

*5For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. 10For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. Titus 1:5-10*

Paul states why he left Titus in Crete, *For this cause left I thee in Crete*. It is good for us to have a little background on just where Crete is and know that it was a very populated island in the Mediterranean. Crete was home to the Minoan civilization, which was the first advanced civilization of Europe. Greek mythology has it as home of the monstrous Minotaur living in a huge maze known as the Labyrinth. *Minotaur, Greek Minotauros ("Minos's Bull")*, in Greek mythology, a fabulous monster of Crete that had the body of a man and the head of a bull. So this was a pagan culture where Paul and Titus brought the Good News.

*Crete—over whose Christian population Titus had been placed by St. Paul—was a well-known large and populous island in the Mediterranean. It lies geographically further south than any of the European islands, and, roughly speaking, almost at an equal distance from each of the three Old World continents—Europe, Asia, Africa. Very early it was the scene of an advanced civilization. In the Odyssey it is mentioned as possessing ninety cities; in the Iliad as many as one hundred. It abounded with Jews of wealth and influence; this we learn from the testimony of Philo and of Josephus. It probably received the gospel from some of those of "Crete" who we are expressly told were present when the Spirit was poured on the Apostles on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection (Acts 2:11). Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

Titus, a Greek disciple of Paul, was left on the island of Crete to create order and structure for the fellowships of new believers on the island. Also, he was to choose leaders that were able to teach sound doctrine, to help these young (newly believing) Christians to grow in their faith in God as members of this new religion, Christianity. Paul's instruction was, *set in order (from orthos; to straighten further, i.e. (figuratively) arrange additionally) what remains (what was left unfinished or lacking) and appoint elders*. Before this time, probably after Paul was released from Roman prison, he traveled to the Island of Crete, where he met his fellow evangelist Titus. Paul and Titus traveled from city to city on the island, establishing local fellowships. But Paul did not remain in Crete long enough to complete the process of organizing the churches.

Paul gave Titus two main objectives, *to set the groups of new believers in order and appoint elders that will have sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict (sound doctrine)*. To accomplish this Timothy is to appoint elders. It is evident that Titus is an overseer of a number of churches for Paul says, *appoint elders in every city as I directed you*. In the new congregations, *in every city*, Paul has given Titus instructions on how churches are to function. A main responsibility is for Titus to scope out what is going on in the life of the believers in the local churches. Then, if there is false doctrine, Titus was to set the church in order, straiten up the people so they are not led astray. Many of the believers may have had a Jewish heritage but others were of Gentile stock. Titus may have instructed them as Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

*9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not*

*be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor 6:9-11*

Titus was acted with these believers as the high priests had in the Jewish tradition, as a man appointed by God to *deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness*. This is how Paul saw himself and it is what he expected of his disciple, Titus. *1For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; 3and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. 4And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. Heb 5:1-4*

Paul knew that Titus had to deal with many deceptive men within the churches. This was not new to Paul. He wrote the Colossians, *8See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Col 2:8* The apostle John's writings are full of warnings against false believers. In 1 John 2 he wrote,

*21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

So there are false teachers in the midst of the churches and it figures that many of them were Jewish believers that were calling for believers to become keepers of the law. *10For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. Titus 1:10*

So besides Titus, straitening out those that were false believers, those who Jude calls *men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts*. He wrote, *For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 1:4* And in addition he says, *These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted. Jude 1:12*

For this reason Paul wants Titus to suss out men who will be able to pick up where he leaves off, men above reproach, men who are faithful to the Word of God. Paul wrote, *if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching. Titus 1:6-9*

Paul here voices his concern for the church. Faith in Christ is caught as it is taught by word and deed, *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom 10:17* Godly men, *men moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21)*, as Peter wrote of those men who responsible for the OT, would *exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (sound doctrine)*.