

Stop going to church Start being the church

Paul's letter to Titus

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first presbyterian church kosciusko, mississippi study series

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introduction

introduction to the study guide

This study guide is part of a continuing experiment in coordinating the **air war** of weekly preaching of the Word of God with the **ground war** of personal study, small group study and family worship in the midst of everyday life. In other words, the goal is to bring the sermon into closer contact with daily discipleship. To that end I am preparing material from the sermon series for you to use in personal study, family worship or small group and Sunday School class settings in preparation for public, gathered worship each week and for application to everyday life. The first series on the Travel Narrative in Luke was well-received, and I benefitted from the experience myself. The study guide will be available in electronic format only, via download from fpckosciusko.org.

introduction to Titus: a letter about setting things straight

The first thing you should do is read Paul's letter to Titus. It won't take long. We'll wait for you. Paul wrote the letter to encourage and instruct Titus in his task of bringing some order and revitalization to the churches planted on the isle of Crete. Paul left Titus there with the responsibility of laying the foundations for gospel growth in a culture that is not so conducive to biblical leadership or community. The emphasis in Titus is on cultivating leadership and community.

Paul wrote this letter in the latter years of his life (c. AD 62-64). Most likely he wrote it during a fourth missionary journey not recorded in the book of Acts. There is only one recorded visit by Paul to Crete (Acts 27), but that was nothing more than a stopover at the harbor of Fair havens on his to Rome as a prisoner. It stands to reason that he was released from that first imprisonment and had several years of travel, which may have included Crete, where he established a number of churches.

In earlier books, Paul and Titus teamed up together. Paul referred to Titus as his dear friend and fellow worker (2 Cor. 2:13; 8:23) and Titus accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys. Titus was an intimate associate and companion of Paul. Paul mentions Titus in over a third of his epistles. In 2 Corinthians 8:23 we read, "*As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit.*" Titus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts so we do not know a lot about him. He may have been a convert of Paul's (Gal. 1:4). He was an uncircumcised Greek, contrary to Jewish law, thus he served as a prototype of Gentile acceptance by faith alone, apart from works of the law (Gal 2:3). This was a very significant issue at the time. It was like a former Muslim as an associate pastor or church planter. They traveled and worked together for over

20 years. Titus was an effective Pastor (2 Cor. 8:6; 2 Tim. 4:10). Paul sent Titus to the Corinthian church to help set matters straight. He did a great job on at least two different occasions. His assignment in Crete is to do the same. Paul was regularly encouraging Timothy but Titus just seems to get things done. Titus was going to reunite with Paul after he completed this newest task of appointing elders in the towns on the Island of Crete (Titus 3:19).

outline of Titus

- I. Greeting (1:1–4)
- II. Purpose: The Need for Proper Leadership (1:5–9)
- III. The Problem: False Teachers (1:10–16)
- IV. Christian Community Set Straight (2:1–3:8)
 - a. Proper living by age and gender groups (2:1–10)
 - b. Gospel basis (2:11–14)
 - c. Summary command (2:15)
 - d. Proper living, particularly with respect to outsiders (3:1–2)
 - e. Gospel basis (3:3–7)
 - f. Summary command (3:8)
- V. The Problem Restated: False Teachers (3:9–11)
- VI. Closing Exhortation (3:12–15)

and now, a word about Crete...with a colorful map too!



Crete is the largest island in Greece, and the fifth-largest in the Mediterranean Sea, just more than 3,200 square miles. Crete was the centre of the Minoan civilization (circa 2600–1454 BCE), the oldest Greek civilization. The island is the location of significant ancient history, which provides popular modern day tourist destinations. They include the Minoan sites of Knossos and Phaistos, the classical site of Gortys, the Venetian old city and port of Chania, the Venetian castle at Rethymno and the Samaria Gorge.