

# Sound Doctrine in Titus

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## I. BACKGROUND

### A. Titus the Man

1. Titus (Τίτος)<sup>1</sup> was converted through Paul's ministry and was a Gentile (Tit. 1:5; Gal. 2:1-3).
2. Paul and Barnabas took Titus of Jerusalem to demonstrate the conversion of this Gentile (Acts 15:1 ff.; Gal. 2:1-3).
3. Titus had encouraged Paul that the Corinthians had responded to his First Epistle to them (II Cor. 2:13-15; 7:5-16). Paul then wrote II Corinthians and sent it back with Titus who was to also collect money for the Jerusalem assembly (II Cor. 8:16-23).
4. During his two known Roman imprisonments, Paul took Titus to Crete and left him there hoping to rejoin at Nicopolis (Tit. 1:5; 3:12).
5. Titus was with Paul towards the end, but left Rome and went back to minister Dalmatia (II Tim. 4:10).
6. Tradition states that Titus died of natural causes on Crete.

### B. The Island of Crete

1. This long and narrow island was in the Mediterranean Sea with Salmone and Fair Havens as significant cities (cf. Acts 27:7-21).
2. Converts from Pentecost presumably went back and planted churches (Acts 2:11).
3. The Cretians manifested wickedness to such an extent that Epimenides their poet said "Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (Tit. 1:12).

### C. The Time, Place and Purpose

1. On his prosperous journey to Rome (Rom. 1:10), he stopped on Crete, and apparently after his release he wrote I Timothy and came back to the island with Titus (c. AD 62). At some point Zenas the lawyer and Apollos joined Titus in his efforts (3:13)
2. Paul started churches in many cities and left Titus there for several reasons:
  - a. To ordain elders in every church (1:5),
  - b. To refute the false teachers,
  - c. To speak sound doctrine to elders, church members, and false teachers,
  - d. To encourage the church members about the responsibility of "*good works.*"

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<sup>1</sup>The proper noun probably means "nurse." It is found 13x in the body of the TR and 2x in the subscripts (II Cor. 13:14 and Tit. 3:15).

## II. OUTLINE

- A. Introduction (1:1-4)
- B. Sound Doctrine and Elders (1:5-16)
- C. Sound Doctrine and the Congregation (2:1-10)
- D. Sound Doctrine and the Christian Life (2:11-3:8)
- E. Sound Doctrine and Heretics (3:9-11)
- F. Conclusion (3:12-15)

## III. “SOUND DOCTRINE”

### A. The Expression

- 1. “Sound” (ὕγιαίνω)<sup>2</sup> “to be sound”
  - a. Physical usage (Mt. 8:13; Lk. 5:31; 7:10; 15:27; III Jn. 1:2)
  - b. Theological usage (I Tim. 1:10; 6:3; II Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Tit. 1:9, 13; 2:1)
- 2. “Doctrine” (διδασκαλία)
  - a. Translated doctrine (19x), teaching (1x), learning (1x).
  - b. In Titus 4x (Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 7, and 10)

### B. The Passages

- 1. *“For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to **sound doctrine** [τῆ ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία]”* (I Tim. 1:10).
- 2. *“For the time will come when they will not endure **sound doctrine** [τῆς ὑγιαίνουσας διδασκαλίας]; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears”* (II Tim. 4:3).
- 3. *“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by **sound doctrine** [τῆ διδασκαλία τῆ ὑγιαίνουσα] both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers”* (Tit. 1:9).
- 4. *“But speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine** [τῆ ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία]”* (Tit. 2:1).

## IV. THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS

- A. False Teachers have no good works: *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate”* (1:16).
- B. Sound Doctrine leads to good works:
  - 1. *“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity”* (2:7).

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<sup>2</sup>The noun ὑγιής occurs 14x (cf. Tit. 2:8). The term “hygiene” comes from this Greek noun.

2. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (2:14).
3. “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (3:8).
4. “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (3:14).

## V. THE DOCTRINE OF FALSE TEACHERS (“Heretick”)<sup>3</sup>

### A. Their Precepts (Tit. 1:14)

1. Jewish Fables (Ἰουδαϊκοῖς μύθοις): see I Tim. 1:4; 4:7; II Tim. 4:4; and II Pet. 2:16 for μῦθος.
2. Commandments of Men (ἐντολαῖς ἀνθρώπων): *vide* Mt. 15:9 and Mk. 7:7.
  - a. Paul did not elaborate on the Jewish fables.
  - b. Paul did seem to link together the heresies of the Jews with those of the Gnostics (Col. 2:8-23).
    - 1) The Jews erroneously emphasized circumcision (vv. 11, 13), angels (vv. 10, 15, and 18), and holydays (v. 16), and may have had fables surrounding these tenets.
    - 2) The Greek Gnostic philosophers taught demonic doctrines of the rudiments (v. 8) requiring men to move upward toward deification through the *pleroma* (vv. 9-10). This involved worshipping angels (v. 18), mortification of the flesh (vv. 21, 23), narcissism (v. 23) and false humility (v. 23).
  - c. Ultimately, all false systems are built upon the premise that man can save himself.

### B. Their Practices and Persons

1. “unruly” (ἀνυπότακτοι)
2. “vain talkers” (ματαιολόγοι)
3. “deceivers” (φρεναπάται)
4. “subvert whole houses” (οἷτινες ὅλους οἴκους ἀνατρέπουσι)
5. “teaching...for filthy lucre’s sake” (αἰσχροῦ κέρδους χάριν)
6. “liars” (ψεῦσται)
7. “defiled” (τοῖς μεμιασμένοις)
8. “unbelieving” (ἀπίστοις)
9. “profess to know God...deny him” (Θεὸν ὁμολογοῦσιν εἰδέναι, τοῖς δὲ ἔργοις ἀρνοῦνται)
10. “abominable” (βδελυκτοὶ)

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<sup>3</sup>The adjective αἵρετικός occurs once in NT and gives the sense of “choosing.” A theological choice contrary to the religious norm or standard is a heresy. A teaching contrary to the Bible is heresy.

11. “disobedient” (ἀπειθεῖς)

12. “reprobate” (ἀδόκιμοι)

### C. Their Prescription (Tit. 1:9; 2:10, 13)

1. By sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince (παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ, καὶ ἐλέγχειν).

1. Stop mouths (οὓς δεῖ ἐπιστομίζειν)

2. Rebuke sharply (ἐλέγχε αὐτοὺς ἀποτόμως)

3. Avoid the following (Tit. 3:9):

a. “foolish questions” (μωρὰς ζητήσεις)

b. “genealogies” (γενεαλογίας)

c. “contentions” (ἔρεις)

d. “strivings about the law” (μάχας νομικὰς)

4. Admonish twice and then reject (μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ [Tit. 3:10]). This would be through church discipline since there is no other means of rejection of false teachers.

## VI. CONTEXT OF CHAPTER THREE

### A. Sound Doctrine and the Christian Life (2:11-3:8)

1. It Requires Good Works (3:1-3)

a. Relative to Secular Leaders (3:1).

b. Relative to Sinners (3:2-3).

2. It Realizes Genuine Regeneration (3:4-8)

a. The Author—God our Saviour (3:4).

b. The Act—washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost (3:5).

c. The Abundance—in grace, hope, and eternal life. (3:6-7).

d. The Affirmation—belief leads to good works (3:8).

### B. Sound Doctrine and Heretics (3:9-11)

1. Avoid their techniques (3:9)

2. Admonish (3:10)

3. Advise (3:11)

### C. Conclusion (3:12-15)

## VII. APPLICATION OF SOUND DOCTRINE

### A. Examples of modern heresies based on myths and traditions of men.

1. Myths (μύθοις)

a. The myth of the “Q” document behind the common source for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

b. The myth of Christ and the Apostles quoting the LXX.

c. The myth of a non-canonical “bitter letter” written to the Corinthians.

- d. The myth that scholars are to restore the Lord's non-preserved words Greek and Hebrew words.
- e. The myth of some "spiritual body" or universal, invisible church into which all Christians are Spirit baptized.

2. Traditions of Men (ἐντολαὶς ἀνθρώπων)

- a. The tradition that only Fundamental doctrines are important enough to defend.
- b. The tradition that there are many "non-essentials" in the Bible that are relegated to preference only (i.e., mode of baptism).
- c. The tradition that parachurch ministries (which are under the aegis of no assembly) have divine authority.
- d. The tradition that there are organizational hierarchies that have inferred authority over the Lord's assemblies.

B. Biblical Implementation of Sound Doctrine

1. Each NT assembly must determine Sound Doctrine and heretical departures.
2. These churches must teach these truths to assembly members.
3. The Lord's churches must then examine their respective practices to make sure they are not compromising their doctrine.
  - a. What about the missionaries and mission agencies they finance?
  - b. What about their schools and education institutions they support?
  - c. What about preachers, pulpit supply, evangelists, etc., they invite in to cover the pulpit?

SOUND DOCTRINE LEADS TO GOOD WORKS!