

## Paul's Epistles to Individuals

### Lesson 24 – Titus 1:1-4

#### I. Review of Lesson 1 – Timelines and Author

As presented early in the study, some argue the following timeline for the writing of these letters:

Letter	Date	Location
Philemon	62 AD	Rome
1 Timothy	66 AD	Macedonia
Titus	67 AD	Nicopolis
2 Timothy	68 AD	Rome

It should be noted that there are various theories as to the timeline and location of the writing of these letters. None of this information can be known conclusively. For example, scholars suggest that Nicopolis was Paul's location when he wrote to Titus who was in Crete. This is based on **Titus 3:12** – *“When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.”* Although this is a possibility, the fact that Paul refers to the city in a future tense and uses the word “there” rather than “here”, creates the strong possibility that Paul had not yet arrived in Nicopolis when he wrote the letter. The certain determination of the time and location of the origin of these letters is unnecessary to the Christian and any discussion here is only for the purpose of understanding context and Paul's circumstances.

Paul is internally identified as the author. Paul was inspired to utter these words by the Holy Spirit, the actual author. See lesson 1 for more discussion on this matter.

#### II. The Greeting (vs. 1-4)

Paul calls himself a “*servant of God*” (**Rom. 1:1; Phili. 1:1**) and an “*apostle*”, thus establishing his authority for the letter. This letter, like those to Timothy and Philemon, is addressed to an individual but was intended to be used for the benefit of all who would read it. In **1 Tim. 3:14**, Paul said he wrote that letter so that Timothy “*may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God*”. As Timothy was told to instruct others, the content of Paul's letters to him are for the benefit of God's people in perpetuity. Likewise, this letter is for all who would read it as Paul describes himself as “*an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God*” (**v.1**). Therefore, Paul is keenly aware of his role as an apostle for all the saints and as a result, the teachings he gives Titus are applicable for a broader audience.

##### A. *Servant (v.1)*

The word translated as “servant” (Gr. “*doulos*”) means “slave”. This word is used in a number of contexts in the Bible but here the idea is “bond-servant”. Paul was completely submissive to God. His words were inspired and from God and if he had been preaching his own thoughts he would not have been a “*bond-servant of Christ*” (**Gal. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:14-18**). The idea of being a “bond-servant” of God and Christ is presented by three other NT writers (**James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1, Jude 1**).

*B. Apostle (v.1)*

The word can be used to denote the ones chosen by Jesus and sent forth to preach or in some cases describes someone selected for a specific mission (**Acts 14:4,14; Rom. 16:7**). Even Jesus is called an apostle in **Heb. 3:1**. But Paul is wholly qualified as an apostle, a witness of, and selected by Jesus as a result of the events in **Acts 9** and recounted in **Acts 26:13-18** and **1 Cor. 15:8**. Due to this, Paul has the full authority to speak under inspiration in this letter.

*C. An Apostle for the Faith of Those Chosen (v.1)*

Commentators and scholars disagree as to what this means. Some suggest that Paul's apostleship was "for" (in harmony with) the faith of God's elect. This view has a Calvinist underpinning by suggesting that God's elect have faith due to their unconditional election based on irresistible grace. If Calvin was right, then Paul's work had nothing to do with their faith, other than to be aligned with it. But, it is clear from scripture that Paul's work resulted in the belief of many Jews and Gentiles and their subsequent obedience to the Gospel. Therefore, his apostleship was "for" (meaning to produce) the faith of God's elect through his inspired teaching, further evidenced by the next phrase "*and the knowledge of the truth which is according to Godliness*" (**v.1**). Again, God's elect are those who would willingly obey the gospel call (**2 Thess. 2:14**) and submit to the command to "stand firm and hold to the traditions" they were taught by word or letter (**2 Thess. 2:15**).

*D. Hope Based on God's Reliability (v. 2-3)*

God is trustworthy because He has proven to be true to His promises. We wait eagerly in hope for that which we cannot see (**Rom. 8:24-25**) because of the promise He has made (**1 John 2:25**) and we know He is "*not slow concerning His promises*" but patient (**2 Pet. 3:9**). He has given us these wonderful promises so that we might be "*partakers of the divine nature*" (**2 Pet. 1:4**) and His patience "*brings salvation*" (**2 Pet. 3:15**).

*E. Revealed at the Proper Time (v.3)*

When God determined the time was right, He revealed His Word (sent Jesus) to fulfill his promises (**Gal. 4:4**). That Word is the Gospel (**1 Pet. 1:22-25**) of Christ. Prior to this, His Word was not fully revealed (**Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:3-7; Col. 1:25-27**)

*F. To Titus (v.4)*

Paul calls Titus his "true child in a common faith". Much as how he refers to Timothy as his "true child" (1 Tim. 1:2) and his "beloved son" (2 Tim. 2:2), this describes Titus as his spiritual offspring. This is coupled with a deep personal affection for both men as Paul had invested a great deal of personal stock in teaching them and instructing them to do the work at a high level. In this letter we see instructions given Titus to do considerable heavy lifting in regard to elders, withstanding false teachings, standing firm on truth and instructing people of all ages as to how to live.