

Introduction

We have come to the end of the short epistle from Paul to Titus. As is the case with the other epistles, there are some final details mentioned at the closing of the letter. Nevertheless, they are profitable details for us.

1. Ministerial Exchange – v. 12

First, Paul was going to send Artemas or Tychicus to Crete, perhaps to substitute for Titus, whom he wanted to come to Nicopolis. It seems as if whoever went from Paul was going to stand in for Titus while he was away visiting with Paul.

It also sounds like Paul is on his way to Nicopolis or nearby there already. Nicopolis is northwest of Corinth in Achaia, on the western coast of the peninsula there. It is about 400 miles straight-line distance from Crete. His plan is fixed (determined or decided, perfect tense) to stay the winter in Crete. There is no wishy-washiness in planning here, as he had been falsely accused of in the past (see 2 Cor. 1:15-2:2).

Artemas is only mentioned here in the Biblical record. We would only be able to say that he is a trusted co-worker with Paul who is able to lead the work on Crete in the absence of Titus.

Tychicus is a little more well known from the Bible. We see him in Acts 20:4, Eph 6:21, Col. 4:7, and 2 Tim. 4:12. From about 56 A.D. (the Acts passage) until about 67 A.D. (the 2 Timothy passage), Tychicus is busy ministering, traveling, and so helping Paul in the work of the churches. We know he is from Asia, perhaps Ephesus. We also know that he carried the letters from Rome to Ephesus and Colosse. What a weighty responsibility to be charged with carrying the original documents of the Scriptures to the churches of their destination! He was sent back to Ephesus at the conclusion of Paul's earthly sojourn.

2. Supplying Needs of Saints – v. 13

In this verse, Zenas and Apollos apparently are carrying the letter to Titus, and will have some material needs as they continue on their journey to some other place of ministry.

Zenas is only mentioned here in the Bible, so we don't know much about him. It is unclear as to whether he is a Jewish lawyer trained in rabbinic studies, or whether he is a Roman lawyer.

Apollos is well known from several Bible passages (Acts 18:27-19:1, 1 Cor. 1:12, 3:4-6, 22, 4:6, 16:12). From these Scriptures, we learn that he was an Egyptian Jew from Alexandria. He was an eloquent speaker and very well versed in the Scriptures, though he required additional instruction from Aquila and Priscilla to advance him beyond the point of John's baptism which is all he knew at the time of his first speaking in Ephesus. Soon thereafter he traveled to Achaia and ministered in Corinth, where Paul says that he "watered" the seed that had been planted. God used this watering, in part, to cause growth in the Corinthian believers. After that point, however, there developed factions in the church, with some following Paul and others Apollos and so on. Later on Paul desired for Apollos to return to the church at Corinth, probably to help straighten out some of the problems there. However, he could not go immediately but would go at a more convenient time.

The main point of the verse is that Titus is to help these two brothers on their way, so that they have no needs on their journey. They need to move on quickly to make some later appointments ("with haste").

We may take some wisdom from this passage, that God's workers need to be supported well so they do not have any needs. It is far too frequent that God's people are disobedient in the matter of generous giving to assist men of God on their way.

3. Learning about Good Works – v. 14

This theme is expanded in verse 14, where all of "our people" must learn to do good works. In the context, it seems to relate to Zenas and Apollos, as if Titus cannot individually supply all their needs, but will require help from the whole church where he is pastor.

There are three points to draw out from the verse. First, church people must learn (imperative form) to maintain good works. The word maintain has been translated "take the lead in" so that the idea is to jump out front and get the job done, not to lag behind in good works. Good works are those activities which are motivated for the glory of God and the love of saints, not out of selfish ambition. This is just for us, beloved—we need to be diligent to do good works, as has been emphasized elsewhere in this very letter.

Second, the good works are to provide for urgent needs ("necessary necessities" or "necessary uses" as in KJV). People do have needs, and sometimes through no fault of their own, or because they are ministers of the gospel who cannot do outside work, those needs have to be supplied by others. These are not wants, obviously, not oversupply, but needs. Watch out for ministers making a buck from God's people that has nothing to do with real needs.

Third, this grace of supplying the needs of saints is tied directly to Christian fruitfulness. If you want to be fruitful, do good works. If not, why not?!?!

4. Greetings – v. 15

Finally, the book closes with the usual type of salutation. First, all of the saints with Paul greet Titus. Paul asks Titus to pass on his greetings to those believers there who love Paul. Notice the wonderful fellowship, even over the distance of many miles. Hopefully you have and will experience that with letters, emails, telephone calls, etc. to saints who are far away.

The grace that is mentioned here is that unmerited divine favor which is the basis of our salvation (Titus 3:7; Eph. 2:5, 8) and our ongoing life (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 4:7).

Conclusion

So we have seen a wonderful final note to a small yet powerful letter. In it, Paul recounted inspired travel plans, spoke to the supply of physical needs of his co-workers in the ministry, how Christians can participate in helping them and ought to do so to demonstrate the fruits of the Christian life, and final greetings showing the love among saints in far-flung places. May it be that these sorts of things mark our lives as well, beloved.