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C1205 – February 1, 2012 – Titus 1:1
Introduction To Titus

Every now and then throughout the years, the Elders have taken turns teaching one thing or another. This is good for Jeremy because it gives him more time to spend on the two other classes he is teaching and his other responsibilities at church and at home. Because he is so diligent and such a student of the Word, preparing for 3 classes, plus all the other things he must do, takes a lot of time – even for someone as smart as he is – and it's good for him and for our church if someone else can help with some of the teaching load. It's also part of our job to train and develop others to teach - which takes practice and experience. And that's why the Elders fill in sometimes. This time, you get me – for better or for worse.

We are going to change things up a bit for this lesson – we are not going to study an Old Testament book, but a book out of the New Testament. The reason for this is that I have no clue how to read Hebrew and I don't want to try to teach out of the Old Testament without knowing some Hebrew. I have been studying Greek and Jeremy has been helping me with translation and exegesis, so I am ok with trying to teach a NT book.

We are going to study Paul's letter to Titus – one of the Pastoral Epistles and a very interesting and practical book. I chose Titus for several reasons – first, it is a NT book. Also, since it is one of the Pastoral Epistles, it is one of the last letters Paul wrote – so Jeremy will not be getting to this book for quite a while on Sunday mornings. You won't hear it again for a long time. Another reason is that it is short – 3 Chapters. Once again, I am working on my ability to translate and exegete Scripture, which takes me a while, and I have daytime job, which limits the time I have available – so the shorter the book the better.

So – let’s get started on Titus. But - before we get into the details of the book, which we will do next week, we will spend our time tonight putting the book in its historical, geographical and cultural context. As we know, this kind of context is important to understanding Scripture – – these are the things that were well known by Paul and Titus at the time the book was written, but usually aren’t stated because everyone knew them at the time. They knew when the book was written, they knew where they were, they knew the culture, they knew what was going on there, and they had some knowledge of the things that had gone on before.

Titus and Paul met each other early in Paul’s ministry (probably during Paul’s early days in Antioch between 43AD and 47AD) – Paul might have even converted Titus - and the letter to Titus was written sometime between 62 AD to 66 AD - after Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome and before he was arrested and imprisoned in Rome a second time. Titus is one of the three books known as the “Pastoral Epistles” – the other two are 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. They are called the “Pastoral Epistles” because they were addressed personally to Timothy and Titus – two men who were functioning in pastoral roles in the church – Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. 1 Timothy and Titus were written between Paul’s first and second imprisonment and 2 Timothy was written during Paul’s second imprisonment.

The whole period of Paul’s life after the end of Acts is somewhat speculative and you get different opinions about the length of time between Paul’s release from his first imprisonment and his second imprisonment. Some say he was free for a couple of years, others say longer. But – for our purposes, the point is that Titus had apparently known Paul for at least 20 years by the time Paul wrote the letter. Since Titus and Paul had known each other so long, it kind of makes you curious about why Paul wrote the letter the way he did, since Titus probably already knew the things Paul was instructing him to do in the letter. We will talk some about this in the next lesson.

To start putting Titus and Paul’s letter to him in context, we need to go through a “whirlwind tour” of Paul’s life and ministry. If you want something to help you remember this, here is a basic outline:

Pharisee and Persecutor of the Church (Acts 8:1-3, Acts 22:1-5, Acts 26:9-11) (up to 34 AD)

“Apostle-ized” on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-19a) (34 AD)

Unified with the Church (Acts 9:19b-31, Acts 11:19-30, Gal. 1:16 – 2:10) (34 – 47 AD)

Left Antioch on First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:4–14:27) (48 – 49 AD)

- **Wrote Galatians after return.**

Attended Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:4–29) (50 AD)

Proceeded From Antioch on Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:40–18:22) (50 – 53 AD)

- **Wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians**

Out Again on Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23–21:19) (53 – 57 AD)

- **Wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans**

Seized in Jerusalem, Held in Caesarea (Acts 21:27- Acts 26:32) (57 – 59 AD)

Taken to Rome for Trial (Acts 27:1 – 28:31) (59 – 62 AD)

- **Wrote “Prison Epistles” – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon**

Let Go For a While (62 – 66 AD)

- **Wrote 1 Timothy the Titus**

Emprisoned Again and Martyred Under Nero (I know “imprisoned” is spelled with an “i”) (67 – 68 AD)

- **Wrote 2 Timothy**

As we go through this, remember - the dates I am going to point out are approximates – you can spend a lot of time trying to narrow them down, and there will still be some disagreement. For our purposes, the approximate dates will do to give you a general idea of when things happened. I am also going to butcher some of these names, but I didn’t have time to look them all up.

Paul was born around 4-5 AD in Tarsus (Acts 22:3). He was an Israelite of the Tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5), and was also a Roman citizen by birthright (Acts 22:28). Sometime during his youth, he moved to Jerusalem and was educated under Gamaliel, the most respected Jewish teacher of his dayⁱ (Acts

22:3). He became a Pharisee and was probably about 26 years old when Christ was crucified (in 30 AD).

About 34 AD, when he was about 30 years old, he was present at Stephen's stoning in Jerusalem (Acts 7:58). As we all know, he was a great persecutor of the Church in Jerusalem. But when Christ called him as he was headed to Damascus, he was converted. He went on to Damascus, stayed with the disciples there for "many days", and preached Jesus in the synagogue. When the Jews plotted to kill him, he escaped by being let down from an opening in the city wall. He traveled to Arabia and spent about 1 year there, then returned to Damascus.

Around 37 AD, 3 years after his conversion, he made the trip to Jerusalem described in Acts 9:26-31 and Gal. 1:17. This was his first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion. At Jerusalem, he tried to associate with the disciples who were afraid of him. Barnabas commended him to the apostles and he was accepted. He argued with the Hellenistic Jews who plotted to put him to death. He escaped to Caesarea and went to Tarsus, and he stayed in Tarsus for about 7 years.

While all this was going on with Paul, the church in Antioch was started by the preaching of believers who left Jerusalem because of the persecution. The church in Jerusalem heard about them and sent Barnabas to them. After spending some time with them, Barnabas went to Tarsus to get Paul and brought him to Antioch. This would have been around 43 AD when Paul was about 39 years old.

While Paul was in Antioch, a prophet, Agabus, came from Jerusalem and prophesied of great famine to occur. The famine occurred during the reign of Claudius, and Antioch took up a collection for the brethren in Judea. Barnabas and Paul traveled to Jerusalem to take the collection to the elders. **According to Galatians 2:1-10, they took Titus, a Gentile believer, with them on this trip. So – by the time this trip had occurred, around 47 AD, Titus had become a believer and had become acquainted with Paul.**

While they were in Jerusalem, Paul presented his gospel to Peter, James and John – not because he thought he was teaching the wrong thing - he knew he

wasn't - but to make sure they were all teaching the same thing – that they were unified. Also, certain Jewish fanatics (who might or might not have been believers) confronted them all with the issue of Titus – an uncircumcised Gentile believer. These Jews, in a Satanic plot to hinder the gospel, were insisting that Titus be circumcised. This was a test and Titus was in the middle of it. And, despite the pressure from these Jews, Titus was not required to be circumcised. So – early in Titus' Christian life, he and Paul are participants in controversy. Can you imagine the discussions and the debates Titus would have experienced with Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James and John? Can you imagine what they must have talked about on their return to Antioch? What an education. What a great preparation for his later work with Paul.

Paul, Barnabas (and presumably Titus) returned to Antioch from Jerusalem late in 47 AD.

The First Missionary Journey (48 – 49 AD)

Around 48 AD, Paul and Barnabas left Antioch on their first missionary journey, taking Mark with them. They began by preaching across the island of Cyprus. At Paphos in Cyprus, they encountered the false prophet – Bar Jesus (aka Elymas, the magician), with proconsul Sergius Paulus. Sergius Paulus summoned them, wanting to hear the word of God, but Paul and the others were opposed by Bar Jesus. Bar Jesus was blinded and Sergius Paulus believed.

They then went to Perga, when John Mark left them and went back to Jerusalem.

They went to Pisidian Antioch (the “other Antioch”). The Jews aroused the devout women and leading men of the city, who instituted a persecution against them and drove them out.

They went to Iconium. They were opposed by the unbelieving Jews and the Jews and Gentiles were divided. An attempt was made to stone them and they left.

They went on to Lystra and Derbe. At Lystra, Paul healed a lame man. The people mistook them for the gods (Barnabas was Zeus, Paul was Hermes, the chief speaker), and wanted to sacrifice to them. The Jews came from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, stirred up the people, who stoned Paul and left him outside the city, thinking he was dead. Paul got up and went back into Lystra and the next day Paul and Barnabas left for Derbe.

At Derbe, they preached the gospel and made many converts.

They returned through Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch “strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith” and they appointed elders in every church. **We need to stop and consider this return to these churches, and not just take this for granted - I think their return emphasizes the burden of care Paul and Barnabas had for the new churches - even though they had been driven out of these towns not long before, and were continually at risk of death, Paul and Barnabas returned to strengthen and encourage these churches. They also knew the churches needed leadership to deal with things when they were not there – so they appointed elders in each of them. Paul didn’t just evangelize and leave them to themselves – his trips, his letters to the churches, in everything Paul does he demonstrates the love and care and responsibility he felt towards the churches God used him to establish. Paul considered them his children and he cared for them as a loving father would. (See 1 Cor. 4:14-17).**

They returned to Antioch though Perga and Attalia.

The trip lasted from 48 to 49 AD. Paul would have been about 45 years old when they returned to Antioch. After Paul returned to Antioch, he wrote his letter to the Galatians.

The Jerusalem Council (late 49 to early 50 AD)

The Jerusalem Council occurred around 50 AD after Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey. Some Jews from Judea came to Antioch and taught that the Gentiles must be circumcised to be saved. Paul and Barnabas and others were sent by the Antioch church to Jerusalem to seek the counsel of the apostles and elders on the issue. **[Note: This can’t**

be the trip referred to in Gal 2:1 because (i) the Gal. 2:1 trip occurred 14 years after Paul's conversion (which would have been in AD 47 to deliver the famine relief collection from Antioch; and (ii) Gal. 2:2 says they went because of a revelation (Agabus' prophecy concerning the famine), and that the meeting was private]. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch with the letter from Jerusalem reporting the decision of the Jerusalem Council that the Gentiles were not required to be circumcised or otherwise subject to the Mosaic Law. Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching.

The Second Missionary Journey (50 – early 53 AD)

In 50 AD, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they visit the churches they established in the first journey to see how they were doing. **Notice once again, the burden of care Paul and Barnabas have for these young churches.** Barnabas wanted to take Mark, Paul didn't because Mark deserted them during the First Missionary Journey, and Paul and Barnabas split up. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus. Paul took Silas and traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. They also delivered the decision of the Jerusalem Council concerning the Gentiles (Acts 16:4).

They went to back to Derbe, then Lystra.

At Lystra, Paul met Timothy. Timothy was circumcised and Paul took Timothy with him. [Remember, Timothy's mother was a Jew, but his father was a Greek. Had he been a full blooded Jew, he would have been circumcised 8 days after his birth; however, since he was a half blood, he was not circumcised then, but was allowed to reach adulthood and decide for himself if he wanted to be circumcised as a Jew. Timothy chose to be circumcised as a Jew to be able to minister to Jews, as well as Gentiles – it would give him more opportunities for ministry.]

They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia, so they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian regions. They went to Mysia and tried to go into Bithynia, but the "Spirit of Jesus" did not permit them. They went to Troas (in Mysia) where Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man asking him to come to Macedonia and help them. They left for Macedonia.

They put out to sea and went to Samothrace, then Neopolis, then to Phillippi.

At Phillipi, they met Lydia (a seller of purple fabrics from Thyratira) at the riverside where they thought they might find a place of prayer. Lydia and her household were converted and they stayed with Lydia.

At Phillipi, they also encountered the demon possessed fortune telling slave girl. Paul cast out the demon and her owners were upset because of the loss of profit. They dragged Paul and Silas before the authorities in the marketplace and accused them of “throwing the city into confusion” and “proclaiming customs unlawful for Romans”. They were beaten, thrown into prison and chained. God caused an earthquake and the doors and chains were opened. The jailer was about to kill himself, but Paul assured him all the prisoners were still there. The jailer and his household were converted. The chief magistrates of the city ordered them released secretly, but Paul told them he was Roman citizen and they were afraid because of the way they treated him. They begged Paul to leave the city. Paul and Silas are released and, after going to Lydia’s house, they left town.

They traveled through Amphipolis and Appollonia and arrived at Thessalonica. At Thessalonica – Paul preached at the synagogue, and people believed. Jealous Jewish leaders formed a mob, went to Jason’s house looking for them, and dragged Jason to the authorities. Jason made a pledge with the authorities and Jason was released. **This pledge apparently prevented Paul from returning to Thessalonica.** Paul and Silas are sent away by night to Berea.

At Berea – according the Acts 17:11 - the Bereans were more “noble minded” than the Thessalonians and the word was received with eagerness. They examined the Scripture to see if Paul’s message was true. However, Jews from Thessalonica followed Paul and Silas to Berea and agitated the people. Paul left and Silas and Timothy remained.

Paul went to Athens and summoned Silas and Timothy to join him. At Athens, he gave the sermon at the Areopagus on Mars Hill. (Acts 17:22-34).

He then went to Corinth. At Corinth – he met Aquila and his wife, Priscilla (they had recently arrived from Rome because of the command of Claudius for Jews to leave Rome). They were tent makers like Paul, so he stayed with them and worked and taught. When Silas and Timothy arrived, he devoted full time to teaching - first at the synagogue, then next door at Titius Justus' house.

Paul taught for 18 months in Corinth. During this period, some Jews brought him before the Judgment Seat at the market in Corinth (when Gallio was proconsul). Gallio refused to hear the case and drove them away. Paul remained “many days longer”, and then left with Aquila and Priscilla for Syria. **During his stay in Corinth, he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.**

They went to Cenchreae where Paul had his hair cut because he was keeping a vow. They then went to Ephesus, where Paul taught in the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. The Ephesians asked him to stay, but he left. He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus.

Paul sailed from Ephesus to Ceasarea, visited Jerusalem, and then returned to Antioch.

The Third Missionary Journey (53 – 57 AD)

Later in 53 AD, Paul left from Antioch and went back through Galatia and Phrygia to Ephesus “strengthening the disciples”. **Notice once again the burden Paul had for the welfare of these young churches.** Before Paul arrived, Apollos had shown up in Ephesus. Apollos was eloquent and “mighty in the Scriptures” and could accurately teach the things concerning Jesus, but he only knew of John’s baptism. Aquila and Priscilla “updated him” and explained to him more accurately the gospel, and he left for Achaia. Apollos was at Corinth when Paul arrived at Ephesus. Paul taught for 3 months in the synagogue, then moved to the school of Tyrannus after some in the synagogue became hardened and spoke out against them. He stayed in Ephesus about 2 years, and did many miracles there. He wrote 1 Corinthians while at Ephesus. He sent Timothy and Erastus on to Macedonia (possibly to take up the collection for the saints in Jerusalem). After he sent Timothy and Erastus away, the uproar with the silversmith Demetrius occurred. Paul’s preaching turned the people away from idols, idol sales dropped, and

Demetrius and other craftsmen who made and sold idols lost a lot of money. Demetrius and the others stirred up the people and incited a riot, which ended when the town clerk told them if they had any charges to take it to court and he dismissed them.

After Ephesus, Paul left for Macedonia, and then went to Greece and stayed 3 months. He wrote 2 Corinthians while he was in Macedonia. **He probably visited Corinth while he was in Greece.** He also wrote Romans while he was in Greece. He found out about a plot against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, so he went back through Philippi in Macedonia. He then sailed to Troas. [Troas was where the young man (Eutychus) fell out of the window sill on the 3rd floor and Paul resuscitated him.]

From Troas, he went by land to Assos, then sailed to Mitylene, then to Chios, and Samos, and arrived at Miletus. He decided to bypass Ephesus in order to reach Jerusalem for the Passover; and he called the Ephesian elders to him at Miletus, bid them farewell and gave them instructions regarding their responsibility for care and protection of the church (Acts 20:17-38).

From Ephesus, he sailed to Cos, then to Rhodes, then Patara, and arrived at Tyre. At Tyre, Paul was warned not to return to Jerusalem. From Tyre, he sailed to Ptolemais, then to Cesarea, where he stayed with Philip the evangelist. Agabus, the prophet, came down from Judea and predicted that Paul would be bound and delivered to the Gentiles. He went on to Jerusalem.

Arrest in Jerusalem, Removal to Caesarea, Appeal to Rome (57 to about 62 AD)

At Jerusalem, Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple and stirred up the crowd claiming that Paul preached against the Jewish people, the Law and the Temple, and that he had defiled the Temple by bringing Gentiles into the Temple. They dragged him out of the Temple to kill him. A riot ensued and the Romans arrested Paul and took him to the Roman barracks. Paul addressed the people from the barracks recounting his history and mission to the Gentiles (Acts 22:1-21). The people reacted violently and the commander ordered that Paul be examined by scourging. As he was about to be scourged, Paul told them he was a Roman citizen. They released Paul and the commander (Claudius Lysias) ordered the chief priests and the Sanhedrin to assemble the next day. At his defense before Claudius Lysias, Paul divided

the Sanhedren by stating he was a Pharisee who was in prison for the resurrection of the dead. (The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, angels or spirits, but the Pharisees did.) The Sadducees and Pharisees turned against each other and Paul was removed from them by Claudius Lysias. Christ appeared to Paul and told him not to worry because Paul must go to Rome to witness there.

The Jews determined to kill Paul and concocted a plot. They would ask the commander to deliver Paul to them for questioning and would kill him. Paul's nephew heard about the plot, and Claudius Lysias was informed. Claudius Lysias relocated Paul to Cesarea for his protection, where his case was to be decided by Felix, the governor. On the trip to Cesarea, Paul was protected by 200 soldiers, with 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen.

After 5 days, Ananias (the high priest), Jewish elders, and Tertullus, an attorney (orator), came to Cesarea and presented their case before Felix. Paul made his defense before Felix. Felix delayed judgment until Claudius Lysias could come to testify. Paul remained in custody, and Felix and his wife, Drusilla (a Jew) summoned Paul to speak to them about Christ. Felix became frightened, but continued to have frequent conversations with Paul (partly because he thought Paul would give him money). After 2 years, Felix was succeeded as governor by Porcius Festus, who continued to hold Paul in prison to appease the Jews.

Festus went to Jerusalem and the Jews again brought charges against Paul. They asked that Paul be brought to Jerusalem (where they planned to ambush them and kill Paul). Festus refused, but told them to go to Cesarea and present their case. They went to Caesarea and presented their false charges against Paul, and Paul made his defense before Festus. Festus wanted to do a favor for the Jews, so he asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem to stand trial. Paul refused to go to Jerusalem and appealed to Caesar.

King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and Festus told them about Paul's case. Agrippa wanted to hear Paul, and Paul made his defense before Agrippa (Acts 25:23 – 26:32).

Paul and other prisoners were put in custody of a centurion, Julius, and they set sail for Italy. They went to Sidon, where Julius allowed Paul to receive care from his friends, then proceeded to Myra in Lycia. There, they changed to an Alexandrian ship headed for Italy. They sailed around the south side of Crete and went to Fair Havens, on the SW side of Crete. Their traveling was difficult because of the winds. They stayed too long at Fair Havens and winter came. The voyage became dangerous because of the strong northerly winds that were prevalent that time of year. Paul tried to persuade them to stay at Fair Havens for the winter and prophesied the loss of the ship, cargo and lives if they continued. Julius was persuaded to continue by the ship's pilot, because they thought the harbor was not safe for wintering.

They left Fair Havens and sailed along the shore of Crete. 276 persons were in the ship (including Luke). They encountered violent weather and were out of control for 14 days. Paul prophesied that the ship and cargo would be lost, but their lives would be spared. Their ship ran aground on Malta.

At Malta, Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake, but was not harmed. Paul healed the father of a leading man on Malta (Publius), and the rest of the inhabitants came to Paul for healing. They stayed in Malta for 3 months, then left for Rome.

They went through Syracuse, then Rhegium, and then Puteoli, and arrived in Rome. At Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who was guarding him. He talked to the Jewish leaders in Rome. Some believed and others didn't. He stayed there 2 years in his own rented quarters "welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered." He wrote the Prison Epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon – while he was in prison in Rome.

This is where the Book of Acts ends.

Release, Second Imprisonment and Death (62 – around 68 AD)

Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment in around 61 or 62 AD. During this period of time, he continued to travel. He wrote 1 Timothy and Titus before he was imprisoned the second time in Rome. He wrote 2 Timothy

during his second imprisonment, and was martyred in Rome sometime before the end of Nero's reign in 68 AD.

Apparently, after Paul was released from his first imprisonment, he traveled extensively. Early church tradition indicates that Paul might have made it all the way to Spain before his second arrest. During this period he went to Ephesus and left Timothy there. He traveled to Crete and left Titus there. When he wrote Titus, he was planning to spend the winter in Nicopolis, which is on the western coast of Greece. It is not known whether Titus actually made it to Nicopolis. However, after Paul's second arrest, when he wrote 2 Timothy, Titus had apparently gone to Dalmatia (which was Northwest of Nicopolis along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea). Since he wrote 2 Timothy, Paul obviously knew of Titus' whereabouts and since Titus might have traveled through Nicopolis to get to Dalmatia, Titus probably visited Paul – either in Nicopolis or while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Church tradition holds that Titus later returned to Crete.

Titus

Titus was Greek and might have been a convert of Paul. In Titus 1:4, Paul called Titus his “true child in a common faith” – which could mean that Paul converted Titus or that Paul was a “spiritual mentor”, or both. Paul also called Titus his “partner and fellow worker” in 2 Corinthians 8:23. These passages indicate that Paul and Titus had a very close spiritual relationship – in one sense like a “father/son” relationship – Paul mentoring and training Titus – and in another sense like a partnership – working together for the good of the gospel. This is high praise and a great expression of affection and confidence from Paul, and from what we know about the great burden of care and responsibility Paul had for the churches, Paul would not have entrusted these churches to anyone who could not handle the task. This tells us a lot about Titus, his spiritual maturity and ability.

As I pointed out earlier, the first mention of Titus in Scripture occurs in Galatians 2, when Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to deliver the famine relief funds – when the controversy over Titus's circumcision comes up and Titus is required to be circumcised.

Titus is not mentioned again in Scripture by name until Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Ephesus, during his Third Missionary Journey. It is not known whether Titus was traveling with Paul during the First or Second Missionary Journey. If he wasn't, he probably spent most of his time at the church in Antioch. However, Titus was traveling with Paul during the Third Missionary Journey.

While Paul was at Ephesus during his Third Missionary Journey, the church in Corinth apparently began to blow up. As we know, the Corinthian culture compares very well to our modern American culture - its people were status driven, self promoting, selfish, idolatrous, and deeply immoral, and all these things infected the Corinthian church. (Just like they can infect our church.)

Paul wrote 4 letters to Corinth that we know of - 3 of these, including 1 Corinthians, were written during Paul's stay in Ephesus during his Third Missionary Journey. The fourth was 2 Corinthians, which was written somewhere in Macedonia during the Third Missionary Journey. The first letter is referred to in **1 Cor. 5:9**. Not much is known about this letter, except that it instructed them not to associate with immoral people, which according to 1 Cor. 5:9 was misunderstood by them to mean all immoral people, not just immoral brothers as Paul intended.

The second letter Paul wrote was 1 Corinthians to correct the problems in the church he had become aware of – the development of factions based on personality cults, immorality in the church, abuse of the Lord's supper, false teaching about the actuality of the resurrection, among other things.

After writing 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians indicates that things got worse in Corinth. Paul probably made a short trip to Corinth to deal with these problems - which was not recorded in Acts – **2 Cor. 2:1** indicates that this previous visit had made the Corinthians "sorrowful" and that Paul did not want to come to them "in sorrow" again.

2 Corinthians also indicates that Paul wrote a 3rd letter after he returned to Ephesus from this "sorrowful visit" – a "severe letter" intended to convict them and bring them to repentance. **This is where Titus shows up again. Apparently, Titus delivered this "severe letter" to the Corinthians. According to 2 Corinthians 7:15, they received Titus with "fear and**

trembling”; and the letter convicted them to repentance. Titus returned to Paul while Paul was in Macedonia after he left Ephesus and gave Paul the encouraging report about the Corinthians’ repentance. According to 2 Corinthians 8:6, Titus had also begun to lead the Corinthians in assembling their gifts for the collection Paul was taking up for Jerusalem. Through all this, Titus apparently had developed an affection for the Corinthians, and willingly returned to the Corinthians (possibly with 2 Corinthians) to finish taking up the collection.

Crete

The next time Titus surfaces in Scripture is Paul’s letter to Titus. When Paul wrote his letter to Titus, Titus was in Crete. Crete is the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. It is about 162 miles long and 36 miles wide at its widest point. A mountain range dominates the center of the island and slopes sharply to the south, which means that most of the inhabitants at this time lived on the northern side. Jews from Crete were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11), and may have brought the gospel back to Crete. Paul passed through Crete briefly on his way to Rome for his first trial, but did not have much time to establish churches there. The Cretan churches may have been started by Paul when he visited Crete between his first and second imprisonment. Titus must have been with him during this visit and Paul left Titus there to “put things in order and appoint elders in every city.”

For our purposes, what we need to know is the reputation of the Cretan people. Polybius (a Greek Historian who lived from 200 – 118 BC) said about them: *“So much in fact do sordid love of gain and lust for wealth prevail among them that the Cretans are the only people in the world in whose eyes no gain is disgraceful”*. Cicero (a Roman philosopher who lived from 106 BC to 43 BC) said about them: *“Moral principles are so divergent that the Cretans ... consider highway robbery honorable.”* Paul said this about them in Titus 1:12–13: ¹² *One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”* ¹³ *This testimony is true.* Paul is probably quoting Epimenides of Crete (who lived between 600 – 500 BC). (By the way, this may be the same poet Paul quotes in the Sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17:28). Paul is not exaggerating. He is affirming that their well known reputation can be counted on to be true. They could be counted on to

be liars, evil, dangerous, lazy, thinking only of satisfying their physical appetites. It is interesting that Titus was involved with both the church in Corinth and in Crete – both areas of exceptionally bad moral reputation, even among pagans.

Another thing we need to know about the situation in Crete is that the church was having to deal with false teachers – some of whom were probably from within their own ranks. There is not a lot that we know specifically about the false teaching, except what Titus tells us – there were many of them, they were men, they were rebellious, deceiving windbags, who were somehow profiting from their false teaching. They were Cretans, they were predominantly Jewish and may have been Jewish Christians. Their teaching included Jewish myths and commandments. It upset the churches and wasted time by focusing on foolish controversies, genealogies and disputes about the Law.

So, Titus was with Paul in his travels through Crete. Churches were established during this trip and Paul left Titus there to put things in order and appoint elders. Titus was again responsible for dealing with a pretty difficult situation.

Summary

To sum up tonight's lesson, we have taken a whirlwind tour of Paul's travels and ministry, pointing out when Titus surfaces in Scripture during these travels and that, when he does surface, he seems to be involved in some pretty difficult situations. We have learned about Crete and the vulnerability of its young churches to the Cretan culture in general and the false teachers infecting the churches in particular. We have learned that Titus had a long relationship with Paul (over 20 years), that Paul considered Titus to be a spiritual son and partner, and that Paul must have had a lot of confidence in Titus' ability to deal with difficult situations as evidenced by his choice of Titus to deliver Paul's "severe letter" to the Corinthians. Despite the problems in Crete, Titus was not in over his head and Paul must have been very comfortable leaving him there to put things in order.

The background of the page is a repeating pattern of a black and white illustration of a church with a steeple, set against a light background. The church is shown from a side-on perspective, with a large tree to its right. The pattern is arranged in a grid that covers the entire page.

Next week, we will start to get into the specifics of the letter. And, as we go through the letter, we may expand a bit on some of the things I have alluded to briefly in this introduction.

ⁱ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Ac 22:3.

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