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Titus 1:1-3 Making Things Right Overview

I'm excited about going into Titus. It's a great epistle; one of the pastoral epistles. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and I would put Philemon in with that as well as Titus are called pastoral epistles. That is to say that they are letters written specifically to pastors. So, these are pastoral epistles in the direction that is given by Paul to these that he writes for the purpose of the pastors and their churches. We understand that Titus is the pastor; the one who is overseeing the church that is in Crete. We actually recall Paul heading in that direction.

One of the things we're going to do tonight is give you some background and some of the setting so that you can maybe understand the book a little bit better. Oftentimes, when we read an introduction like what we see in chapter 1, we tend to skip over some of the things that are said to maybe perceive that "Ok, he's just making general statements," but they're all very specific to the needs that they're addressing and to the place Paul is writing to. So, he's not only writing to Titus, but this place that he's in and the difficulties that they are having to contend with as he writes this letter to a pastor that is trying to make things right. I would say that if there is a general title to the book of Titus, it is basically "Making Things Right." I oftentimes use different titles than what I've done before so that you'll see it's very much emphasizing the same things, but it gives you a new perspective on it. So, we're just going to emphasize that things need to be made right. We're dealing with a church that's already established but there are things being done in it that are really upside down. The church has allowed the world to come in and cause them to think the way of the world rather than the way that the church should be run according to their faith.

So, Titus has been sent more specifically for the purpose of correcting this grave error and setting things back in order. We're going to see that theme flowing as we go into the book. What I'd like to do today is not only talk about that theme and how it flows at the introduction of this but also understand Titus, as well as this particular region. Sometimes our thoughts are "Well, that's way back then. It's at a different place and these people are totally different than us." But we continue to find out that everybody really is the same. We deal with different problems and come from different angles, but it's the same problem that we're dealing with. So, we're going to see that as we go into this book, and I hope that you see how applicable it is to you. These are really very applicable books to us, and the difficulties that are being conveyed as Paul writes to this church.

As we look at Titus, let me tell you a little bit about Titus. Galatians 2 gives us the insight that Titus is a Greek. So, Titus is not a Jew, he's a Greek and obviously he's in a region which is Crete; that is filled with both Romans and Greeks and also will have quite a population of Jews. The

interesting thing is that the amalgamation of this grouping; they're all thinking alike, and they've allowed themselves to merge together in a similar thought pattern. So, it's very interesting, you have Jews, the Romans, and Greeks on this island. You also have a very interesting background as far as the foundation of this place. Now, Crete is mentioned in the Old Testament by the name of Caphtor. So, in the Old Testament you'll see the name Caphtor. You won't see the name Crete. The city that I've put here is called Gortyn. It's an interesting city and probably one of the oldest cities in the world. They've actually been excavating recently, and they're saying 4,000-5,000 years; which is going almost all the way back to the Garden. There are very old, ancient things that are coming out. So, this place has been around for a long time. There's a reason why I'm telling you all of this, and let me just say this too, it's ok to look into background and talk about the population and understand the setting that is involved there, but when you're in Scripture, you don't want to go into the extremes of making the focus the historical setting; you want to see the setting as that which God is using to explain the passage. So, as long as the emphasis is to explain the passage, it's a good thing. Otherwise, it just becomes a rabbit trail.

If you were to go all the way back to Genesis 10, in this passage we start off in verse 6; coming out of the Ark, we're all related to Noah, right? His son Ham has a son by the name of Cush and from that genealogy comes Egypt. Cush is another word for Egypt; more specifically Ethiopia. Interestingly, Cush becomes the father of Nimrod in verse 8. So, it starts off in verse 6, "The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim." Cush would probably be Ethiopia; Mizraim would be Egypt itself. Then it says, "Put and Canaan." So, it goes on to talk about that.

(Genesis 10:8) "Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth."

Of course, we know that he founded Babylon and Ninevah. So, some of the great cities were founded by Nimrod. As you drop on down in the passage, it then talks about Egypt; or the term "Mizraim," if you look in verse 13, "Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim

(Genesis 10:14) and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) ..."

Are you catching this? So, actually from the Egyptian lineage comes the Philistines. What's that last word there? "Caphtorim" which is Crete.

In Jeremiah 47 we know what this chapter is dealing with because it says in verse 1, "That which came as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines, before Pharaoh conquered Gaza."

Then, if you drop on down to verse 4, "On account of the day that is coming
To destroy all the Philistines,
To cut off from Tyre and Sidon
Every ally that is left;

For the LORD is going to destroy the Philistines,
The remnant of the coastland of Caphtor."

So, my point is that the Philistines were very much a part of the foundation of this island. As it goes on, it deals with Gaza and Ashkelon; which are some of the cities of the Philistines. You'll see the same thing being mentioned in Amos 9. Once again, in Amos 9 you'll see the Philistines tied directly to Crete.

(Amos 9:7) "'Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me,
O sons of Israel?' declares the LORD.
'Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt,
And the Philistines from Caphtor...'"

He's saying, "I know where everybody's hiding." So, though the Philistines were also in the region where Israel was in that area where Ashkelon is and the different cities of the Philistines, He also knows that they were mariners, traders and in some regard pirate-like. They were pretty much men of the sea. So, you have this place called Crete; in which they would oftentimes hide, and God goes, "I know where you are, and I'm going to pull you out. Wasn't I able to pull out Israel from Egypt? Don't you think that I can pull you out from where you are?" So, it is interesting that the background is that. We have an interesting mix. We have an island that has the foundation of the Philistines, the ancient city and the capital Gortyn which is a Roman city. So, you have the strong influence of the Romans as well as the Greeks at large; much of their religion has infiltrated the thought process of Crete. Then you have the Jews which are buying into the whole idea of the way Cretans are thinking. Once again, we're now just going to take the conglomerate and make everybody in there Cretans; but it's an interesting mix. What's also interesting are the things that they worship on the island; which is really going to tell us the problem.

In Titus 1, there's an interesting description given to us starting in verse 10. So, we're going to jump ahead and look at that description since we're looking at the background and setting of the place. Verse 10, "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers,
especially those of the circumcision." That's talking about the Jews. So, there's an influence of the Jews. Then it goes on, and it says,

(Titus 1:11) "who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain." Of course, people are trying to make money off of Judaism in that case.

It then goes on, and says, "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'" (Titus 1:12)

(Titus 1:13) "This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith

(Titus 1:14) not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth."

So, what an interesting mix. You have Jews that are seemingly teaching law, but they're really not because they've allowed the whole Cretan way of thought to come in; and we know much of the Talmud is based on wives' tales. One of the things that Paul warns against is myths and wives' tales. Well, you think the Jews are only teaching the law, that's not true. They were teaching their myths as well; which oftentimes went into mysticism as the other places did. So, what a strange breed there is. Now, at the crux of all this is the main worship on the island; which once again, has infiltrated Judaism, the Romans, Greeks, and whoever is there; that is the foundation of Zeus. The worship of Zeus and Greek mythology is a big issue on the island. In fact, many of the temples that are there besides Zeus, Apollos are Egyptian Gods. So, you have a strange coming together of all kinds of worship. Now, the interesting thing about this is that all these different kinds of worship are affecting the same result.

With the worship of Zeus in particular, Zeus was seen as a god becoming man, and using his god abilities to get what he wants. So, Zeus has this power to be god-like, but then he can morph into a man. It sounds a little familiar, a god becoming man. It starts fitting in a little bit with Christianity. It's sort of like the Catholic church. The church moves into an area and there's a female goddess, and they go, "Hey, we'll take that, and we'll make her Mary." So, they just adjust to the place that they're in. Well, the church on Crete was starting to mix with all these kinds of thinking. So, what you have is the mindset of men to use their power to womanize; to take advantage; oftentimes, committing adultery and doing all kinds of things under the guise of their "worship." So, there was a barbaric thing that was going on as well as misrepresenting themselves. That sounds strange. Why would somebody misrepresent themselves? To get what they wanted. So, what you have is this worship that was embraced because of the fact that guys are going, "All I have to do is make this thing a religion and make myself kind of powerful and I can use my power to get what I want." Then they would do that. They would put on airs, and they would sometimes try to convey themselves as being something that they weren't. Of course, guys would never do that on the whole, but in order to get what they want; and that would be what we call lying. See, you're misrepresenting yourself; you're lying; you're deceitful; but hey, it was all under the guise of "getting what we want."

So, there was that heavy influence. What was also interesting with especially the Roman government and the pulling together of the Egyptian worship; which of course, we know the Philistines are Egyptians in and of themselves. In fact, you'll probably remember in Jeremiah 44 when Jeremiah told the people, "Ok, don't go down to Egypt. Just let God take you into captivity. He'll take care of you. If you do what the king says, everything will be ok." They go, "Yeah, we don't like your advice." Do you remember who was really opposing Jeremiah at this juncture? It was the women, right, and it was under the guise of the queen of heaven; which they worshiped in Egypt. So, they were basically saying, "We're not going to listen to you or the name of the Lord."

(Jeremiah 44:16) “As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you!”

That’s how we knew they weren’t going to listen.

(Jeremiah 44:17) “But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her.”

Well, that particular influence was on the island of Crete as well. So, the women actually called themselves “the new Roman woman.” Something new under the sun, “We’ve never heard of anything like that ever happening before.” I think they had the epitaph “I am woman; hear me roar.” I don't know, maybe not. Especially the wealthy women were using their money to buy the mercenaries that were there, and there was usury on their side. So, we have usury with the men womanizing, we have usury with the wealthy women that were manipulating, and things were turned upside down. There was no sense of caring for family. It was all about what they wanted because it was basically the worship of the island. The worship of the island was self-gratification, self-aggrandizement; it was all about getting what you wanted, and you could care less what anyone else had. Now, we’ve got a mess in the church. Actually, there were some ancient letters that said the church had begun to look more like Zeus than Jesus; which is something worrisome. So, for this reason, Titus needed to be sent to put things in order.

Historically understanding this is that we know Titus the Greek does go. Paul had used him before to go to Corinth. An example is found in 2 Corinthians 7 and 8. We know that he had sent Timothy on one occasion, but Paul was very concerned that they might run over Timothy, but he can send Titus and he would pretty much hold his own. One of the nice things is that Titus came back with good word, “Everything’s ok.” It’s almost as if he had kind of a dry run with the Corinthians and then Paul goes, “Ok, I think we can send you to the Cretans.” So, he sends him to the Cretans and it’s an interesting point.

Titus seems to be referred to as like a son to Paul which seems to convey that Paul had probably led him to the Lord. So, there’s a close bond in that regard. From what we understand historically, Titus will eventually go to some other areas but will ultimately end up back in Gortyn; which is just north of a little place called Fair Havens where ships would go in case the weather got really bad. We’ll talk about that in just a second. From what we understand, he will die as a martyr in that city. Eusebius, who’s a historian during about 300 AD, a couple hundred years after Titus, writes what happened. What we understand is that about 800-840 AD the Arabs come in and attack that city and burn it down, but the Romans somehow cut off the head of Titus. They get his skull, and they take it to Italy. For many years the head was in Venice in a place in Italy, but in 1966 they took the head back. So, it might make you feel better that the head of Titus is actually back in Crete where his head and body now reside or so to speak, his bones are back together again. So, it’s a bizarre thing, he probably did more traveling dead than alive. It’s interesting when you begin to realize that he stuck with Crete and ended up dying

there as a martyr. So, Scripture is revealing to us a little bit; as well as giving us a little more historical and biblical background of what Titus is about.

When you consider the island of Crete and the people of Crete, you have to ask yourself “How did this church get started?” There are probably two sources. One is, according to Acts 2, Crete is mentioned there during the time of Pentecost. Remember Pentecost, when there were Jews from all over the place? Well, Crete is one of the places that’s mentioned. So, there were probably some Jews that were converted at that time and went back and maybe a church started from that; or a spark began to start. We also know that Paul kind of fell into this particular place. Remember when he was taken off to Rome? So, he was going to Rome to basically stand before the Caesar. So, he goes to Jerusalem. Then they put him in Caesarea. So, he starts off in Syria and starts going off. Well, the winds start going contrary. So, they decide to hide behind Cyprus; to act as a buffer for the winds, but things don’t get any better.

(Acts 27:1) “When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius.

(Acts 27:2) And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.”

So, it seems like they’re ultimately going to head towards Greece. Then, from there to Italy.

(Acts 27:3) “The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.

(Acts 27:4) From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.

(Acts 27:5) When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.

(Acts 27:6) There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.”

So, it’s not just us having to stop off at Atlanta before we go someplace. They had to stop off.

(Acts 27:7) “When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone;

(Acts 27:8) and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.”

So, the church was probably in the region of Gortyn. From what we understand, according to this passage, verse 9, “When considerable time had passed, and the voyage was now

dangerous;" because the winds were getting worse. Paul was there for some time. So, we have the influence of Pentecost. Of course, some Jews were there at Pentecost and were witnesses. Obviously, Paul stops off at Fair Havens at this juncture when being in Crete. We also know that later on he sends Titus back after he had been there. So, at what point he went back is hard for us to understand but the influence is there; the church has begun; there are now problems. What are the problems? Well, the problems are that once again, the world has infiltrated the church. The church has become probably more like the world than they are like Christ. So, Titus has to deal with that particular issue.

So, we look at the letter, and we're going to be talking about what he's saying in the introduction of this letter. Once again, we oftentimes take the introduction for granted and I don't want you to do that. It starts off this way in Titus 1:1, "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness." Now, the last phrase that is used, "according to" is actually used earlier in that verse, and we probably missed it. So, let me just inject it in the passage, "Paul a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ," See that phrase "for the faith"? That's actually "according to the faith." Now, the reason why I make that distinction is because Paul is conveying to them that their faith is very unique, and it doesn't look like anything that the world has to offer. So, therefore, it can't amalgamate with something else obviously, but it's going to be very distinctive looking. His focus is that "I'm sent to you; not as much to establish your faith, but to help you live according to your faith." So, he's going to begin describing this because of the fact that though some may be calling themselves Christians, they're not living according to their faith. If you look with me, it says, "according to the faith of those chosen." The unique thing about a true believer is that they at one point in their life go, "I wonder why this guy doesn't get it." There are just certain things that are just clear as day and so obvious that we're just surprised that they're not getting it. The world is surprised that we're not thinking like they think, but I stand amazed, "You can't see that?" "I don't get it." So, there has to be this sense of understanding that this faith is so unique that it literally picks out certain people.

So, the way that he puts it is, "according to the faith of those chosen of God." "*Eklektos*" is the term that is used within the passage. By the way, let me just show you a couple of passages that make reference to this. We oftentimes make reference to the passage in John 3. It says in verse 20, "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

(John 3:21) But he who practices the truth comes to the Light."

So, we're talking about this mark of sorts that we have that draws us to truth. Now, he's going to be talking specifically about truth in this passage, but why do you see it and others don't? That's the interesting thing. He's saying this is very unique. Just in case somebody is thinking "Why don't we think like everybody else? Everybody else goes this way." Because that's what's

happened; everybody else has been going the way everyone else has been going, but he's trying to convey "No, what you see is very different and it is because God has chosen you."

So, it says, "chosen of God..." Now, watch the phrase here, "...and the knowledge of the truth." In Acts 13, do you remember when people began to be saved in the church? The way that it's put here in Acts 13:48, it says, "When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." That's an interesting phrase, isn't it? Who was it that believed? The ones that were appointed to eternal life. Why them? Because they saw something that nobody else saw. What was that? Truth. It just rang true in their hearts. So, Paul is beckoning them and bringing them to that sense of "you're different." So, don't try to think like them. Don't try to go with them. You know in your heart you're seeing things different. You go, "Well, what am I seeing?" If you look in the passage, "the knowledge of the truth." There's this sense of "that's true! I just know it to be true." It's sort of like the song, "you ask me how I know He lives; He lives within my heart." There's really an explanation and I think one of the statements that Paul is going to make to the church, to Timothy is "Great is the mystery of godliness." If you look at the end of Titus 1:1, it says, "which is according to." Once again, he's starting off, "Ok, now, the way we see things is according to something very different than the way that the world does. We see a truth that the world doesn't see; and that truth is directly connected to godliness." This is a very interesting point because they're in a whole world that is full of compromise and there's a tremendous amount of debauchery happening on this island. His point was you not only know the truth; you know what the truth looks like, and it doesn't look like that. He's establishing the foundation of that "according to." That would probably be the best way I could put it. What's wonderful is the tag on to this because he puts "the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

(Titus 1:2) in the hope of eternal life."

Now, our thought is "Well, that's great. They have a hope of eternal life." You have to pull it together. So, the point isn't just "Wow, I get to live long." That's not the point. The point is that to the believer, to the one who God has called, the hope is eternal life of godliness. See, that's the combination.

In 2 Peter 3, do you remember when he says, "the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up"?

It says this in verse 11, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

(2 Peter 3:12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

(2 Peter 3:13) But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

We're not just looking for eternal living; we're looking for eternal life, and eternal life is where godliness dwells. I've heard people say, "I don't know if I want to live forever." Well, I can understand that if you're talking about this world. If we're talking about a perfect world where love, genuine care and affection of God are and a sense of purity and not taking advantage of each other; not using one another; not killing one another; not thinking only of themselves, but a place that is forever; never to be in any way ever changed. That's what he goes on to say in Titus 1:2, "In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie..." Why do you think he threw this in? Because Zeus is all about lying; it's a whole religion of lying. You go, "Well, that's something new." No, that's religion. That's what religion has always been about. It's about lying. So, Jesus will warn His disciples, "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees;" which is hypocrisy; which is lying. Putting on a face and deceiving people for the sake of sordid gain; which we know according to this passage, people are using Judaism to make money. Once again, nothing new under the sun. Sometimes we have a tendency to segment, "These are the Greeks, these are the Romans, these are Jews;" and the wonderful thing to me that this whole story of Crete does is it pulls them all together and it says, "No, there's really only two kinds of people: believers and non-believers." The believers are those that love God and want to follow Him and live like Christ; they live according to their faith, which is according to godliness; which is according to truth; which is according to sincerity; which is according to genuineness. So, it's not any kind of hypocrisy or flattery or manipulation or people trying to use people for something, but we have a faith that is pure. We look forward to that day when we're at that place that forever remains that way.

The way that he ends verse 2 is "promised long ages ago." If I were to directly translate that it would probably translate "before times eternal." That actually probably the more accurate translation of that phrase. You say, "What's the significance of that?" Well, I am very thankful that you asked that. When you come to the end of Hebrews 6:13, you can see where God made a promise to Abraham. It says, "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

(Hebrews 6:14) saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU."

(Hebrews 6:15) And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

(Hebrews 6:16) For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

(Hebrews 6:17) In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,

(Hebrews 6:18) so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie..."

That sounds a little bit like Titus, doesn't it? Doesn't he say that in Titus 1:2? "In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie..."

So, what's wonderful about this is not only is he making reference to the character and nature of God, which cannot lie; which immediately separates Him from all other faiths. He cannot lie; it's impossible. He will never misrepresent Himself. You have to think in this term, how unsettling it is for people to deal with a liar day in and day out. Is that not unsettling? To me, the horrible thing about dealing with a liar is if they are telling the truth, you never know when it is. You're hoping that maybe today they're going to tell the truth, but if they have a record of telling a lie, you just never know. Think about how comforting it is that God interposed, and He says, "You want Me to tell you something? Not only do I promise you this, but I never change." "The unchangeableness of His purpose," see the passage? In which it is impossible for God to lie. Now, we're dealing with the unchangeableness of His character; which is telling us long ages past, eternity before time that God has always had this in His purpose; that is to give us hope of everlasting life of purity and goodness. This is nothing new. That produces a hope that's sure and steadfast.

If you look in Hebrews 6:19, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul." Why? Because it's never changed from eternity past. It has always been and therefore always be because it's directly connected to who God is; unchangeable in His purpose, character, nature, in His promise, and all that He is. You have to realize what Paul is doing; He's giving them some stability because they live in a world where everybody is lying. Nobody tells the truth. Once again, how unsettling is that? He's going, "But you know what truth is and you know that there is a place that doesn't do this, and you hold onto that." It's very easy to just give up and say, "It's just the way it is. Maybe I'll just compromise." Maybe in some regard this is why the church became more like Zeus than Jesus because after a while, the only way to deal with the world is to lie too. Everybody else is being deceitful. He's pulling them back. He goes, "No, no, no, you know, I know, we're different and we can see the truth. We know that our truth is in godliness and transparency and real. We're not going to settle for that." So, he's calling them back. It's a very interesting introduction within the book; a hope both sure and steadfast. It's obvious that Crete would know what that would be as well from the book of Hebrews.

(Titus 1:2) "In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

(Titus 1:3) but at the proper time..."

Sometimes people go, "Why now? Why do I know now?" Obviously, you can't fully comprehend everything that God does. I had somebody asking me today, that old question, "Why couldn't God have done it differently? Why do people have to suffer? Why do we have all these difficulties?" I said, "The short answer is that God never does anything wrong the first time. So, if he did it then it's perfect. There's absolutely no mistake. He's comprehensively flawless in everything that He does. There is no number 2 with God. It's always the first decision." It's not like Adam and Eve sinned, and God goes, "Oh, what a surprise. I didn't plan

for that. So, now I need to retool everything.” No, no, no, God knew this from ages past and from eternity past. So, nothing new has happened, but God will always do right.

Now, we come into a play in which I’m sure people are probably even asking him, “So, what makes you so special?” and “Why now?” So, Paul is establishing that God had a perfect plan in this and yes, we do have questions. In some way we feel like the prophets of old were scratching their heads, “What’s going on? 1 Peter 1:10 reads this way, “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries,

(1 Peter 1:11) seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

(1 Peter 1:12) It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.”

You say, “well, why now?” Well, it’s very interesting that God in some way is conveying that this message has been released at the perfect time. I’ve oftentimes mentioned the interesting aspect from the time you come from the Old Testament, then you come to the time of Christ, that there is a maturation process in Scripture. So that when you’re in Genesis, you have this picture of an infant to early childhood in which there is no law. Once again, you sit down with a one-year-old and go, “Ok, let’s talk about ‘Thou shalt not..’” and the kid’s just going to burp on you or cry or something. He doesn’t understand what you’re talking about. It is very interesting that Cain kills Abel and there are no ramifications for that because we’re at the beginning of the earth and there was no law laid down. So, when you consider a child, I remember kids slapping each other when they were little, and we’d get after them, “Don’t do that.” If they were to slap each other when they were like fifteen, then they’re really in trouble. When they were young, there really wasn’t an understanding of the law. “No, that hurts.”

So, in the beginning of Genesis, you see all kinds of mayhem and stuff done. It’s an interesting picture of almost an early childhood development in which the children are all over each other messing up everything. Then, when you come into Exodus, you come with the law. Now, it has become remedial. So, the teaching goes, “Don’t touch that. Don’t do this.” And you begin to see the children growing up with a list of do’s and don’ts. Up to this time they really haven’t had that. Then, all the way through they almost become teenage-like in which they rebel. In the rebellion, God goes, “Ok, consequences will pay up.” and they go into captivity. Then, Jesus comes, and Jesus coming is that picture of what is called the fullness of time. In Galatians 4, as Paul is making the analogy between the law and ultimately in grace; His point is that when you’re under the law, when you’re a kid, your parents say, “Don’t,” and you weren’t necessarily thinking in terms of “Gee, I want to be a stellar citizen.” You’re not thinking that way; you’re thinking, “Can I do this?” and they’re going, “No.” “What about this?” “No.” “So, I can’t throw the rock through the window?” “No.” It’s all those kinds of things. So, you have a list of all these

do's and don'ts. Paul makes reference to this in Galatians 4:1, he says, "as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything." In other words, a child may grow up in this family, and the parents say, "You can't do that. You can do that." He has the same rules as the poor family, or if there is a servant in the house, he has kids, they have the same rules. He can't do the same things they can't do.

(Galatians 4:2) "but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.

(Galatians 4:3) So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.

(Galatians 4:4) But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

(Galatians 4:5) so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

Virtually, in that verse, we're seeing what is called in Jewish terms, "bar mitzvah." That is, "bar," son, "mitzvah" of the law. So, he's a son of the law. So, when a kid hits twelve, what's the point? Well, the point is that he's declared a son of the law. That is to say, he's matured to the point where he can think beyond childhood, and he wants to do the law. He's not just doing it because he has to. He comes to the point of "I want to be a grown up. I want to do the right things." Then, he starts the true maturation process. This passage is saying that when Christ came and He saved us, His Spirit comes within us, and we now take on the spirit of a son which wants to do the right thing. Up to this point, we were under law and our parents told us we had to do it; but when we receive the Spirit of Christ, we receive the spirit of maturity that says, "I want to do the right thing." This is called "fullness of time." It's a very interesting picture of humanity maturing to the point of "it's now time for the Spirit to come." Do you see what I'm saying?

(Galatians 4:6) "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"

What does that mean? I have a relationship with my Father. I do what I do because I want to. I do what I do because I want to please my Father. Jesus will say, "Everything I do, I do to please My Father." Well, you have that spirit because you now have matured to the point of the Spirit of God moving you rather than laws moving you. That tells us that it was preplanned before the foundation of the world. We see the maturation process in a child, and God says, "I've given you a picture of what My plan is." So that when you come of age; we'll put it this way, when humanity comes of age because they've been through the whole gambit at this point. They've gone into captivity. Now, they want to be freed. We'll put it another way, as a child and a rebellious one, we'll call them teenagers, they went their own way. "All we like sheep have gone astray," right? So, they went their own way, and they rebelled against God, and they became like the prodigal son. The prodigal son, there in captivity goes, "Wow, there are

consequences for my sins.” There’s an epiphany: The wages of sin is death. “But you know what? My heart is turning towards my Dad like it never has been before. I thought my Dad was just trying to be mean; but my Dad was protecting me.” Some earthly fathers don’t do this, but I’m just saying the way it should be. The child comes to this point, and they go, “Man, I now understand, and I want to go back home. I want to be a son that is a good son.” What could cause that change? Well, the spirit has to change, and that’s what happened when Jesus Christ came. He came at the perfect time, at the fullness of humanity to demonstrate that now was the time for the Spirit to take over. When we raise our children, our hope is that after we’ve set all the rules and boundaries, and you do it as long as you can; but then you realize that the day comes when you need to step back. Once you step back, you’re going, “God, I hope I’ve introduced Your Spirit to them.” That’s why it’s so important to point your children to having a relationship with Jesus because if in fact they don’t have the Spirit of Christ within them then they’re not going to be able to go beyond the realm of laws. “Why are they in jail?” Because they can’t go beyond, “I need to do this because I want to do it.” Why are they in trouble? Why are they marrying the wrong people? Why are they going the wrong way?

If you’ve pointed them to Christ, you’re pointing them to the Spirit, and it’s only the Spirit that can keep them. It will be the Spirit that will bring them back at the fullness of time. I know I took the long road on that one, but it was that the proper time was manifested. His point is that this Gospel that we’ve been preaching is a Gospel of change and manifestation.

He says in Titus 1:3, “I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,

(Titus 1:4) To Titus, my true child...” It’s interesting that he wants to emphasize truth in this. “...in a common faith...” Actually, the phrase is “according to faith.” His point is “I’m sending you somebody that’s living this truth that you know is true. You’ve been chosen. You see these things, don’t you?” Oh yeah, but I haven’t seen it around lately. “I’m sending a guy. There’s a guy that’s been doing this, and he’s going to come to you and give you the example.” He’s going to turn to Titus, and go, “You need to make sure that you place those kinds of guys in the office.”

Just to tie these together, I’m going to touch upon this; I want you to see the picture that in some ways he’s drawing. I want to emphasize that in Ephesians there’s Crete, right? So, the Greek influence of mythology as well as the philosophical thought has infiltrated. Here again, if your thought is, “Well because they’re Jews they’re teaching the Torah.” Not necessarily. They’re teaching for sordid gain, and they’re going to look for any way to tickle the ears of whoever. So, they’re going to compromise the message in any way they can. We know the Pharisees were already doing stuff like that. We know they were lovers of money; and we know according to Matthew 23, as Jesus talks to the Pharisee, He goes, “Woah, you Pharisees, you hypocrites. You’re taking advantage of these poor widows so that you can accumulate great wealth for yourself.” So, we already know that they were using their religion. That’s not a new thing for the Jews to do; as well as it was already in the system of worldly worship and all kinds of religion. It’s just a matter of taking advantage. In Ephesians 4, he deals with the same things

in the church of Ephesus. A very mythical place, not only mythology but mysticism came in from the east as well. So, another place of great amalgamation because it's one of those port cities. So, they're going to have the same problems in the text.

He says in Ephesians 4:17, "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

(Ephesians 4:18) being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God..."

See, our eternal life is that life of righteousness. That's what eternal life is to us.

"...Excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

(Ephesians 4:19) and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality..."

That was exactly what the followers of Zeus were doing.

"...for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

This is talking about "I get to do what I want to do because I want to do it" and "It doesn't matter who I hurt. It doesn't matter who I run over or who I use. Quite frankly, it doesn't matter if I tell the truth or not."

(Ephesians 4:20) "But you did not learn Christ in this way,

(Ephesians 4:21) if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus."

You're not going to be deceiving people, using people and manipulating people. He goes on and talks about that you've been corrupted in the old self according to the "lusts of deceit." That's an interesting phrase that he uses. The manipulation and facades, if you think about it; hypocritical, flattering to acquire your selfish desires is what it's talking about. You're just manipulating to get what you want. You don't care if you lie, cheat, or steal. You just do it. That's why he says in verse 25, "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH." Quit lying to one another. Quit using one another. Quit trying to manipulate the people around you. That's not the life that we were called to. We want transparency; we want the love; we want the relationship. So, what's interesting is that in verse 26 he ties it together in the sense of if you're angry with one another, you're lying against the truth. If you hold a grudge against somebody else, you're lying. "What do you mean I'm lying?" Well, wait a minute. You didn't learn Christ this way. Did Christ hold a grudge? Can you guys think of a verse where Christ held a grudge? "While being reviled, He did not revile in return." (1 Peter 2:23) He gave a blessing instead. So, you didn't learn Christ in this way. Do you know where you learned it from? The world; that's where you learned it from.

It goes on and talks about how you don't want to steal from people. Then verse 29, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification." In other words, you basically ask yourself, "Is this going to help?" If it's not, don't say it.

Then verse 30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

Watch verse 31, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you."

Why? Because it lies against the truth. The truth is that you've been forgiven. Your hope is the hope of righteousness; your hope is the hope where people have forgiven each other; your hope is the place where people are following Christ. That's your hope; it's what you see and embrace more than anything else.

(Ephesians 4:32) "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

See, you and I don't learn animosity and bitterness from Christ; we learn that from the world. That is us manipulating people. I can tell you from my own experience, I've held onto anger, wrath and bitterness toward people, and I can tell you why I did it. I wanted them to be miserable. "Oh Gary, are you going to forgive me?" "I don't know. I'll think about it. Are they suffering enough?" The goodness of God has called us to something far better. We can feel that tug in our heart. We have this interesting picture of all these people together. It's so strange that you can have Romans and Greeks and Jews living in harmony hating each other. It's amazing; they all see things the same way. He turns to them, and he goes, "But you and I are very different." So, he sends Titus. Titus is going to show what is according to faith; he's going to show what is according to truth; and what is according to godliness. They're going to see the difference. He's going to tell the young women to be workers at home; don't try to sit up on the stage and declare yourself as independent from man.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for this wonderful letter that begins to take us down this wonderful journey of what our faith is according to. You've actually called Paul for this very purpose; to teach us what our faith looks like, and how it plays out in a world that is very contrary to Christ. We pray that You will speak to our hearts even now, as we begin to take this journey with Titus and begin to put things the way they should be. We pray this in Your name, Amen.