

Who was Titus in the Bible?

Titus was an early church leader, a trusted companion of the apostle Paul, and a faithful servant of the Lord.

Titus was a Gentile (Galatians 2:3) who was led to faith in Christ by Paul (Titus 1:4). He was drawn to the ministry and became a co-worker with Paul, accompanying him and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem (Titus is included in the “other believers” of Acts 15:2). At the Jerusalem Council, Titus would have been a prime example of a born-again Gentile Christian. Titus was living proof that the rite of circumcision was unnecessary for salvation (Galatians 2:3).

Later, Titus went to Corinth to serve the church there (2 Corinthians 8:6, 16-17). On Paul’s third missionary journey, which took place from A.D. 53 to 57, Paul arrived in Troas and expected to meet Titus there (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Not finding his friend, Paul left for Macedonia. Titus rejoined Paul in Philippi and gave him a good report of the ministry in Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 13-14). When Titus returned to Corinth, he hand-delivered the Epistle of 2 Corinthians and organized a collection for needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:10, 17, 24).

Several years later, Titus and Paul traveled to the island of Crete, where Titus was left behind to continue and strengthen the work. Titus’s task was administrative, mostly: he was to maintain sound doctrine and “straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town” (Titus 1:5). When Artemas and Tychicus arrived in Crete to direct the ministry, Paul summoned Titus to join him in Nicopolis, a city in the province of Achaia in western Greece (Titus 3:12).

The last mention of Titus in the Bible indicates that he was with Paul during Paul's final Roman imprisonment. From Rome, Titus was sent to evangelize Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10), an area which later became known as Yugoslavia and is now called Serbia and Montenegro.

As a Gentile Christian, Titus would have been particularly effective in combating the heresy of the Judaizers. The Judaizers insisted that all Christians were bound by the Mosaic Law. Usually, the Judaizers honed in on circumcision: Gentiles must be circumcised, they said, in order to truly be saved (see Paul's refutation of this teaching in Galatians 5:1-6). Titus knew this teaching well, for the subject had come up in Syrian Antioch, leading to the Jerusalem Council, of which he had been a part.

Titus was a faithful servant of the Lord and a dedicated aide to Paul. He must have been trustworthy and dependable, since Paul appointed him to lead works in Corinth, Crete, and Dalmatia. Indeed, Paul calls him "my partner and fellow worker" (2 Corinthians 8:23). Knowing the difficult situations in both Corinth and Crete, we can infer that Titus was an insightful man who could handle problems with grace. Scripture says that Titus had a God-given love for the Corinthian believers; in fact, in returning to Corinth, Titus went "with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative" (2 Corinthians 8:16-17).

May we have the same zeal for the Lord that Titus showed. Every believer would do well to model Titus's commitment to truth, fervor in spreading the gospel, and enthusiastic love for the church.