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C1206 – February 8, 2012 – Titus 1:1-4
The Salutation

Last week, we covered some background to help us put Paul's letter to Titus in context. Tonight, we are going to get into the book. First, let's briefly look at an outline of the letter. Remember – an outline is a good tool to help us organize the book and remember where things can be found. I am not very good at remembering where specific verses are, but I have found that it really helps narrow it down if I can just remember what book the verse is in and remember the outline of the book, then I can usually narrow it down to a section. Then, I can go to the section and find it. Hopefully, the more I study, the more I will be able to remember specific verses, but that is something I'm not very good at. I know the verse is somewhere, but I need tools to help me remember where.

Here is a basic outline of Titus, it is pretty simple:

- Salutation (1:1-4)
- Selection of Elders (1:5-9)
- Silencing False Teachers (1:10-16)
- Instruction to Specific Groups (2:1-15)
- Instruction to All Concerning Government and Non-Believers (3:1-16)
- Final Instructions (3:12-15)

Tonight we are going to cover the Salutation. Let's read Titus 1:1-4.

Titus 1:1–4

¹ Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who

cannot lie, promised long ages ago, ³ but at the proper time manifested, *even His word*, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, ⁴ To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Now, as you can probably see, this salutation is very, very dense. It touches on a lot of doctrine and you can pretty much find most of the basic topics of systematic theology in these verses – the doctrine of God the Father and His attributes, the deity of Christ, the Godhead and their relationship, soteriology, anthropology, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of revelation, eschatology, and others. For purposes of this class, I'm going to try to focus on the purpose of the Salutation – the reason Paul is bringing these things up – rather than try to drill down into each of the doctrines that come up in this passage. For starters – although I have studied some of the basics of systematic theology, it would take me months to get studied up enough to go into them in depth. Also, even if I was prepared to go into all the doctrines involved, we could spend the next year on the Salutation – and I don't think you want to do that. So – I think the best thing to do is to try to understand what Paul is saying in the Salutation and why he is saying it.

If I were to describe what Paul is doing in the Salutation in one word, the word would be “Authority” – “Authority” - Paul's Authority, The Authority of the Gospel, and Titus' Authority. Paul is basically getting our heads straight – making sure we have the correct attitude about who God is, who he is, what the gospel is, and what Titus is. He wants to make sure everybody is on the same page about that before he gets into the instructions in the letter.

Now – let's think back about what we learned last week. First, we took most of the time and went through Paul's life and ministry – trying to get the basic flow of his ministry from his conversion on the Damascus Road in 34 AD until his martyrdom under Nero about 68 AD. One thing we can take from this review is that, from early in Paul's ministry, he had opposition – false teachers – mostly from Judaism, but also from other groups – sometimes these people would even follow behind him causing trouble. One big way they would cause trouble for Paul was to question his authority. Not a bad idea. If Paul doesn't have the authority to teach what he is teaching, then they don't have to listen to him. And remember – Paul received new revelation, he's not

just teaching stuff that they could go look up somewhere – so it is critically important that he have the authority to teach what he is teaching.

Paul probably had to deal with opposition questioning his authority his entire ministry and in almost every place he went. They did this to him in Galatia, they did it to him in Corinth, and they were probably doing it in Crete. As we learned last week, the churches in Crete were dealing with false teachers and Titus 1:10, 14 and 3:9 indicate that many of these false teachers were Jewish. If their tactics are at all consistent with past history, the issue of Paul's authority has come up in Crete and Paul is dealing with it in the Salutation. This Salutation is lengthy – the only one that is longer is Romans – and most of it deals with Paul's authority.

You also need to keep something else in mind – where does Titus's authority come from? It comes from Paul. So – if Paul doesn't have any authority, then Titus doesn't have any authority. He doesn't have the authority to appoint elders, he doesn't have the authority to silence the false teachers, he doesn't have the authority to exhort and instruct the congregations. He's got nothing over them. Titus's authority stands on Paul's authority. So, the Salutation is also written to support Titus' authority.

There is another thing you need to remember about authority – Position determines authority. It determines how much authority you have. It determines who you have authority over. And it determines what you are supposed to do with that authority. Our passage deals with all these things. The Salutation describes 3 different positions that Paul holds – Slave of God, Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Steward of the Gospel. Each of these positions has certain authority, and carry with them certain duties and responsibilities.

The Salutation also confirms the authority of Paul's message, the gospel, as well as Titus' authority to act for Paul.

Let's talk first about Paul's authority.

Paul as Slave

The first thing Paul tells us about his position is that he is a “slave of God”. This phrase tells us 2 things – first, he is a slave and second, God is his Master. So, first thing – what is the hierarchy? In a master/slave relationship, who’s greater? The Master, of course. We all know this. The Master is greater than the slave, and of course, God is greater than all.

So, right off the bat, Paul reminds us of the hierarchy. And now that we have the hierarchy straight – let’s talk about what a slave is supposed to do. Two basic things – absolute allegiance and absolute obedience. A slave owes his allegiance to his Master only – no one else – and he only acts in the best interest of his Master. A slave is only supposed to do what his Master tells him to do. A slave does not act independently of his Master – and he certainly does not act contrary to his Master’s commands. So a slave is bound to duties of absolute allegiance and absolute obedience of his Master.

Another thing – when a Master tells a slave to do something, by whose authority is the slave acting – his own or his Master’s? Obviously, his Master’s authority. We can use the employer/employee relationship to illustrate this. An employer would be like a Master and the employee would be like his slave. If I’m an employee, and my employer owns some rental property and he tells me to go kick out a deadbeat tenant, under whose authority am I acting? Could I kick the deadbeat tenant out on my own authority? No. Then why can I kick him out? – because my employer is the owner and has the authority. So, a slave does not have his own authority – he only has the authority that is given to him by the person with the real authority. And who has the real authority over all the universe? God. He is the ultimate authority.

So – this phrase informs everyone – Paul is slave, God, who has absolute authority, is his Master. God’s commands give Paul the authority to do what God commanded, and Paul is absolutely obligated to obey God’s commands. So - if anyone who has a beef with what Paul does, he doesn’t have a beef with Paul – he has a beef with the ultimate authority – God.

One other thing to note about this phrase: This is the only time Paul uses this phrase “slave of God” to describe himself. Other times he refers to himself and other believers as slaves of Christ. This may be an Old Testament allusion by Paul to place himself on a par with Moses, Abraham,

and other in the Old Testament, who spoke and acted for God, and any Jews that read this letter, in particular the Jewish false teachers in Crete, would realize that. This adds a particularly Jewish emphasis on Paul's position and authority.

Apostle of Jesus Christ

The next thing Paul tells us is that he is an "apostle of Jesus Christ". This give us a little more information about Paul's position – because slaves and apostles have different duties. Paul is making sure that he is understood to be both.

What is an apostle?

As used in the New Testament, the word "apostle" basically means a person who has been commissioned by another person or group to accomplish some purpose. In our terms, an apostle would be an authorized agent or delegate. Let's look at an example from my law practice – sometimes people get crossways with each other and, for whatever reason, can't work out their dispute because they are so upset they can't talk directly to each other. So – one of them may hire me to talk to the other person, or the other person's lawyer, and try to work things out. In a sense, my client has appointed me to act as his "apostle" – he has sent me to the other person to try to resolve the issue. As his representative, I cannot communicate or offer anything in settlement without my client authorizing me to do it, and I certainly cannot accept an offer of settlement on behalf of my client, unless he has authorized me to accept it. I can only do and say what my client tells me to do and say – I have the authority of my client to do and say these things and, when I do, it's as if my client did them or said them. Also, even though my client may authorize me to do something, if he doesn't have the authority to do it, I don't either. He can't authorize me to break the law because he doesn't have the authority to break the law.

So, when you are dealing with the authority of an apostle, there are two main questions. First, who is the apostle acting for? Who has commissioned the apostle? Because – the apostle's authority does not exceed the authority of the person who commissioned him. If the person who commissioned him doesn't have any authority, the apostle doesn't have any authority. Second,

what was the apostle commissioned to do? The apostle only has the authority granted in his commission.

As a side note, we need to keep in mind that, in the New Testament, the term “apostle” can be used in a general sense and a technical sense. In the general sense, the term just means an agent or messenger who was sent out to do something or deliver a message. In this passage, we are not talking about this kind of apostle.

We are talking about an apostle in the technical sense – a person who has been directly appointed by God. There were only 13 of these men – divided into 2 groups – the group known as “the Twelve” and Paul. “The Twelve” were the original eleven apostles appointed by Christ, plus Matthias, who was selected by God through the casting of lots before Pentecost. There were only to be 12 of these men and Acts 1:21-22 tells us they had to have accompanied Jesus and the eleven all the time from John’s baptism to His ascension. Paul could not have been one of these apostles. And the fact that he wasn’t one of the 12 gave his opponents ammunition to attack his apostleship and thus, his authority.

Paul was a 13th apostle - a true apostle of a different class, but equal in authority with the Twelve. In Paul’s case, he was personally commissioned by Christ Himself on the Damascus Road. So, Paul was directly commissioned as an apostle by Christ. Consequently, Paul has the authority of Christ when Paul acts in the name of Christ. So – the question then is – what has Christ commissioned Paul to do?

Turn to Acts 26. **Look at Acts 26:12–20**, this is a part of Paul’s defense in front of King Agrippa – remember when this was – it occurred after Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem, after he had been relocated to Caesarea, and before he was put on the prison ship to Rome. In his defense in front of King Agrippa, Paul describes his commission from Christ: ¹² **“While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,** (it’s kind of ironic that Paul started out with a commission and authority from the enemies of Christ, and ended up with a commission and authority as an apostle of Christ), ¹³ **at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.** ¹⁴ **“And when we had all**

fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’¹⁵ “And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’¹⁶ ‘But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister [ὁ πηρετης – a servant who carries out the will of another. Jeremy talked about this word in 1 Cor 4:1 – basically, the servant is given orders and is obligated to carry them out without question and without regard for self] and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;¹⁷ rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”

Paul’s commission as an apostle of Christ is in verses 16 – 18 – Christ appointed Paul to be a “servant” and a witness of the “things which you have seen and the things in which I will appear to you” and Christ is sending (the word send is “apostello”, which is the verb related to the noun “apostolos” from which we get the word “apostle”) - Christ is sending Paul for this purpose – to minister and witness to the Jews and Gentiles. We also see the goal of Paul’s appointment – to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Christ.

Also, remember something that I mentioned before. When an apostle acts in the name of the person who sent him, it’s like the act of the person who sent him. In other words, when Paul speaks or acts as an apostle of Christ, it’s Christ doing the speaking and acting. The Cretans need to know this – because they need to know if they ignore what Paul is saying, they are ignoring Christ, their Lord and Savior.

So, in Titus 1:1, when Paul says that he is an apostle of Christ, he is giving us additional information about his position as “slave of God”. Not only is he a slave, who owes God his absolute allegiance and obedience; He has also

been specially appointed by Christ as His messenger to proclaim the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles for their salvation.

Step back from this a minute and let me briefly point something else out. Notice how Paul uses his references to God and Christ in this passage. “Slave of God”, “Apostle of Jesus Christ”, “the chosen of God”, “God who cannot lie”, “God who promised”, “God our Savior”, “God the Father” and “Christ Jesus our Savior”. There are several references to God and Christ in Titus where he refers to both God and Christ as “our Savior”. Titus 2:13 even describes them both together – “our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus”. As Jeremy taught before, according to Granville Sharpe’s Rule of construction, this clause is referring to the same person – that God our Savior and Christ Jesus are the same person – and is an important verse supporting the deity of Christ. However, Paul toggles back and forth in the other references – using God here and Christ there – and I think it has something to do with the nature and roles of the Godhead - but I have not had time to investigate this thoroughly enough to address it in this lesson. I will try to investigate and address it in another lesson – maybe by the time we get to Titus 2:13. I also encourage you to look at this and try to work through it.

Now let’s move on.

Paul as Steward

So far, we have covered Paul’s position as a “slave of God” and as an “apostle of Jesus Christ”. Titus 1:3 gives us more information about Paul’s position – he is a Steward of the gospel. Look at **Titus 1:3:³ but at the proper time manifested, *even His word*, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior.**

Paul says that he was entrusted with something – he was given something that he is responsible for taking care of – in this case, according to **Titus 1:3**, it is God’s word, that, although previously hidden, has now been revealed. In other words – the gospel. In **1 Timothy 1:11**, another of the Pastoral Epistles, written close to the time Titus was written, Paul refers to himself as being “entrusted” with the gospel. You can also see this in **Galatians 2:7**, and **1 Thess 2:4**. So, Paul has been entrusted with the gospel. That makes

Paul a “Steward” with respect to the gospel. Turn to a passage that Jeremy has recently taught in 1 Corinthians - 1 Cor 4:1-2 - **1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.** Let’s focus on the word “steward”. A Steward is a person who manages something for someone else – like a person who manages an estate for the owner. He runs the estate – takes care of the property and does what needs to be done with it. Paul is a Steward of gospel. He is responsible for taking care of it and doing what needs to be done with it – proclaiming it.

Paul has been given the message – the gospel - and is responsible for preserving it – not altering or distorting it in any way. It’s related to the concept of apostle and authority – as an apostle, he is also a Steward, he was entrusted with care of the gospel – and the gospel **must not - - must not** be changed in any way. Paul did not have the authority to do that. Neither did anyone else to whom it was entrusted - the other apostles, Titus, the churches, other apostles - and neither do we. No one does. **Galatians 1:8-9** says if anyone preaches a different gospel, he is damned. **1 Corinthians 1:17** tells us that, if we try to put a worldly spin on the gospel – to try to make it more acceptable to our culture – it will be ineffective. Remember - **James 3:1** tells us that teachers can incur a “stricter judgment”, and I am sure this is one of the reasons why. [Very Scary For Teachers]. That is why Paul was so careful with the message. That is why Titus and the churches in Crete had to be careful with it. And that is why we must be careful with it. We don’t have any more freedom than Paul did to mess with it.

Something else – when a person appoints a Steward over his property, he gives the Steward instructions about what the Steward is supposed to do with it. **Acts 26:16-18** tells us Paul was being sent to the Jews and the Gentiles to preach the gospel. Look at **1 Corinthians 9:16-17** - **“16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. 17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.”** Notice he says that he is under compulsion to preach the gospel as a Steward. He can’t just sit on the message – He is obligated to proclaim it. Paul never took it easy – he was dedicated to his mission, compelled, driven – and you can see this throughout his writings.

You can see this in the “whirlwind tour” of his life and travels that we went through last week. This was his purpose, his mission and his burden. And there was a tremendous sense of urgency – the world is like a ticking time bomb – he knew that at any time judgment could come. At Acts 17:30–31, in the Sermon on Mars Hill, Paul tells the Athenians: ³⁰ **“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,** ³¹ **because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”** The time bomb was ticking and Paul had to get the message out. That was his job. Look at **1 Corinthians 9:16** again: ¹⁶ **For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.** ¹⁷ **For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.** Here you can see both aspects of Paul’s Stewardship – the thing entrusted – the gospel – and his instructions as to what to do with it – preach it. And he says, “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel”.

Finally, Titus 1:3 tells us Paul was entrusted with this message by the command of God our Savior. This phrase emphasizes, once again, that Paul is acting under the command of God. As God’s slave, apostle, and steward, he must obey the command of his Master and their Master – the Almighty God. And since God commanded that Paul deliver the message to them, and since God is their Master, as well, they must obey the message God communicated through Paul.

Summary of Paul’s Position

To sum all this up, Titus 1:1, and 1:3, tells this about Paul’s Authority - His Position, His Master and Source of Authority and His Duties:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Master and Source of Authority</u>	<u>Duties</u>
Servant of God	God	Absolute Allegiance and Obedience
Apostle of Jesus Christ	Jesus Christ	Proclaim the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles

Steward	God	Preserve and Preach the Gospel
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The Goal of the Mission

What is the goal Paul has been appointed to accomplish? When a person is given some kind of authority, the person who authorizes him usually has a goal that they want to accomplish. Now, we need to consider what the goal is that God intends to accomplish through Paul. Look at Titus 1:1 - **Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness...**". This is better translated and more understandable (at least to me) if you state it this way - **Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, with a view to (or for the goal of) the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth with a view to (or for the goal of) godliness...**" This is a statement of purpose or goal. Whose goal is it? Who appointed Paul? God did. So these are God's goals – this is what He will accomplish: Three things - the faith of "those chosen of God" - believers, - the believer's knowledge of the truth, and the godliness of the believer that results from the knowledge of the truth. And I think that Paul used them in that order on purpose. First, faith. Then knowledge of the truth. Then godliness. You cannot have godliness without knowledge of the truth. And you cannot have knowledge of the truth without faith.

Let's look at the term "**the faith of those chosen of God**". What does this mean? I believe it means both the initial faith of the believer that results in justification (the faith of Abraham in **Genesis 15:6**) and the faith referred to by Paul in **Romans 4:3-5**.

"Those chosen by God" can be translated as "God's elect". With this phrase, Paul is describing believers, but he is emphasizing God's sovereignty in the process. Which makes sense. God is the ultimate authority, He has appointed Paul to the task, but it is by God's doing – His drawing - that some – God's chosen – will believe. It's not up to Paul who believes – it's up to God. Here we clearly have a reference to the doctrine of election, but I am not going to go there. I'm certainly not smart enough, and in my humble opinion,

the tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility cannot be resolved by our finite minds. They are both clearly taught in Scripture – but the two things have not been clearly reconciled in Scripture - so I have decided that I am just going to have to get comfortable with the incomprehensibility of it and rely on God's character – His righteousness, justice, and love – to live with it.

For our purposes, without getting into election, this phrase - “those chosen of God” - are believers. All believers – then, now, and in the future. Basically – all of us.

So, the first goal of Paul's appointment is to bring about the initial faith of believers.

The second goal is the “knowledge” of the truth. What is this? One commentator stated it this way: *“The phrase as used here indicates the process of coming to know and acknowledge the truth of the gospel ‘Recognition’ (ἐπίγνωσις) designates not only rational comprehension but also acknowledgment.”* So – it is the recognition and acknowledgment of the truth as truth. Before we were saved, we couldn't really know anything. **1 Corinthians 2:14** tells us this - ¹⁴ **But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.** Yes, a natural man can know the things that can be observed – data, information, numbers – but he cannot really reason from them to reality, because he doesn't have the ability to properly interpret them and put them in proper context. Proper interpretation of the data from creation requires access to the mind of God. And the natural man doesn't have this – God's mind is foolishness to him. So, even though he can observe data, and make conclusions from the data, he cannot properly reason from the data to reality.

Once a person becomes a believer, he can have “knowledge of the truth” to the extent God has revealed it, but he doesn't get it right away, all at once. Knowledge of the truth is a process. After we believe, and we have access to the “things of the Spirit” we then begin the process of learning more and more about reality through the study of Scripture. Things we could not know before we believed. Things we must learn as we study the Scriptures as we should. We grow in our knowledge of the truth.

And as we grow in our knowledge of the truth, we can exercise our faith to act accordingly – which is godliness.

So – the goal or purpose of Paul’s appointment is the faith of believers and their knowledge of the truth with a view to their godliness.

Now, let’s consider Titus 1:2 - look at Titus 1:1-2 again: “**¹ Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,”**

First, let’s look at two words here – “hope” and “promised”. Really, the word “hope” is better understood in this context as “certainty”. I’m uncomfortable with using the word “hope” as we understand it today – it’s too wishy washy – to us, it implies that something may or may not happen. To us, it’s like buying a lottery ticket and saying “I hope I will win a million dollars”. You might win, but you don’t expect to win. That’s not what the Greek word “ἐλπίς” means. The word translated “hope” actually means “confident expectation” - looking forward to something with confidence and expectation that it will be fulfilled. It’s like saying “I hope I will win a million dollars” and then going out and spending it before you get it. The only way you would do this is if you absolutely know that you will win. Of course, we do know that anything that God says He will do, He will do. We have certainty that it will be fulfilled. So there is no question that it will happen – we know it will happen because it is based on God’s word. So, “hope” in this passage means the certainty of eternal life.

Also, “promised” is better understood as “declare” – the Greek means “to declare to do something with implication of obligation to carry out what is stated”¹. God has declared it and He is bound to do it. So – the passage is really saying “the certainty of eternal life”.

¹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 356.

Now we come to a part of the passage where the Greek is very difficult, and frankly, I have not been able to figure it out. Let's read Titus 1:1-2 again and pay attention to something: **"¹ Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,"**. Notice the clause "in the hope of eternal life" that we just re-translated to "in the certainty of eternal life". The word translated "in" is the Greek preposition "epi" which describes the **"basis for a state of being, action, or result"**² and when used in this context it has the meaning of "on the basis of" or "supported by". The question is – what part of the verse does this phrase modify? There are different views out there. In one view, it can be understood to modify Paul's apostleship and provide an additional aim or goal of Paul's apostleship – the eternal life of the elect of God [*Thus Paul's thought is that all of his ministry is "with a view to" eternal life*³.] – or the certainty of eternal life that Paul has in common with those who believe as he carries out his apostolic ministry. [*Perhaps then this prepositional phrase at the beginning of v. 2 qualifies ἀπόστολος (cf. 1 Tim. 4:10), as does the preceding phrase, κατὰ πίστιν.... It would thus give an additional reason for Paul's apostleship (cf. BAGD s.v. ἐπι II.1bγ). If this is so, then this phrase speaks of the hope that Paul shares with the ἐκλεκτοὶ θεοῦ as he carries out his apostolic ministry and message*⁴).

In another view, the passage could mean that the certainty of eternal life is the basis for the believer's godliness. [*The combination of faith and full knowledge of the truth is to bring godliness on the basis of the hope of life*

² William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 364.

³ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-), Tt 1:2–3.

⁴ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles : A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 284.

eternal.^{5]}. In this case, a believer's godliness is founded upon the believer's knowledge of God's gracious provision of eternal life in Christ, which He declared in eternity past, revealed in Christ, entrusted to Paul, and commissioned Paul to proclaim.

I am not convinced about which of these views is correct. So I will have to leave it for further study and we will move on.

The Message

Now we will talk about the authority of the message. In addition to emphasizing Paul's position, duties, and goal of his mission, the Salutation in Titus also emphasizes the authority of the message. Notice the things it says about the message.

First, look at Titus 1:2-3 again. Titus 1:2-3 tells us some things about God's declaration of eternal life. Titus 1:2-3 – **² in the hope [certainty] of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised [declared] long ages ago, ³ but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior...**" . It was declared long ages ago, but was not revealed until the proper time.

It was declared long ago. In the Greek it says "πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων"- "before ages eternal". God declared eternal life "before ages eternal". What does this mean? Does it mean a declaration made by God in history – like His covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David – or does it mean a declaration made by God before creation - When all that existed was the 3 persons of the Trinity.

I believe this clause is describing the mystery, now revealed, of eternal life in Christ. It was declared before ages began, but was not revealed until Christ came. Look at **2 Timothy 1:8–11 - ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ who**

⁵ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Tt 1:1.

has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,¹⁰ but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,¹¹ to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” Notice that grace was given to us in Christ before time began (the same phrase as is in Titus 1:3), but that this grace was not revealed until Christ came, who “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”. This is talking about the same concept. Look at **1 Corinthians 2:6** – “**6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;**⁷ **but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory;**” . Finally, look at **Ephesians 3:1–7** - **1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—**² **if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you;**³ **that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.**⁴ **By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,**⁵ **which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;**⁶ ***to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,**⁷ **of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.** Paul is addressing the same kind of thing in 1 Corinthians 2, Ephesians 3, 2 Timothy 1, and Titus – the fact that eternal life in Christ was declared before time eternal, but in God’s omniscience, was not revealed until what Titus calls “the proper time” or “God’s own timing”. God determined when it would be revealed.

So, why does Paul make a point of telling us that this new revelation was declared long ago, but not revealed until NT? Practically, what does this do for us? Well – let’s think about this. What was declared? Eternal life. When was it declared? Before ages eternal. When was it revealed? At the proper time, in God’s own timing. When Christ came. The point is this – before creation, before Adam, before Adam fell, before we did anything, eternal life

was declared by God. And because of this - it is a done deal – it is secure. There is nothing any one can do to change it. And – the timing of Christ’s incarnation, life, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, all of it – was not an accident. It was done in God’s time. **Galatians 4:4** calls it the “fullness of time”. Over the ages, the world had sought knowledge of God through its own wisdom and failed. The time was right for Christ – the light of the world – to come and reveal the wisdom of God. It’s all part of God’s perfect plan, declared before creation, and is secure and certain, and we can count on it.

What else does this passage tell us about Paul’s message? It is God’s word. And, as we talked about earlier, it was entrusted to Paul by God.

So, Paul’s message is God’s word, was declared by God before times eternal, was revealed by God at the proper time, and was entrusted to Paul by God. The message itself is inherently authoritative. It was given to Paul directly by God.

Titus

Now, what about Titus? What is his authority? Look at Titus 1:4. Paul calls Titus, his “true child in a common faith”. This is probably better translated “true child *according to a common faith*”. Their common faith is the standard, or unifying principal, of their spiritual relationship. This part of the letter is basically a recommendation for Titus – Paul is commending Titus to the churches. Remember, Titus is a Gentile and is open to opposition from the Jews on this basis. Paul wants to make sure that everyone understands that Paul, the Jew, and Titus, his Gentile spiritual child, have the same faith. Paul is putting his stamp of approval on Titus – which helps give Titus the authority to carry out his instructions from Paul.

Purpose of the Salutation

Let’s start wrapping this up. As I stated at the beginning, the Salutation is about Authority – Paul’s Authority, The Authority of the Gospel, and Titus’ Authority. Paul is making sure we have the correct attitude about who God is, what the gospel is, and what Titus is. He wants to make sure everybody is straight about that before he gets into the instructions in the letter.

However, Titus was Paul's "true child in a common faith". Titus knew everything Paul was writing in the Salutation. Titus certainly wasn't questioning Paul's authority – so why did Paul address this to Titus and not to the churches?

Paul addressed this letter to Titus, but I'm certain that he intended that this letter be presented to the churches. Look at the last sentence in Titus – **Titus 3:15 – "Grace be with you all."** If Paul intended that Titus keep the letter to himself, why would he end with "Grace be with you all"? He intended it to be read to the churches. Here are a few reasons why I think Paul did this:

1. Paul always had to deal with attacks on his authority. Crete was probably not an exception. Paul had to confirm his authority and the authority of the gospel. And, since Titus was Paul's assistant in Crete, Titus's authority depended on Paul's authority.
2. Titus was instructed to appoint elders, deal with false teachers, and instruct the churches in Crete. These people needed to know that Titus had the authority to do what he was doing. A letter addressed to Titus from Paul, specifically instructing Titus to do the things covered in the letter, confirms Titus's authority. If anyone questioned what Titus was doing, the letter would resolve the issue.
3. There weren't any elders in the churches, yet. Titus was left in Crete to appoint them. There was not any church leadership to address the letters to – other than Titus.

So, Paul addressed this to Titus, but intended that it be read to the churches.

Finally, let's briefly talk about what this has to do with us. What can we, as believers today, take away from this Salutation? Many things, as I said at the first; this Salutation is really dense. But one of the main things is this - when Paul wrote this letter, he was doing it under the authority of God. What he wrote in the name of God is just like God wrote it. God, through Paul, gave us this letter. It's His word. And it behooves us to read it, to handle it accurately and not distort it, to follow its instruction, and through it and the rest of Scripture to grow in our knowledge of truth, which leads to godliness.

Next week we will move on to Paul's instructions to Titus concerning the selection of elders.

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