

Yes, We Were That Bad (Titus 3:3)

The word “for” as a conjunction connects verse 1 and 2 regarding how Christians are to conduct themselves in society. They are more than platitudes; they indicate a contrast. Verse 3 provides the contrast and the reasonableness of the exhortation in verse 1 and 2.

Paul does not just remind the Christians (in Crete) what they were like. He includes himself. Notice the pronoun “we.”

Man, in his natural, unredeemed state as a sinner:

1. Is a Fool

- Literally means “not having a mind” or “not within the province of thought.”
- It describes one who is unwilling to use their mental faculties to rightly understand. It does not describe a person with a lack of intelligence but who is too lazy or careless to think. There is always a moral fault driving the intellectual failure.

2. Is Disobedient

- Literally means “without persuasion.” It refers to someone who refuses to be persuaded despite overwhelming evidence. It also describes someone who disregards authority.
- The root word has to do with trust and faith. A failure to trust will lead to a failure to obey.

Notice the progression: There is an unwillingness to use the faculties of the mind in order to understand truth. As a result of their laziness and suppression (Romans 1:18), they are inevitably unwilling to be persuaded by truth.

3. Is Deceived

- Literally means “wandering.” In the English we have “planet.” It means to wander (in the active sense) or to be led (in the passive sense).
- Man, in his degenerated state (as a sinner) is a strayer. He is lost, he is a wanderer, and strays from truth naturally.
- Not only is he a deceived sinner, but the Devil, who is a liar, compounds his tendency towards deception. He is deceived by others who deceive (2 Timothy 3:13).
- In the sinner’s deception, he is weak and easily imposed upon by Satan, by others, and by the world system.

4. Is a Slave to Various Passions and Pleasures

- Literally “in bondage.” This is a willing bondage (that is, the sinner prefers to bow to sin). Notice that the Spirit does not define what these passions and pleasures are in our text.

- **Passions (lusts):** refers to “raging, unchecked passions.” These passions and lusts originate in the heart and mind (Ephesians 2:3), are worldly (Titus 2:12), are prominent in the youth (2 Timothy 2:22), are fleshly (1 Peter 2:11), are of the “eyes” (1 John 2:16) and are ungodly (Jude 1:18). Sinful lust is always outside of God’s care and blessing. Lust is an expensive passion that takes more than it can offer.
- **Pleasures:** describes the state of enjoyment (hedonism). It refers to self-appetite.

The unsaved, sinful man is like a wild beast that has no rationality, always acting on mere impulse, and self-pleasure regardless of the cost to himself or others.

5. Lives in Malice

- It is a mean-spirited or vicious attitude (disposition) for ill-will and hatefulness towards someone else. It manifests itself in malignant interpretations of the actions of others and assumes the worst motives.

6. Is Envious

- It describes the pain that is felt and conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness in someone else. It resents something that someone else has and wishes ill-will towards that person.
- Envy has a sense of entitlement and cannot truly rejoice over another’s happiness.
- This type of person cannot rejoice in anything good that happens to another person because their hearts rejoice in evil.
- The envious person is a complainer and a grumbler who is always demanding yet never satisfied; he/she is the most ungrateful person.
- The envious person suffers the most. Envy is its own poison (Proverbs 14:30)
- While lust is directed towards a specific object, envy is directed towards a specific person.

7. Is a Hateful Hater

- The Spirit chose two different Greek words for hateful and hating. It describes the person who hates good things. They hate and have no reason for it.
- It describes the sinner who hates God (Who is all good) for no reason.

Considering all this sinfulness, wickedness, and deadness, God in Christ became a man and rescued sinners by grace through faith. We serve a merciful God!