too far down the path of interacting with people of such ideas, because these discussions with those who are committed to false ideas pertaining to this covenant will ultimately be useless in changing their minds.

⁴¹ αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν· καὶ δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν· παραιτοῦ – Paul encourages Titus to say twice to a Jew who is wrongly viewing the Mosaic Covenant that he is wrong and that he, Titus, is not going to get into a discussion with him on the subject.

⁴² εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἀμαρτάνει ὢν αὐτοκατάκριτος – Paul's point seems to be that if a Jew refuses to change his mind about the Mosaic Covenant and conform his thoughts to the apostolic message, then he is demonstrating that he does not have a changed heart and still stands condemned eternally before God. What is Titus supposed to do with such a person? Warn him and lovingly move on to continue to present the apostolic message to the authentic believers on Crete.

⁴³ Ὅταν πέμψω Ἀρτεμᾶν πρὸς σὲ ἢ Τύχικον, σπουδάσον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ κέκρικα παραχειμάσαι – Paul plans for either Artemas or Tychicus to replace Titus on Crete, or he plans for one of them to meet up with Titus and accompany him to Nicopolis where Paul will spend the winter months before traveling again to disseminate the gospel.

⁴⁴ Ζηναῖον τὸν νομικὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν σπουδαίως πρόπεμψον, ἵνα μηδὲν αὐτοῖς ἴλειπῃ – Paul expects Zenas and Apollos to show up on Crete on their way somewhere else, and he urges Titus to rally the people to gather whatever resources they have to help these two men to finish their journey. Zenas is an expert in either OT law or Roman law.

⁴⁵ μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρεῖας, ἵνα μὴ ὦσιν ἄκαρποι – Paul finishes the thought about the Cretan Christians' helping Zenas and Apollos by this being an opportunity to learn

how to meet other people's needs. This is appropriate morality in line with the apostolic message, and this kind of help given to people manifests the fruit of God's working within them through His Spirit to produce genuine faith and morality. Cf. Galatians 5:22,23.

⁴⁶ Ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες. ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει. Ἡ χάρις ἔμετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν – Paul finally tells Titus that all the Christians with him in Nicopolis send their greetings to him, and he wants him to give the Christians on Crete their greetings. He ends with hoping that God's grace will continue to be with them, working among them and in them, which it will because of God's loyal love towards authentic Christians.