


# ARAMAIC & GREEK BIBLE COMPANION

## TITUS

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*The original commentary was completed in 2002.*

*The epistle is fairly short – written originally in just under 650 words and amazingly, only 24 sentences - if you include the “Amen” as one. By way of overview the first chapter is about introducing **orthodox** biblical practice and Christian lifestyle in a chaotic Cretan situation. The second chapter describes what “didaskalia” (integrated or **systematic teaching**) will do for any society. The third Chapter has two behests – one on **public conduct**, one an appeal to Titus to come for the **support** of the apostle to Nicopolis.*

### ORTHODOXY HAS CERTAIN DEFENCES AND GUARANTORS 1-4

#### The first line of defence – messengers called and in touch with God and His word

The first is the existence within the church of “servants” who are “sent”. Paul’s **apostolic calling** made him a servant of God who runs after his own in love and of Jesus Christ who ministered in death as He does in life. This guarantee lies within “conscious calling” – the whole elect believe this mission to serve

The second guarantee is “a knowledge adequate to teaching” of the truth so that holy and reverent living results – this involves “**teachers**” who direct people towards the purifying hope of ‘eternal life’ which God who cannot lie announced in “clothing man” sending him to “till the ground” to learn the principle of “life” and by setting a sword a the gate of life to show man he must “die under judgment” before he can truly live. The third guarantee is “**gospel preachers**” who in the latest times clarify God’s word under the commission. The fourth guarantee are genuine “above/heaven” born **believers** who know the mercy grace and peace of the new covenant and walk under the Lordship of Christ. This is the import of the 4 “directional” **κατα** (*when the preposition takes the accusative “direction” as here may be implied*) statements in the first paragraph.

### ORTHODOXY’S SECOND LINE OF DEFENCE – A CHAIN OF SELF-DISCIPLINED CHRISTIAN LEADERS 5-9

Bringing into line with **Orthodoxy** the Cretan believers meant **finding “men of God”**. God’s methods are men & women. Paul left a lot undone. The history of Crete’s evangelism involved Pentecost, the docking of Paul’s ship which called at *Fair Havens* en route to Rome and a possible post house-arrest visit of the apostle.

1. In each independent city elders who can take various posts are to be ordained [**καθιστημαι**] – constitutional need
2. Their qualifications – without facing accusation, with one wife, with believing children – with no charge against them of being profligate and unrestrained
3. It is essential that those who watch the household of God be clear of having to give public answer to a judge so of good character as we would say. Five negatives – Not self-pleasing or stubborn [**αυθαδη**], not irritable or passionate [**οργιλος**], not playing drunken tricks & behaving as drunken [**παροινος**], not one who strikes back & kicks [**πληκτης**], not shamelessly in search of shameful gain [**αισχροκερδη**] as distinct from fair profit [**φιλοκερδη**]. Then Paul adds, let there be “love of strangers

(involving hospitality), love of goodness, the mind in a good state (safe and sane and whole or integrated), righteous or scrupulously fair & just, living by natural & divine law, with self-mastery and discipline, holding out against all odds for the teaching of the trustworthy word of God, that he may be able to comfort in his circle of personal wholesome training or experience of meeting circumstances which can be related – the seven graces *φιλοξενον (love of strangers), φιλοαγαθον (love or the good), σωφρωνα (respectful living), δικαιοσ (right living), οσιον (holy or distinctive ethical living), εγκρατη (disciplined living), αντεχομενον (endurance or "standing one's ground" on scripture truth & the gospel).*

It is to be noted that “Health” was used as opposed to “turbulence” in society – quiet smooth-running affairs. This is established by biblical teaching to encourage those who seek to live aright and convince and correct those who oppose life’s proprieties.

### **ORTHODOXY’S THIRD LINE OF PROTECTION –THE HEALTHY MIND AND CONSCIENCE OF ITS SUPPORT BASE 10-16**

Where Christianity is not working or working rather poorly at grassroots in its fellowship there are likely to be three characteristic problems –

- (a) It is not “subject to discipline” (10).
- (b) It has rash talkers who speak without finding (10).
- (c) It bankrupts or upsets or disheartens and within it there are “stirrers” who “must be bridled” (11).

### **A SOCIETY THAT BELIEVED “ZEUS IS DEAD AND BURIED” LOOSES AWE AND GROVELS MORALLY**

*It is little wonder that Crete lived for the day and countenanced such banal and low level speech, behaviour and liberation from the fear of God. Titus as an ambassador had an uphill task and he must be reckoned among the great teachers and men of endurance of the first century.*

**Stirrers-** [*ανυποκτοι “those not subject to authority or principle”, ματαιολογοι “those whose talk is characterised by the random element” , φεναπαται “cunning cheats” or “wily impostors” like the φοενιξ or fabled Egyptian bird promoting “second life” and vain hope. This latter word is one not found in classic Greek and may be a Pauline creation*]. Stirrers can upset or stir up whole families – teaching non-essentials for shameful gain. One of these, a prophet from themselves (*Επιμενιδες* - 6<sup>th</sup> century philosopher tried to foist on his peers the deceit that Zeus was buried in Crete) said classically “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.”(12) Though an undisciplined remark– and gauged to cause a stir things up it was nevertheless “true” in this case, says Paul. For this rebuke them severely – that they may be “whole” or “sound”, that is, of quiet, submissive and healthy mind in the faith “not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of men who have apostatised from the truth.” Everything is clear of pollution or unsoiled to the pure – to those who are tainted with guilt and unbelief nothing is clean – their mind and conscience is defiled. Such confess (or better “profess”) to know God but they deny him by their works. “They are nasty, disgusting, nauseating and rigid – not susceptible to persuasion. Such people are like unmanageable ships; unproven in any good work” i.e. [*αδοκιμος*] like base coin such are impostors and not the “genuine currency” of Christianity.

## CHAPTER 2

*There are three aspects of orthodox Christian teaching – first it is “health-giving”. As a spiritual “health check” is offered to seniors Christian orthodoxy delivers the test of “healthy relationships” with God and other believers and possessing the mind of Christ. Second genuine Christian teaching is filtered through the example of mature believers and “commonly understood” alongside the body of believers and so supplied with correctives. Third, Christian orthodoxy is not given to speculation but hugs the rock of scripture for safety like the rock climber. [v.15 – especially περιφρονεω]*

### FOUR AREAS OF CHRISTIAN TEACHING

The word [διδασκαλια] is used of “instruction” and also of that which was “composed for presentation”. *Often 4 plays were presented together as a tetralogy.* Actually if we revert to Titus 1.9 and adjoin it with the three references here we have four sets of materials which every young church leader should prepare and use.

- a. A presentation on the character and qualities expected in a leader 1.5-9
- b. A presentation for seniors – laying stress on example (2-3)
- c. A presentation on youth (4-6)
- d. A presentation on serving and the ethics of work (9)

Each of these to be related to our lives fashioned on Christ’s v12, under His judgement and responsive to redemption that makes us a people [περιουσια] with more than enough, resourced and, as we would say, “with a lot to give”. The comments in this represent the mere framework of such presentations.

### ALL-AGE CHRISTIANITY SHOULD PACE ITSELF FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT 2

1. To be **fitted for “health-giving” doctrine** a pastor has a duty to “talk things through” [λαλεω]. There is advice here not for counsellors or leaders per se but “fathers” – in **OLDER MEN** the priority is “dignity” a reverent attitude to life – that they live without wine, in a noble way, discreet lives – “healthy” in faith love and endurance
2. **SENIOR LADIES** – the priority is a healthy state of consecration to the Lord, not accusers, nor enslaved by wine, teachers of what is beautiful, that they should quickly make **YOUNGER WOMEN** prudent to make their marriages warm in the affections of their husbands and children – of discreet temperate mind, pure, working at home or guardians of home, good responsive to their husbands leadership. These by their contraries bring God’s word into disrepute. The most effective demonstration of the word of God in action is the Christian home

### A PATTERN FOR YOUTH 6-8

- 3 The approach to youth is to be one of sensitivity – paralleled by the “still small voice of the Holy Spirit – v 6  
[παρακαλεω] – it involves helping cheering exhorting. The development of a moderate chaste prudent sound mind is of first priority. It is emphasised also in seniors. The young pastor himself is vital to youth as exhibit no.1 of what God can do in a dedicated life. The word [παρεχω] means also the pastor should “open his heart” “place himself at the disposal of” others and share what God has done! He is as a “seal” or “*coin imprint*” in the sense that when flexible a faith impression

was made on him and the stamp of Christ's Lordship put on his life. So character formation is seen in clear outline or the working model of the pastor's life. The effect of example in five areas will mean that youths who show opposition will turn around [εντρεπω] v8. The vital impressions are: –

- (a) An uprightness that will not corrupt or evaporate or be different and dissimulate at times is consistent living.
- (b) That “extra something” a “fine, splendid, august” person – the believer must walk with “the” king.
- (c) An example of the “indestructible” in the sense of “not being shipwrecked” or “tacking courageously”.
- (d) An example of “sound advice or healthy oracle” (e) a model of the absence of query or inquiry [γνωσις] connotes lifestyle or carnality – a person in whom there is no question of impropriety sexually.

#### **4 WORK 9-10**

##### **THE WORK ETHIC WAS VITAL TO IMPROVING CRETAN SOCIETY**

This formerly referred to “slaves” who did the bulk of the work in the society of the time – even as teachers doctors monitors and general workers.

The keynote is making the doctrine of Christ attractive

- (a) By respect for authority master/employer & by an orderly approach to work – working in harmony with others.
- (b) By being in attitude – pleasing and satisfying in personal standards
- (c) By mounting allegation or counter claim against a comment of management – in adversarial approach.
- (d) By not appropriating to you what belongs to an employer.
- (e) By laying yourself open to the employer – declaring your mind in all good faith – showing him what is done – even what is your idea or right view of a matter.

*υποτασσω (orderly obedience), ευαρεστος (well-pleasing as Jesus was), αντιλεγοντας (not talking back), νοσφιζομενος (stealthily misappropriating), ενδεικνυμενος (being open and exhibiting what one is)*

##### **LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF GRACE AND CHRIST'S RETURN 11-15 LEADERS**

To **hold firmly to** sound doctrine appointed leaders should hold out above all for the word of God and its standards (1.9) Paul insists on a biblical church. This should be grounded in the truths of 2.11-13. Church leadership like all who serve are to adorn the “ordered doctrine” *διδασκαλια* of Christ (10). This body of doctrine is often called “the faith” and is laid out with 10 fine details under 4 basic heads: –

- (a) Within this body of doctrine Christians subscribe *the incarnation* of our Lord Jesus, His virgin birth, salvation by grace through faith,
- (b) We subscribe a deep commitment to the *worship* and *ethics of Christ* being trained to say “no” to the lusts of this world and lack of awe and worship, to the practice of Christianity in prudence and *moderation* in respect of the self-life, *righteousness* towards one's neighbour and *reverence for God*,
- (c) We subscribe a belief in the *deity of Christ* and His return in glorious *epiphany*,
- (d) We subscribe the fundamentals of *the atoning blood* and *the work of the Holy Spirit* who resources believers for works of service. Here is a body of ten cardinal doctrines that emerge from 2.11-15.

Leaders, second, should have an ordered married life and be able to nurture confident trusting children who adorn their lives.

Leaders, third, have to be free of five problems: stubbornness, passion, drunkenness, disorderliness & a governing money or lucre motive. Leaders need seven graces: – hospitality; love of the good, self-control; fairness, holiness, self-control & adherence to the doctrines and standards of scripture.

*Here then is the heart of the book and these presentations impinge on improving leadership, home-life, and the development of youth and relationships society and in the world of work.*

### CHAPTER 3

*This chapter centres on “good works” although from the kernel of its teaching it would appear we have come away from scripture with a mistaken concept of “good work(s)”. The context makes the exemplary work of Christ’s whole life, that is His “useful life-work and philanthropy” the basis for our employment not our optional engagements.*

#### **SUBMISSION & GENTLENESS COMMENDED – PAUL REFERS TO HIS FORMER FAULTS 1-3**

##### **(1) THE WORK OF CHRIST 4-7**

**i The kindness & generosity (in action) of God our Saviour appeared contrasting with what men know prior to conversion – in a life of service or usefulness** [*χρηστος / ξραομαι “to supply or have & use means”*] and one of philanthropy [*Showing kindness or liberality – the opposite of grudging or envying*]. The use of the word “epiphany” here emphasises what Herodotus would have called “divine manifestation” – but it is the divine work for men that is here in mind.

##### **ii The laver positioned as an ancient reminder of God’s grace in regeneration which alone can wash and purify us spiritually**

The thought and inspiration we bring to our demanding tasks in the area of righteous dealing or trading had nothing whatever to do with salvation. Our works that God has given us to be occupied with—however excellently motivated and executed cannot save us from the malady of sin. Adam was to “till the ground” but as in Genesis 3.17 the curse makes the work frustrating had not the clothing given promise of atonement—God’s recovering or saving work. Beyond the brazen altar in the old tabernacle compound stood the “laver” – a testimony that approach to the Lord is only possible with “second birth or regeneration” and a “thorough/continual renewal” – the work of the holy Ghost— His resource outpoured on us richly. The laver stood beyond the altar of burnt offering lest men got the impression that their offerings approved them—that version by Solomon depicted in 1 Kings 7

Testifies to the need for cleansing, and its symbolic figures speak of the Christ of the gospel and His provision.

##### **(2) REMIND CHRIST’S PEOPLE TO RESPECT EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY 1-3**

The first implication of this is to be prepared for every good task that must be undertaken. People must not speak evil of the plans of government, not be at war with authority, but rather courteous and reasonable – we are not to present as sticklers for

the letter of the law – but as those prepared to fit in where we can- and demonstrate an ability to guide by grace and something more Socratic than Draconian – a mild attitude that can soothe the sore ones and tame the wild [*επιεικεις, πραοτης*]. Formerly we too were not thoughtful, faithless, as wandering stars, serving passions and various pleasures, we passed all of our days in bad quality life and in envious living, showing hatred and feeling hatred of one another.

### **(3) A CREDIBLE TRUISM TO BE RATIFIED 8-11**

Those who have trusted and are faithful to God – give a lead that they may devise give attention to and care about good works. These are enjoyed and serviceable to men. So the works in mind are tasks that will result in much human benefit. Paul then instructs what Christians are shift and transfer away from – to avoid by getting round people involved in : foolish enquiries – typical of the sceptical philosophers; genealogies – largely racially; rivalry in work; warfare belonging to the laws or conventions – these are not useful and are vain. The stress Paul is laying is not in the narrow church confine but in wider society.

Put aside a heretical man – who chooses to go his own way or follow his own teaching – after one or two attempts to advise him [*νουθεσις*] fail, seeing that he has diverted and is missing the mark, having passed judgement against himself.

### **(4) OUR PEOPLE MUST LEARN TO BE FOREMOST IN WORKS THAT ARE BENEFICIAL 12-14**

Paul here speaks of practical leadership matters. He will substitute Titus in Crete with either Artemas or Tychicus and asks Titus to plan or study for his imminent coming to Nicopolis – where Paul has decided to pass the winter.

Paul as *Dean Farrar* has suggested that after his first imprisonment Paul went to Spain and then returned to Crete and thence to Troas and Northern Greece, leaving Corinth eventually for Nicopolis. **Try to forward the preparations of Zenas the lawyer and Apollas that nothing is left to them.** This is an immediate practical request to manage from Titus' end the coming of a party of three. He then urges that Christians get involved in society – much like Zenas (a lawyer) and Apollas (an educator-cum-philosopher) who could supply their daily needs from vocations and public speaking tours. Christians need to be productive.

### **FINAL GREETING 15**

Those with me embrace you – embrace those who love us in the faith (possibly when he greeted others as Zenas)

Grace in accordance with its special definition through the justifying work of Christ (cf. v7) – His saving work – be with you all. Amen

FINIS

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L'shuvkha Marya (To the glory of the Lord)**