

**Introduction**

The function of these verses in the book of Titus is simple: it is the greeting section of a letter from Paul to Titus, providing some information about author, some about the recipient, and a prayer from the author on behalf of the recipient. It is of the normal structure (From Paul...To Titus...Grace, peace, and mercy). Notwithstanding its simplicity of purpose, it is important not to overlook it. Why? First, because this little bit of text is inspired by God. And second, because it contains some significant theological statements before the main body of the letter is even commenced.

Of the Pauline epistles, only **Rom 1:1-6** is comparable in length to this elaborate introduction. It seems that because this material is thrown forward in the letter, it must be quite important. As such, it seems to mark the general mission of Paul. These things characterized the Paul that was writing to Titus and showed things that he thought were important about himself. The structure of the greeting forms our outline:

**I. From: Paul (vv. 1-3)**

## A. His Call (v. 1a)

1. As a servant of God. Did you know that this title is only used of three people in the Bible? They are: Moses (**1 Chron. 6:49, 2 Chron. 24:9, Neh. 10:29, Dan. 9:11, Rev. 15:3**), Paul (**Titus 1:1**) and James (**James 1:1**). Obviously the title of servant is meant to convey the humble state of one who is doing the serving (or slaving) but what is often overlooked is that the servant of the highest Person in the Universe is quite exalted himself. What a privilege to serve the King of kings!
2. As an apostle of Jesus Christ. An apostle is one sent as a representative. Paul was called by Christ and sent by Him to do a particular job. We'll see what the job was just now.

## B. His Purpose. (v. 1b)

- The key word is the first word in the phrase, kata (κατά). It is used about 436 times in the NT and so you can imagine that, as such a workhorse, it might have quite a range of possible meanings, and it does. In this instance, I believe best to understand it as "for" in the sense that Paul's call was with the two-fold goal, intention, or purpose of:
1. Bringing the elect to faith...The phrase "faith of God's elect" means "faith exercised by God's elect." Election is the theological term that means "That God chose all believers, before the foundation of the world, to salvation in Christ with all its attendant blessings and obligations." As such, there are a group of "chosen ones" called "elect" in the Scriptures. This term is used in several places this way (**Rom. 8:33, Col. 3:12, 2 Tim. 2:10, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 John 1, 13**). This purpose of the apostle's work was laid out in **Acts 26:14-19**. The concept of the elect, and the work required to "find" them, is mentioned in **Acts 18:10**. We trust that not all who will exercise saving faith have yet done so, and therefore we must continue as believers to do the work necessary to bring them to Christ.
  2. ...And bringing the elect to knowledge of the truth. This knowledge is in agreement with or in accord with godliness. (Here kata [κατά] is used with its most common meaning). You could call this the "godly living" kind of truth. Right thinking should lead to right living. Wrong thinking leads to wrong living (**Mat. 12:34**). Paul's whole purpose in life was to further God's work in these directions. And this was not just to get people saved and that's it, but that there might be more voices to add to the chorus of thanksgiving which will redound to the glory of God (**2 Cor. 4:16**).

## C. His Hope (v. 2).

This is the basis. for Paul's work. The preposition epi (ἐπί) indicates that his service and purpose are built upon the hope of the gospel, namely eternal life. Without this, there is no hope at all. It has been fixed from eternity past because the "unlying" or "unfalse" God promised it back then.

## D. His Commission (v. 3).

In contrast to the time of the promise (eternity past) from the last verse, here what we learn is that at just the right time (the *when*) God manifested His word (the *what*). He did so "through preaching" (the *how*) and this preaching was specially entrusted to Paul as his job description. He was commanded to be a preacher by God. Actually from the passages in Acts, we understand this to refer to the commandment of Christ to go to the Gentiles, but this is of little consequence as Jesus is very God anyway.

**II. To: Titus (v. 4a)**

This is a fascinating little verse. Titus is called a *true* or *legitimate* or *genuine* child. Herein is Paul's confidence that Titus is really a born-again believer in Christ. So it can be for you as well—are others so impacted by your testimony for Christ that they say "he is a *genuine* disciple." I'm not talking about your own personal assurance—I'm talking about the assurance of others regarding you!

The common faith referred to here is the rule or standard by which you know someone is a true Christian. "Common" does not necessarily mean "wide spread." Something like you have heard about common sense – it is not so common any more. This "common" has to do more with the idea of "shared" among all Christians. Only in that sense is it common—common to all Christians. Unfortunately, people tend to think of Christians as holding a wide variety of beliefs. But there is a common or shared base of true believers from which, if one varies, they cannot be Christian!

**III. Greeting (v. 4b)**

Here I understand this to be essentially a prayer, where the prayer is for the following three items to be given from God and Christ to Titus:

- A. Grace: unmerited favor, not only the "saving" kind but also the "sustaining" and "service" kind. It is the disposition of God that is unearned, totally free and "not of works" so that we have nothing to boast about.
- B. Mercy: The kindness or compassion of God that is expressed toward someone in need and withholds from them what they deserve.
- C. Peace: The blessed state of the saved, a state of harmony or lack of conflict between God and the believer.

These items are "from God" and "the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior." They ought to be demonstrated among ourselves as a consequence of our receipt of them from above.

Note "our Savior" is used of Jesus here and of "God" in verse 3. **Isa. 43:11** and **Hos. 13:4** teach that there is no Saviour beside God Himself. That Jesus is the "Jehovah who saves" (the meaning of His name) and is of equal deity with the Father is evident in this passage. The doctrine of the Trinity is thus supported.

**Conclusion**

Paul is a servant and apostle whose goal is to see God's elect come to faith and knowledge of the truth. This is founded upon the hope of eternal life which God has promised, and He cannot lie. The promise was made from eternity past, but has been manifested at just the right time through the vehicle of preaching. To Paul this preaching was entrusted according to the command of God our Saviour.

May you have desires in accord with those mentioned here. Furthermore, may you be one who can be called a "true child according to the standard of the commonly received Christian faith." Finally, may God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ grant you grace, mercy, and peace.