

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn to Titus chapter one.
2. Tonight as we begin to look at Titus 1:10-16 we will see how we are to react to false teachers.
3. Do we just let them alone or do we confront them?
4. First, we must understand who the ones are that are qualified to answer that question.
5. The context in Titus 1 has to do with Titus appointing elders in the church.
6. He has just stated that one of their qualifications in verse 9 is that they cling to the trust worthy Word for the purpose of exhorting in sound doctrine and refuting or reproving those who contradict it.
7. Now in verses 10-16 he shows them why they must confront those who contradict sound doctrine.
8. Notice what he says.
9. Read Titus 1:10-16.
10. As we stated in our study last Sunday concerning false teachers, the Bible gives many warnings concerning them.
11. Jesus said in Matthew 7:15 (NASB) "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

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12. The word “beware” (prosecho) is in the present tense which means to “constantly beware.” It is also an imperative which is a command. He is commanding them to constantly “pay attention to,” “be cautious about,” or “take heed” (Strong). The word “beware” also means “to turn one’s mind or attention to a thing by being on one’s guard against it” (Vine).
13. The word that He uses for “false prophets” (pseudoprophetes) refers to “one who falsely claims to be a prophet of God or who prophesies falsely” (BAGD). He is “a prophet of lies” (Kittel).
14. Do you remember what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 (NASB) ²⁰ 'But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' ²¹ "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' ²² "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.
15. The “sheep’s clothing” that Jesus refers to in Matthew 7:15 is the enduma that “may refer to the woolen attire that was the characteristic garb of a shepherd.”¹

¹John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Mt 7:15.

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16. John MacArthur says, “These deceive not by disguising themselves as sheep, but by impersonating true shepherds. They promote the wide gate and the wide way.”²
17. Jesus says they are “ravenous wolves.”
18. Despite their outward appearance and profession, these persons are in fact the mortal enemies of those who belong to the flock.³
19. Albert Barnes says they assume “the appearance of holiness, in order that they might the more readily get the *property* of the people.”
20. Paul described them as “savage wolves” who do not spare the flock in Acts 29:29.
21. They speak “perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).
22. Peter says they “secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves” (2 Peter 2:1).
23. Paul tells Titus these “rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision... must be silenced” (Titus 1:10-11).

²John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Mt 7:15.

³Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary : Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002). 183.

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24. So in verses 10-16 he first describes the false teachers, then talks about their impending destruction, denounces their conduct as he closes with an apt description of who they really are.
25. First, we see *the false teachers described* in verse 10.

I. The False Teachers Described (v.10)

He begins by telling us...

A. Their Number (v.10a)

He says, “For there are *many*.”

1. This is not the work of one individual but *many*
 - a) Paul told the Galatians that there were “some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ” (Gal.1:7).
 - b) He told Timothy to remain in Ephesus for the purpose of instructing “certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith” (1 Tim.1:3-4).
 - c) He continues in verses 6-7 by saying “For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, ⁷ wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.
 - d) In verse 20 he names two of those false teachers who have “suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith” (v.19). They are “Hymenaeus and Alexander.” Paul says he

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“handed [them] over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.”

- e) He names Hymenaeus again with another false teacher named Philetus in 2 Timothy 2:17 and says that their “talk will spread like gangrene” if they are not stopped. These men “have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some” (v.18).
- f) Before he ends this letter with Timothy, he also informs him about “Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica” (4:10).
- g) Paul says there are “many rebellious men” in Crete.

- 2. Because there are many false teachers this lends to the urgency of Titus’ work to ordain elders in every church in every city

This made it all the more urgent.⁴

Notice...

B. Their Behavior (v.10b)

They are “rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers.”

⁴John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 55.

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1. They are “rebellious men”

The AV has “unruly” while the NKJV and ESV has “insubordinate” and the NASB “rebellious.”

The Greek word *anupotaktos* means “undisciplined, disobedient, rebellious” (BAGD), “not subject to rule” (Vine).

Adam Clarke says they are “Persons who will not receive the sound doctrine, nor come under wholesome discipline.

John Gill says they are “Persons who are not subject to the law of God, or Gospel of Christ; whose spirits are not subject to the prophets; and who will not submit themselves to them that have the rule over them, nor attend to the admonitions of the church, nor be brought into any regularity and order; and there were many of this sort, who were not sent forth by Christ, or his churches, but went forth of themselves, and were corrupters of the word; and therefore Christ's ministers ought to hold fast the faithful word, and convince such opposers by sound doctrine.”⁵

John MacArthur adds to this by saying, “They are spiritual and moral insurgents—the enemies of God, His truth, and His people. Being a law unto themselves and representing the rebel Satan, they do not recognize the authority of God’s Word or

⁵ John Gill, John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

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of His Spirit, much less that of His divinely called preachers and teachers. Even when their erroneous doctrine and immoral living are exposed, they are inclined to defy correction and discipline by the true church.”⁶

- a) Paul already used this word when referring to an elder’s children

He said in verse 6 that they were not to be “accused of dissipation or rebellion.”

- b) What he says the elder’s children were not to be guilty of these false teachers were
- c) This kind of behavior must be confronted in the church
 - 1) Paul says later in Titus 3:10-11 (NASB)¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,¹¹ knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.
 - 2) He says to the Philippians in Philippians 3:17-19 (NASB)¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the

⁶John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 56.

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cross of Christ,¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

- 3) He told the Romans in Romans 16:17 (NASB) Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

2. They are “empty talkers”

The AV has “vain talkers” while the NKJV has “idle talkers.”

The Greek word (mataiologos) occurs only here in Titus and come from mataios which means “vain, deceptive, pointless, futile” and lego which means “to speak.” It is “one who utters empty, senseless things” (Wuest).

Fritz Rienecker says they were “using impressive language with little or no solid content of truth.”⁷

2 Peter 2:17-18 refers to them as “springs without water” that speak “arrogant words of vanity.”

⁷ Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976, 1980). 652.

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Adam Clarke says they are “Empty boasters of knowledge, rights, and particular privileges; all noise, empty parade, and no work.”

They are “devoid of force, truth, success, result,” thus “vain” in the sense of “in vain.”⁸

3. They are “deceivers”

The word “deceivers” (phrenapates) means “a mind misleader” (Strong). They are “deceivers of the mind, deceivers of thinking, seducers” (Rienecker).

“Their teaching has a seductive and perilous fascination over the minds of its victims, deceiving them and leading them astray” (Hiebert).

The apostle John wrote in 2 John 1:7 (NASB) For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

The word he uses here for “deceivers” (planos) means “an imposter or misleader” (Strong).

⁸Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Tit 1:10.

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God said to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 14:14 (NASB)
Then the Lord said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.

We saw their number and behavior, now notice...

C. Their Identity (v.10c)

He says "especially those of the circumcision."

This is...

1. The chief source of the false teaching

The word "especially" (malista) means, "chiefly, most of all" (Strong) or "above all, especially, particularly" (BAGD).

Kenneth Wuest says, "It is probable that there were very few false teachers who were not 'of the circumcision.'"⁹

2. The identity "of the circumcision"

This phrase occurs only here in Titus.

⁹Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Tit 1:10.

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Marvin Vincent says, “There can be no doubt of the presence of Jews in Crete. Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 2) even makes the absurd statement that the Jews were Cretan exiles; and that from their residence in the vicinity of the Cretan Mount Ida they were called *Idaei*, whence *Judaei*.¹⁰

Those “of the circumcision” were Jews who taught that salvation required the physical cutting of circumcision and adherence to Mosaic ceremonies¹¹ in order to the perfecting of the Gospel.¹²

- a) They are identified throughout the NT but in Acts 15 we have a clear understanding of what they were teaching. Verse 1 says they were teaching that “unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (v.1).

This, of course, brought a “great dissension and debate” between them, Paul and Barnabas, so much so, that they all went to

¹⁰Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 4:335.

¹¹John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Tit 1:10.

¹² Adam Clarke, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1826), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Titus".

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the elders at Jerusalem “concerning this issue” (v.2).

The elders and apostles in the Jerusalem church responded by saying in verses 10-11, “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ ‘But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.’”

In other words, we are not saved through the rite of circumcision or adhering to Mosaic ceremonies. We are, as Ephesians 2:8-9 says saved “by grace...through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- b) Paul told the Galatians in Galatians 6:15 (NASB) For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
- c) He said earlier to them in Galatians 5:6 (NASB) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.
- d) He told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 7:19 (NASB) Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *what matters is* the keeping of the commandments of God.

Teaching anything other than salvation by grace through faith is dangerous and it must be stopped.

This issue is what separates the true people of God from pretenders.

Notice in verses 11-13...

II. The False Teachers Destruction (vv.11-13)

Their teaching wreaks havoc on everyone and everything. That's why Paul tells Titus in verse 11-13 they "must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain. ¹² One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³ This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith."

First he says...

A. Their Mouths Must Be Silenced (v.11a)

The word "must" (*dei*) means, "it is necessary" (Strong).

The words "be silenced" (*epistomizo*) translates an infinitive of the verb that literally means "to put something over the mouth" and is used figuratively to

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refer to preventing someone from talking.¹³ The noun form is used of the “stop” of a water pipe. The verb used metaphorically means “to reduce to silence.”¹⁴

A.T. Robertson says it is “Literally, “whom it is necessary to silence by stopping the mouth.”¹⁵

“Like dangerous beasts these men needed to be muzzled” (Hiebert).

How does Paul want Titus to “silence” these false teachers? By refuting their vain talking.¹⁶

That’s what Jesus did in Luke 20 so that verse 40 says, “they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.”

John Calvin says, “A good pastor ought therefore to be on the watch, so as not to give silent permission to wicked and dangerous doctrines to make gradual

¹³Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 275.

¹⁴Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Tit 1:10.

¹⁵ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

¹⁶John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Titus*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Tit 1:11.

progress, or to allow wicked men an opportunity of spreading them. But it may be asked, “How is it possible for a bishop to constrain obstinate and self-willed men to be silent? For such persons, even though they are vanquished in argument, still do not hold their peace; and it frequently happens that, the more manifestly they are refuted and vanquished, they become the more insolent; for not only is their malice strengthened and inflamed, but they give themselves up to indolence.” I reply, when they have been smitten down by the sword of God’s word, and overwhelmed by the force of the truth, the Church may command them to be silent; and if they persevere, they may at least be banished from the society of believers, so that they shall have no opportunity of doing harm.”¹⁷

Notice again what Paul says to Titus in Titus 3:10 (NASB) Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.

Reject is from *paraiteomi*, which is also translated, “have nothing to do with” (1 Tim. 4:7) and “refuse” (2 Tim. 2:23).

In the first case Paul is referring to “worldly fables fit only for old women” and in the second to “foolish and ignorant speculations that ... produce quarrels.”

Factious is from *hairetikos*, from which *heretic* is derived.

¹⁷John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Titus*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Tit 1:11.

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The original word simply meant “to choose,” but eventually the term came to signify the placing of self-willed opinions above the truth, refusing even to consider views contrary to one’s own.

In its noun form, it is associated with such serious “deeds of the flesh” as “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, *factions*, envying, drunkenness, carousing” (Gal. 5:19–21, emphasis added).

The **factious** person will not submit to the Word or to godly leaders in the church. He is a law to himself and has no concern for spiritual truth or unity.

Although false teachers certainly are the most devastatingly **factious**, Paul is here casting a broader net, which includes *anyone* in the church who is divisive and disruptive.

Because the consequences of insubordination, nonsubmission, and bickering can be so destructive of unity among the Lord’s people, the apostle commands that a **factious man**, or woman, as the case may be, should be rejected by the church if they do not heed a **first and second warning**. The issues themselves may be trivial, but arguing about them is not.¹⁸

¹⁸John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 163.

CONCLUSION

1. It is clear that false teachers must not be allowed to propagate their heresy without being challenged.
2. The elders at Crete were to be so skilled in the Word of God so that they would be able “to refute those who contradict” (1:9) sound doctrine.”
3. Would you be able to correct one who is contradicting sound doctrine?
4. False teachers abound. There are *many*.
5. They behave as “rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers.”
6. They oppose the Word of God with their teaching—teaching things contrary to it.
7. They must not go unchallenged but must be silenced by “sound doctrine” (v.9).
8. Though the context indicates this is the primary responsibility of elders in the church, all believers must know what the Bible teaches and be able to defend it.
9. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:15 (NASB) But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.
10. My prayer is your able to do just that. Let’s pray.