**Titus Commentary**

**Titus Chapter 1**

Tit 1:1

**“for *building up*.”** This phrase comes from the Greek preposition *kata*, which often refers to a standard or norm and can be translated as “according to.” However, when *kata* is being used to denote an intention or goal to be reached, it is better translated as “for,” “for the purpose of,” or “to.”[[1]](#footnote-25112) Here in Titus, the purpose of Paul’s ministry is said to be the building up of the believers in their trust and knowledge rather than the goal of bringing God’s chosen to salvation. The scope of Titus seems to more clearly be to strengthen the believers with a secondary purpose of bringing people to the point of salvation rather than the other way around.

**“that leads to godliness.”** The Greek is κατά εὐσέβεια, and it can either mean “in accord with godliness” (a descriptive phrase meaning the truth is godly), or the *kata* can refer to the result, and thus the phrase could be saying that godliness is a result of truth, or more clearly, that the truth produces godliness[[2]](#footnote-30089)or leads to godliness.[[3]](#footnote-30369)

This is an example where we lose something when we translate from the Greek to English. There is a double meaning in this verse, an amphibologia, because it is clear that truth is indeed godly, and that certainly is part of what Paul is communicating. However, the greater truth in this verse seems to be that the truth produces godliness in us. That truth and godly behavior are connected and the rejection of truth and evil are connected is a theme in the Epistles of Paul (1 Cor. 5:8; 13:6; Eph. 5:3-4; 5:8-10; 2 Thess. 2:13; versus Rom. 1:18, 2:8; Gal. 5:7; 2 Thess. 2:10, 12; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:18; 3:8).

[See Word Study: “Amphibologia.”]

Although many versions simply have the phrase, “the truth that is according to godliness,” that is not at all clear in English. The ordinary meaning of the English refers to the godly nature of truth, and in that case, it seems it would be better to do what *The Source New Testament* does and simply use the phrase, “godly truth.”

Tit 1:2

**“life in the age *to come*.”** This is the everlasting life that begins with the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom.

[See Appendix 1: “Life in the Age to Come.”]

**“before the ages began.”** The Greek is literally, “before the times of the ages” (cf. YLT; 2 Tim. 1:9). This phrase has been the subject of much discussion. The primary question is whether the Greek refers to time before mankind, i.e., in the eternal purpose of God,[[4]](#footnote-30491) or to ages during the time of humanity, from Adam forward.[[5]](#footnote-15235) It makes some sense that this is referring to the time since Adam. The verse says that we are “in hope” of everlasting life in the Age to come. Why would we be? Because God, who never lies, promised it. But to say God promised it within himself, in His own purpose, seems to skirt the meaning of “promise.” It seems clear that the reason we can believe the promise for us is that God actually made the promise to people before us. The promise of the Messiah who would get rid of evil was first made after Adam sinned (Gen. 3:15), then further enlarged and clarified throughout the Old Testament. The alternate understanding would be that this does refer to a promise that God made within Himself, and if that is the case, in essence, the phrase means, “before the Ages.”

Tit 1:3

**“by the command of.”** The Greek is a technical phrase that means “by the command of; by order of.” See commentary on 1 Timothy 1:1.

**“that I was entrusted with.”** Paul was given special revelation about the times we are living in and the Administration of Grace that had not been revealed before (Eph. 3:2-5; Gal. 1:11-12). At different times in history, God revealed truth that had not been known before. People who received revelation that was unknown before that time included Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, and Paul, and many prophets got bits and pieces of information that were unknown before that time. For example, Micah was given the revelation that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah.

Tit 1:4

**“with respect to *our* common faith.”***Kata* is here translated “with respect to,” see BDAG def. 6: “denoting relationship to something, *with respect to, in relation to*.” Titus is Paul’s true child *in relation to* the faith, which is their common faith. We have added “our” in italics to best capture the meaning of the Greek phrase. Paul is not speaking of “a” common faith, or saying the Christian Faith is “common,” rather he is saying it is common between him and Titus, it is “our” common faith (cf. NIV, NRSV, HCSB, NAB, NJB).

Tit 1:5

**“I left you in Crete.”** The biblical evidence is that Paul visited Crete after his imprisonment in Rome, so this visit occurred after Acts 28 but before his second imprisonment that is mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:16. Paul was executed while under arrest in Rome while Nero was the emperor.

Tit 1:6

**“blameless.”** The Greek word is *anegklētos* (#410 ἀνέγκλητος), and it means without having a legal charge against you. It is very important that a minister live according to the laws of the land. A minister is not to risk getting caught breaking the law and thus bringing a charge against himself and also besmirching Christianity. This word occurs here and in Titus 1:7 and 1 Timothy 3:10.

**“the husband of one wife.”** This command directs a leader to be “a one-woman man.” He is to have only one wife, not multiple wives (or women), while female leaders are not to have more than one man in their life. This command does not forbid divorcees from being in leadership (see commentary on 1 Tim. 3:2).

**“having children who believe.”** This would normally apply to children who live in the house, not to older children who are married and on their own. Boys would usually marry or join the army by age 16, while girls would ordinarily marry somewhat younger. It was an important part of a parent’s job to raise their children to be believers and valuable family members, and a parent who had children in the house that were out of control generally meant that he or she was not qualified to be a leader in the church.

**“reckless actions.”** This word is translated in many different ways. It appears as “riot” (KJV), “wildness” (HCSB), “disorderly conduct” (NJB), “dissipation” (NASB), “debauchery” (ESV), etc., (see its use and context in Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:4). The Greek is *asōtia* (#810 ἀσωτία), referring to the sort of “behavior which shows lack of concern or thought for the consequences of an action—‘senseless deeds, reckless deeds, recklessness’” (Louw-Nida). The translation “reckless actions” well denotes such an attitude of action without concern about the consequences.

Tit 1:7

See commentary on 1 Timothy 3:3.

**“not arrogant.”** The Greek is *me authadēs* (*me* means “not,” and *authadēs* is #829 αὐθάδης), from *autos,* “self” and *hēdomai,* “to satisfy or please.” It is translated “self-pleasing” in Young’s Literal Translation and “arrogant” in many other versions. It is to be self-pleasing, assuming, or arrogant. The minister is not to be arrogant and overbearing, or pleased with his own way, but is coachable and willing to defer to the judgment of others. He is not determined to get his own way. Towner writes that the word *authadēs* means, “At the root is a fundamental selfishness that compels one to ride roughshod over others in the effort to satisfy oneself.”[[6]](#footnote-23092)

**“not quick-tempered.”** The Greek is *me orgilos*, “not prone to quick anger.” There are many pressures in Christian leadership and the leader must be one who does not have quick, violent outbursts.

**“not an excessive drinker.”** Ephesians 5:18 tells believers not to get drunk, but generally, leaders are held to a higher standard than regular believers. People do not have to be drunk to have changes in their behavior. Leaders must be able to set an example for others and be ready to step into service for God at a moment’s notice.

**“not eager for dishonorable gain.”** The Greek is *me aischrokerdēs* (*me* is “not,” and #146 αἰσχροκερδής) and means, “not eager for dishonorable gain.” This refers to all kinds of gain, not just money. Of course, it does include money, and historically there have been many ministers who have laid guilt trips on people, or bullied them, or threatened them, to get money. However, the phrase also refers to other kinds of gain that can be acquired in a dishonorable manner, such as gaining popularity by adulterating the Gospel to attract more people to the congregation. Greed for money, power, recognition, etc., can cloud the mind and ruin the ministries of Christian leaders.

Tit 1:8

**“hospitable.”** See commentary on Romans 12:13.

**“loving what is good”** is *philagathos,* liking (or loving) that which is good.[[7]](#footnote-19833) This word occurs only here. The Christian leader likes good, and good things, and his entire life reflects that fact. This is not just “liking good people,” or “being a friend.” It is liking, or “loving” good, i.e., good versus evil. Because he likes what is good, there are no evil or immoral activities in his personal life or “recreational life.” The minister of God does not like or participate in sinful activities. They are just not something he likes. *Philagathos* also implies that a leader would pursue that which is good. “‘Love for what is good’ describes the leader generally as one inclined to pursue things and people that are virtuous, inherently good.”[[8]](#footnote-18097)

**“sensible.”** The Greek word is *sōphrōn* (#4998 σώφρων). It means sensible, self-controlled. It occurs in Titus 1:8; 2:2, 5; 1 Tim. 3:2 (see commentary on 1 Tim. 3:2).

**“righteous.”** The Greek is *dikaios* (#1342 δίκαιος), which means righteous, upright, honest, just, law-abiding. The leader must be honest, just, and law-abiding in his life. He is often called on to judge things in other people’s lives, and living an upright life gives him the clear vision to make judgments as Christ would make them. (See commentary on Rom. 3:22).

**“pure.”** The Greek is *hosios* (#3741 ὅσιος), devout, pure, dedicated, holy. When used of people, it is used of those who observe their duty to God and fulfill their obligations to Him. Richard Trench writes, “The *hosios* is one who reverences these everlasting ordinances and admits his obligation to them.”[[9]](#footnote-10987) *Hosios* is used of those who live right before God. *Hosios* has a range of meanings. It can refer to people who are devout (Titus 1:8), or to things that are “pure” (“pure hands” 1 Tim. 2:8), or “sacred” (Acts 13:34, “sacred promises”). Trench points out that in classical Greek, *hosios* was used more often of things than of people. *Hosios* also sometimes refers to the outward standard of that which constitutes holiness, and in those cases, “holiness” may be the best translation even though an English reader cannot tell it from *hagios* [#40 ἅγιος, “holy”].[[10]](#footnote-16423) *Hosios* is also used to refer to the inner nature of God and Christ, which is pure and devout. God always manifests outwardly His inner holiness.

After saying that in biblical Greek the meaning of *hosios* remained faithful to its classical roots, but was intensified, Trench writes: “The Septuagint draws a striking distinction between *hosios* [#3741] and *hagios* [#40, “holy”]. Although *hosios* is used 30 times to translate [the Hebrew word] *hasid*, and *hagios* is used nearly 100 times to translate [the Hebrew word] *qados*, *hosios* is never used for the latter or *hagios* for the former.” This shows us that in the mind of the ancient Jews, there was a clear distinction between the character quality of “holy” (*hagios*) and the outward actions that made one *hosios*, “devout, pure, dedicated.”

Although *hosios* gets translated as “holy” in most English Bibles, that often causes a loss of meaning in the text because of the distinction in meaning between *hagios* (#40 ἅγιος), which we usually translate as “holy,” and *hosios*, “devout.” While it is true that “holy” (#40 *hagios*) can refer to a behavior, it more properly refers to a quality. Holiness is a quality of God. God is holy (Isa. 6:3) and one of His titles is “the Holy One” (Job 6:10; Prov. 9:10). When people are set apart in God’s sight, and especially so as Christians, who are born of God (1 Pet. 1:23) and are partakers of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), they are “holy” too. Believers share the state and quality of God’s very character: holiness. As well as being “holy” (#40 *hagios*), we are also to be “devout” (#3741 *hosios*), and actively and outwardly show our devotion and dedication to God. Nevertheless, there are times when the best English translation of *hosios* is “holy” because we lack a good English equivalent, and sometimes words like “pure” or “devout” do not carry the meaning of the Greek as well as “holy.”

Being *hosios* is necessary for a Christian leader. The leader must be willing to get the work of the Lord done. But leaders will not be able to do that without the active involvement of the Lord in their life, and unholiness and ungodliness limit how the Lord will work with a minister. To be truly successful, the minister of God must have God’s daily support, which is His grace. Salvation-grace is unconditional in nature: God promises it to anyone who obeys Romans 10:9 and takes Jesus Christ as Lord. However, the grace a minister needs to truly be successful is conditional, not unconditional. “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5). Being “devout,” “dedicated,” and “pure” spring from inner humility and shows in the outward life of the minister.

**“self-controlled.”** The Greek is *egkratēs* (#1468 ἐγκρατής) from the root word *kratos*, “power.” It is used of the person who has power over himself. In the Greek literature, it was often used of the person who was self-controlled regarding sex, although it includes self-control in general. The minister is one who controls his life and environment. He is a self-starter and disciplined in his personal life. This is the noun form of the adjective, which is the fruit of the spirit “self-control” (Gal. 5:23).

Tit 1:9

**“faithful word.”** The Devil uses all the resources at his command to get people to abandon the message of the gospel and to believe that the Word of God is not faithful and true. He uses false doctrines to replace the truth, he tries to get people to water down the truth, and he gets people to be so focused on the practical side of life that they forget the doctrinal side or think it is not relevant or important. The minister of God recognizes the importance of doctrine and the message God has communicated in the Scripture, and holds it firmly. It is the responsibility of a leader to know and contend for the faith. This is not always popular, but it is a sacred trust that leaders have been given.

**“as he has been taught.”** The Greek is more literally, “according to the teaching,” which refers to the teaching that Titus had been taught. Titus had been taught by at least Paul the apostle, but the ones Titus was teaching were to keep that teaching also.

**“doctrine.”** The Greek word is *didaskalia* (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it were a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse, we felt “doctrine” was better than “teaching,” because we encourage and refute by the substance of what is taught, “doctrine,” not by the way of teaching. Furthermore, it refers back to the Word, mentioned earlier in the verse.

[For more on *didaskalia* see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13.]

**“refute those who oppose it.”** The minister is not only charged with keeping the deep truths of the faith, he or she is charged with “refuting” those who oppose it. The word “refute” is *elegcho,* and it has a broad meaning that includes “refute, reprove, admonish, call to account, expose, correct, demand an explanation.” We chose “refute” for the REV (cf. NIV, NASB, NRSV) because although a minister may not be able to “convince” or “convict” someone with the truth, he can always “refute” the error, which may help someone else listening to believe. “Refuting” someone is not very popular or comfortable in our society, which has rejected the notions of truth and error in favor of “sincerity,” and relationship with others, yet refuting error is very clearly a responsibility of those who say they represent God as His overseers. Many people resist the idea of ministers performing this part of their God-given duty. The minister must graciously bear up under such pressure and press on with the work given him by the Lord to strive to preserve and promote sound doctrine in the Church.

Tit 1:10

**“there are many who are rebellious.”** The context shows that these rebellious people are believers.

**“especially those from among the Circumcised.”** The unbelieving Jews were especially troublesome to Paul, Titus, and others trying to spread the Good News. At this time in history the Old Testament was hundreds of years old, and some parts of it were well over a thousand years old. The Old Testament told much about the Messiah and supposedly could be trusted. But the Old Testament was not clear that the Messiah was going to come twice, the first time as the suffering servant and the second time as the conquering Messiah. The Jews just expected a conquering Messiah, and since Jesus did not fulfill those prophecies and also taught and did things that the Jews considered blasphemous—for example, he forgave sins and did not wash his hands before eating—the Jews taught that Jesus was a false Messiah (and they still do that today). And since the Messiah was going to be Jewish, the Jews who spoke against Christ had some credibility with the Gentiles.

Tit 1:11

**“overthrowing.”** The Greek word is *anatrepō* (#396 ἀνατρέπω), and it means “to cause something to be overturned” and thus to “jeopardize someone’s inner well-being.”[[11]](#footnote-15243) to overthrow, overturn, subvert, ruin, destroy.

God wants everyone to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). In contrast, the Devil is a liar and the very father of lies (John 8:44). He constantly introduces ideas and opinions into the world that confuse people and cause them to abandon the truth. A major way he does this is by false teachers, so God sternly warns believers to watch out for false ideas and doctrines (Matt. 7:15-20; Titus 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Also, God warns teachers that they will be judged more strictly on Judgment Day (James 3:1). Believers will only be able to separate truth from error if they know the truth from the Word of God, which makes it very important that they read and learn the Bible.

**“by teaching.”** The participle can be causative, and this is an example of that. Here, the present active participle, *didaskō* (#1321 διδάσκω), means, “by teaching.” Households of believers were being overthrown, led into false beliefs and practices, by false teaching.

Tit 1:14

**“instead of paying attention.”** The Greek is more literally “not paying attention to.”

**“Jewish myths.”** Robert Yarbrough writes: “By ‘Jewish myths’ he would be referring to stories circulated by Jewish teachers, or in Jewish circles that lacked credible basis in fact, and that were distracting Christian congregants from doctrines they needed to affirm and live out.”[[12]](#footnote-25614) R. C. H. Lenski writes about the Jews, “they dealt with the genealogies of the books of Moses, inserted fictitious names into these genealogies, and spun fabulous stories around these names; at the same time they put fancies into the law of Moses so that it no longer struck the conscience of sinners….”[[13]](#footnote-11589) Philip Towner writes: “As ‘myths,’ these teachings were to be avoided not simply because they were untrue but because they were actually harmful, for such fabricated traditions were often employed to justify immoral practices by linking them to the gods.”[[14]](#footnote-25735)

**“or.”** On some occasions, the Greek *kai*, “and” can be disjunctive, “or.” There seem to be two things Paul is warning about: Jewish myths, and the commandments of people who turn from the truth. Paul is describing two forms of teaching that are contrary to sound doctrine in the faith. Many translations read “Jewish myths and the commandments of people.” However, this can be taken one of two ways: one way is that the Jewish myths and commandments of people are references to the same false teaching dealing with Jewish stories and traditions. The other way to understand the verse is that the Jewish myths and the commandments of people are distinct from each other and the commandments of people have a broader point of reference than only those based on Jewish traditions. The traditions of the Pharisees led to many commandments of people (cf. Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13). By the time Titus was written, however, there were many Gentiles in the Church, and they came with their own traditions and commands that were contrary to the truth. So it seems that here Paul would be using the widest frame of reference and not just refer to what the Jews commanded.

Tit 1:15

**“To the pure all things are pure.”** The immediate context of this is the Jewish practices, which spent a lot of time on what to eat and how to stay “pure” (or, “clean”) in the eyes of God. The Jews had added all kinds of regulations about eating and washing that were not part of the Mosaic Law. Christ taught that the things that a person eats do not make him unclean (cf. Matt. 15:11), and that is the general idea here in Titus 1:15.

**“to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure.”** Nothing is pure because what they think and say is impure. Christ taught, “*it is* not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth—this defiles a person” (Matt. 15:11). Then he added, “But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile the person” (Matt. 15:18).

**“but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.”** It would basically take an act of God to change a person whose conscience was defiled. Lenski writes, “the conscience, the inner moral judge of what is right and wrong” that always “holds us responsible.”[[15]](#footnote-15199)

Tit 1:16

**“but by their works they deny him.”** Evil people are often good liars, and most are good at “talking a good talk,” but the works of evil people will reveal who they really are. Jesus knew this and taught that we can recognize evil people by the works they do; the fruit they produce (Matt. 7:15-20).

**“detestable.”** The Greek adjective translated “detestable” is *bdeluktos* (#947 βδελυκτός), and it means “detestable, abominable,” and it only occurs here in the New Testament, although the cognate noun occurs twice (Rom. 2:22; Rev. 21:8). The noun also occurs many times in the Septuagint, especially in contexts involving idolatry. To many Christians it is not comfortable to speak of a person being “detestable” to God; we typically like to think that God loves everyone. But to understand that God “loves” everyone, we have to understand what God’s “love” is and how it works. God does not “like” evil people; He says that many times in the Bible. God calls out evil people dozens of times in the Old Testament. However, He always “loves” them in the sense that His arms are always wide open to those who repent and return to Him. In fact, He moves first to bring evil people back to Him (2 Chron. 36:15-16; Jer. 7:3-16). But if a person remains evil and unrepentant, God will come against that person in this life, and throw them in the Lake of Fire on the Day of Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

**“disobedient.”** The word “disobedient” clarifies and solidifies the ungodliness of these rebellious (Titus 1:10) people. People can deny God by their works in ways that are hard to exactly pin down; that is, they do things that seem ungodly to people who understand the Word of God but are not breaking a specific command. An example today might be getting high on marijuana day after day and not thinking about ways to serve God or others. But for people to specifically be “disobedient” indicates that they broke specific commands of God, which is almost always the case with ungodly people. They break lots of godly principles, but they also break specific commands of God, which makes them “detestable” to God.

**“unfit.”** The Greek word can have many meanings and nuances, which explains the large number of different readings in the English versions (e.g., “reprobate” (ASV, KJV); “disqualified” (CEB); “unfit” (CJB, CSB, ESV); “unqualified” (NAB); “worthless” (NASB); “untrustworthy” (NJB); “disapproved” (YLT)). In this context, “unfit” seems to catch the sense of what Paul is saying.[[16]](#footnote-28762)

**Titus Chapter 2**

Tit 2:1

**“speak.”** The verb is imperative, “you must speak.”

**“consistent with.”** The Greek could also be translated as “fitting” or “proper,” that is, fitting and proper to God, who sets the rules and standards. What is “fitting” in the world may not be fitting to God. The text is saying that what Titus spoke and taught was to be proper in that it agreed with “sound doctrine,” that is, the doctrine given by God to His people. The Roman world was a gigantic mixture of beliefs, because people from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East were all represented. So what was “right” to some people was not right to others. However, there is only one God, so in the final analysis, there is only one “right doctrine,” only one right way to think about the basics upon which life is built. There are many things in life that are not regulated by that doctrine, but that does not mean there is not just one right doctrine. For example, Jesus Christ is the only Savior; the Father of Jesus Christ is the only God; the world to come will be the way God describes it, not any other way, and so forth.

**“doctrine.”** The Greek word is *didaskalia* (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it were a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. The word “doctrine” fits better than “teaching” in this context. For more on *didaskalia* see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13).

Tit 2:2

**“older men.”** The Greek word translated older men is *presbutēs* **(**#4246 πρεσβύτης), and although it can refer to an older man, a man with the position of elder in the Church, or an ambassador, in this context it refers to old men in the church, men with experience and maturity who should be an example to the younger men. It is worth noting that much in this list agrees with the general sentiment in Roman society of how elder men were to behave.

**“dignified.”** From the Greek word *semnos* (#4586 σεμνός). Also used in 1 Timothy 3:8, 11. (See commentary on Phil. 4:8, “honorable.”)

**“in endurance.”** This list is an asyndeton, the last term does not have an “and” before it.[[17]](#footnote-23944) That means the list is not a complete list, but there are other things that could be on the list, and furthermore, it is the conclusion of the list that is what is really important (see commentary on Gal. 5:22, “fruit of the spirit”).

[See Word Study: “Syndeton.”]

Tit 2:3

**“older women.”** It is significant that the Bible specifically mentions older women here, because in Roman society older women were often mocked and thought of as gossips, drunks, and desirous of sex with younger men, which was likely true of many Roman women, especially in the upper class. After all, after their childbearing years were over, what could they do in society? Often their husbands were having sex with household slaves—mostly younger women of course—and off at parties where there was alcohol and sex. It was common among the upper class in Rome that the husbands and wives had separate bedrooms, so dallying with the slaves was usually very convenient. Also, the women of the household were supposed to be busy with weaving and sewing, but those things became increasingly difficult with age, and especially in the dim light in most Roman households.

Tit 2:4

**“instruct.”** The Greek word is related to “wisdom,” and it means to make them wise.

**“lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children.”** It was simply expected in the ancient culture that women would marry and have children. A primary expectation of women in the Greco-Roman world was that they would love their husbands and children, and this expectation shows up as a praise eulogy on many Roman tombstones, which read like, “So and so loved her husband and her children.”

Tit 2:5

**“sensible.”** In this context, “sensible” included conforming to the social norms so as not to bring scorn on Christianity. “Sensible” things included maintaining the home, obeying one’s husband, being modest, and being sexually faithful to one’s husband (even though he was not faithful to you).

**“caring for their household.”** The Greek word is *oikouros* (#3626 οἰκουρός, pronounced oi-koo-'ros). *Oikouros* occurs only here in the NT, and it is made from *oikos* (house) and *ergon* (work), so in its roots, it refers to one who works at, or for, the home. It refers to someone who works at home and cares for the home and family that lives in it. One who takes care of domestic affairs. It is similar in sense to 1 Timothy 5:14, which says that women are to “rule the household.” The idea is that it takes a lot of work to run a godly household, and God charges the women with that responsibility. It is important to note that the impact of the verse is not “being” at home, but “working.” Work is challenging, and it takes dedication and focus to run a godly home. The challenge, in biblical times and now, is to do the work it takes to make the home a blessing, joy, and success, and not just a place to sleep at night.

While many women work outside the home today and family issues and responsibilities are discussed and divided between the husband and the wife, nevertheless, God created us male and female and there are still overarching responsibilities that follow accordingly. Men are still charged with protecting the home and family, and the woman still is charged with the internal running of the home. However, the culture and state of life in biblical times almost always demanded that a woman stay home. Besides that, in the Roman culture, the ideal wife stayed at home and was quiet, docile, and more or less socially secluded. If a woman did go to the Colosseum, for example, social norms did not allow her to sit in the lower sections with her husband but was escorted by servant guardians to the very upper decks. In fact, respectable women did not usually appear in public and never without an escort. There was no effective birth control, so families were usually large and most women found that for much of their lives they were either pregnant or had little children. A good example is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters (Matt. 13:55-56). That means Mary had at least seven children (if “sisters” meant more than two, then Mary had more than seven).

So if Mary married Joseph when she was 13 (a usual age for girls to be married) and if she gave birth an average of every 18 months (not unusual) then she was pregnant for about 10 years and then nursing her youngest for a couple of years after that, for a total of 12 years, making her 25 when she stopped nursing babies. Then, if her youngest was a girl and married at age 13, we add another 13 years for her to “launch” her last child out of the home, making Mary 38 when her youngest was married and Mary was free of the responsibility of children. By now, in biblical parlance, Mary is not a “young woman” anymore. Between death in childbirth, childhood diseases, and no way to fight disease or infection, the average lifespan for a girl in Christ’s time was in the low 30s (some sources say 32). In comparison, a girl’s life expectancy today in the USA is in the 80s. Beyond that, however, families were very close-knit and as a grandmother, Mary would now have plenty of grandchildren to help with.

Besides mothering responsibilities, work at home was difficult. Just cooking was a herculean job. Water usually had to be drawn from a well or obtained from a local cistern and carried to the house. Firewood had to be gathered and chopped and the fire watched, if the family even had a stove, which would have been a mud-brick oven. Often in the country. the family would just have a fire to cook over. Cooking itself was a chore, and food storage was difficult. All food had to be carefully guarded against insects and vermin (and sometimes thieves). Cooking was just the tip of the iceberg. The family clothing was made by hand. That meant spinning the wool or linen into yarn and then weaving that into cloth. It was a huge job to clothe a family and clothing was very valuable, which is why, bloody as they were, the soldiers wanted Jesus’ clothing and divided it up right at the foot of the cross. Of course, there is much more to running a successful home in the biblical world than just food and clothing, but these are some of the considerations.

If we consider all the things it took to run a successful and profitable household, the women had to be at home working, and the men had to be working outside the home at jobs such as tilling the soil, fishing, or at work at some craft like building and carpentry (like Joseph and Jesus). A successful family was a large family with lots of teamwork, and so God charged the women to be working at their homes.

**“defamed.”** The Greek verb *blasphēmeō* (#987 βλασφημέω) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation.

[For more on *blasphēmeō*, see commentary on Matt. 9:3.]

Tit 2:6

**“sensible.”** In this context, the Roman man must be “sensible” to societal norms, but more so to God’s norms when the two sets of norms clashed. For example, it was socially “normal” for a man to have sex with his slaves as well as his wife, but God’s norms would not allow that.

Tit 2:7

**“in all things.”** The phrase “in all things” most likely belongs in verse 6 prescribing the young men, “to be sensible in all things,” rather than in verse 7 with Titus “setting an example in all things.” This is the punctuation chosen by the Nestle-Aland Greek text, HCSB, and NJB, although, grammatically the phrase could go with either. The ambiguity of the Greek shows that both are true, nevertheless, there are reasons for preferring the translation in the REV. As Hendriksen and Kistemaker point out, “the fact that this admonition is very brief makes it all the more probable that the phrase “in every respect” belongs here and must not be construed with verse 7.”[[18]](#footnote-18475)

**“teaching.”** The Greek word is *didaskalia* (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used for the act of teaching or instruction (as if it were a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse, we felt bringing *didaskalia* into English as “teaching” was better than “doctrine.”

Tit 2:8

**“*and* sound speech that cannot be condemned.”** An alternate translation of the text is “sound speech that is above reproach,” and this is picked up by some English versions.

**“so that those who oppose you.”** Although the Greek text is singular, more literally, “he who opposes you,” is not meant to refer only to males, nor is it trying to say that only one person, or one at a time, will oppose you. The sentence is referring to all those individual people who will oppose you, so reading “those who oppose you” catches the sense well (cf. NIV, NLT).

**“will be put to shame.”** In the honor-shame society of the ancient world (both Roman and Middle Eastern), that enemies of the Gospel would be put to shame was important and very impactful. It would increase the honor of the Christian Faith.

**“bad.”** The Greek word *phaulos* (#5337 φαῦλος), translated as “bad,” has a range of meanings and applications that include things that are just “worthless” to things that are decidedly evil and are intended to cause harm. In this case, the idea is to include the whole semantic range. The wise Christian lives in such a way that even their enemies (such as we have here in Titus; “those who oppose you”) have nothing “bad” to say. Of course, anyone can lie or make something up, but that is not what is being discussed here. This verse is not saying to live such that no one can lie about you, that would be impossible. It is saying to speak in such a way that no genuinely bad thing can be said about you.

Tit 2:9

**“slaves.”** In general, slaves had a bad reputation in the Roman world and were generally thought of as being lazy, argumentative, disobedient, thieves, and liars. So Christian slaves had a wonderful opportunity to show that the Christian Faith had a powerful and life-changing effect on people, and set believers apart from the general population.

**“masters.”** The Greek is *despotēs* (#1203 δεσπότης), and means master or lord, and it refers to someone who has legal control and authority over others, such as subjects or slaves (cf. 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:9). See commentary on Luke 2:29.

Tit 2:10

**“showing complete faithfulness *in that which is* good.”** It often occurred that Romans who owned slaves demanded a slave to do something that was very ungodly. There is no command, or expectation, that a slave would be commanded by God to obey that command.

**“faithfulness.”** In the Greco-Roman world, slaves were well-known for being thieves or taking advantage of masters whenever they felt they could get away with it, so Paul exhorting slaves to show completely good faithfulness makes perfect sense. For the translation “faithfulness,” see commentary on 1 Timothy 4:12.

**“the doctrine.”** The Greek word is *didaskalia* (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it were a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse, “doctrine” fits better than “teaching.”

[For more on *didaskalia* see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13.]

Tit 2:11

**“bringing salvation for all people.”** God’s grace, in sending Jesus Christ to die for the sins of humankind, made salvation available to all people. The Bible gives clear instructions on how to be saved in Romans 10:9: confess Christ as Lord and believe God raised him from the dead. Upon doing that, the person gets “born again,” sealed with the gift of holy spirit, and receives the promise of everlasting life (Eph. 1:13-14).

Tit 2:12

**“instructing us.”** The Greek word generally refers to the instruction and training of a child.

Tit 2:13

**“while we wait for the blessed hope…”** Scholars debate the translation of this verse, and the two sides of that debate can be seen in the various translations. Some scholars believe that “glory” is used in an adjectival sense, and that the verse should be translated as in the NIV84: “While we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” Versions that follow suit are the KJV and the Amplified Version. Many other versions, such as the RV, ASV, NASB, Moffatt, RSV, NRSV, Douay, NAB, NEB, etc., translate the verse very differently. The NASB is a typical example. It reads, “…looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” The difference between the translations is immediately apparent. In the NIV84, we await the “glorious appearing” of God, while in the NASB we await the “appearing of the glory” of God our Savior (this is a use of “Savior” where the word is applied in the context to God, not Christ. See commentary on Luke 1:47), i.e., we are looking for the “glory” of God, which is stated clearly as being “Jesus Christ.”

There are a few reasons why the best way to translate this phrase is something like, “we wait for the...appearing of our great God and Savior’s glory—Jesus Christ,” where “Jesus Christ” is the “glory of God,” not God himself. First, God and Jesus Christ are commonly distinguished in Titus. For example, in Titus 1:1 we read, “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ,” and in Titus 1:4, “Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.” To Paul, God is clearly someone different from Christ Jesus. Secondly, God is called “Savior” just three verses earlier in Titus 2:10 (also in Tit. 1:3; 3:4), so it would not be out of the ordinary for both “God” and “Savior” to refer to the Father in Titus 2:13. Lastly and most compellingly, Paul speaks of the “grace of God” as a person (referring to Jesus) in Titus 2:11-12. He says, “the grace of God appeared...instructing us to deny ungodliness,” thus, Paul is speaking of the “grace of God” as a person, Jesus Christ. Paul speaks very similarly in Titus 3:4-5 saying, “when the kindness and benevolence of God our Savior appeared, he saved us...” So, again, Jesus is the “kindness of God” which appeared. Jesus is not God, but the kindness of God. Paul consistently uses the “appearing” of an “attribute of God” to refer to Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:11-12; 3:4-5). So when reading Titus 2:13 and Paul again uses the “appearing” of an “attribute (glory) of God,” this should be interpreted just as it is in the other locations, in reference to Jesus Christ. Namely, that Jesus is the glory of God, not God himself. Therefore, “our great God and Savior’s glory” which will appear at the second coming (Acts 1:11) is Jesus Christ.

God’s Word also teaches that when Christ comes, he will come with his Father’s glory: “For the Son of Man is about to come ... in the glory of his Father” (Matt. 16:27). Keeping in mind that what is revealed in other places in the Bible about a certain event often clarifies what is being portrayed in any given verse, it becomes apparent from other scriptures referring to Christ’s coming that the Bible is not trying to portray God and Christ as one God. In this case, the glory of God that we are waiting for is Jesus Christ.

Some Trinitarians say that the grammar of Titus 2:13 forces the interpretation that Jesus is God because of the Granville Sharp rule of Greek grammar. That is not the case, however. The Granville Sharp rule has been debated and successfully challenged. The highly regarded Trinitarian Henry Alford gives a number of reasons as to why the grammar of the Greek does not force the interpretation of the passage to make Christ God.[[19]](#footnote-25270)

The context of the verse helps us to understand its meaning. The verse is talking about saying “no” to ungodliness while we wait for the appearing of Jesus Christ, who is the glory of God. Its purpose is not to expound the doctrine of the Trinity in any way, nor is there any reason to assume that Paul would be making a Trinitarian reference here. It makes perfect sense for Scripture to call Christ “the glory of God” and for the Bible to exhort us to say “no” to ungodliness in light of the coming of the Lord which will be quickly followed by the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-33; Luke 21:36).

[For more on the Granville Sharp rule, see commentary on 2 Pet. 1:1. For more information about there not being a Trinity, see Appendix 6: “Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Not God the Son,” (there is a book list at the end for further reference), and Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?”]

Tit 2:14

**“up for us.”** From the Greek preposition *huper* (#5228 ὑπέρ). An alternate translation could read, “who gave himself in our place.” See commentary on Romans 5:6, “in place of the ungodly...in place of...in our place.”

**“to redeem us.”** The Greek could also be translated, “to ransom us.” Jesus Christ paid the ransom price by dying for us so believers could have everlasting life.

**“to cleanse for himself.”** Sin stains people (cf. Jer. 2:22), but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin. Here in Titus, we learn that Jesus’ sacrifice not only cleansed us from sin, but that Jesus did it so we could be “for himself,” that is the believer is to be completely a lover of God and Jesus. God and Jesus want to be the sole God and sole savior of believers. Just as in the Ten Commandments God did not want His people to have any other gods, today God and Jesus do not want believers to have other gods and other lords.

**“a special people.”** The Greek phrase, λαὸν περιούσιον, is a well-known phrase in the Septuagint (Exod. 19:5; 23:22; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18). Each time it occurs it refers to the way God has selected the nation of Israel to be His special people upon whom He demonstrates His love and goodness. Israel, as God’s special people, is not just the object of God’s love and attention, Israel was to be a holy people, so being holy and God’s special people go hand in hand. This, then, is connected with Titus 2:12 when Jesus gives himself up for us so that he could cleanse for himself a special people.

The Greek word περιούσιον is not found in secular Greek literature outside of the biblical references. It is “not found except in the LXX, prob. Signifying ‘that which is over and above,’ the special portion which a conqueror took for himself before the spoil was divided. …It implies the thought of Christ as the triumphant king.”[[20]](#footnote-28013) William Mounce translates the verse using “a special people: “who gave himself for us in order that he might redeem us from all lawlessness and cleanse for himself a special people, a zealot for good works.”[[21]](#footnote-25927) Mounce then says in his commentary, “‘special people’ is an expression used of the nation Israel in the OT…Because God chose Israel to be his special people, they must avoid idolatry (Deut. 12:29ff) and keep His laws (Exod. 19:5; 23:22 [LXX], Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18).”[[22]](#footnote-16822) The *TDNT* says, “The only NT instance [of περιούσιον] is in Titus 2:14. Christ’s work of redemption has created for God a people that is a costly possession or special treasure.”[[23]](#footnote-28014) The Holman Christian Standard Bible (2005) reads, “he gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness, and to cleanse for himself a special people, eager to do good works.”

**Titus Chapter 3**

Tit 3:1

**“rulers *and* to authorities.”** The designations “rulers” and “authorities” occur together nine times in the New Testament (Luke 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15; and Titus 3:1). Sometimes the rulers and authorities are demons (Eph. 6:12), sometimes they are human rulers (Luke 12:11; Titus 3:1), and sometimes the designations are more general and refer to all rulers and dominions, both spirit beings and human beings (Eph. 1:21). In this context, the “rulers *and* authorities” are human rulers and authorities.

[For more on the use of “rulers” and “authorities” in the New Testament, see commentary on Eph. 6:12.]

Tit 3:2

**“slander.”** The Greek verb *blasphēmeō* (#987 βλασφημέω) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation.

[For more on *blasphēmeō*, see commentary on Matt. 9:3.]

**“reasonable.”** See commentary on 1 Timothy 3:3.

**“meekness.”** See commentary on Galatians 5:23.

Tit 3:4

**“kindness.”** See commentary on Galatians 5:22, “kindness.”

**“benevolence.”** The Greek word is *philanthrōpia* (#5363 φιλανθρωπία), and it means affectionate concern for, and interest in humanity,[[24]](#footnote-16547) “benevolence,”[[25]](#footnote-19134) “a friendly disposition toward people.”[[26]](#footnote-22094) Although *philanthrōpia* refers to the concern and interest that God has for humankind, the idea of “humankind” is built into the meaning and does not have to be expressed separately in the translation. “Benevolence” refers to caring about the well-being of others and doing good for them. The context of Titus 3:4 shows the kindness and benevolence of God expressed in sending Jesus Christ to provide salvation for all who choose to be saved.

**“God our Savior.”** God is referred to as our Savior in Titus 3:4, while Jesus is referred to as our Savior in Titus 3:6. This is an example of the principle of author-agent in the ancient world and an example of ultimate source and immediate source. God is the author of salvation and is called our Savior many times in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 22:3; Ps. 106:21; Isa. 43:3, 11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16; Hos. 13:4 ). Jesus is the agent of our salvation, who accomplished our salvation in accordance with God’s will by his death on the cross. There are other titles that apply to both God and Christ as well as Savior, for example, “Lord” (see Word Study: “Lord”), and “King of kings” (see commentary on 1 Tim. 6:15).

Tit 3:5

**“righteous works.”** The Greek is emphatic, but becomes unclear when translated literally into English. The Greek phrase, *ergōn tōn en dikaiosunē* (ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ), literally translates as: “works, the [*ones*] in righteousness.” By making “righteousness” into a noun, it adds emphasis to it in the Greek sentence. It is emphatic, and could be more literally understood as, “not by works, the ones done in connection with righteousness,” perhaps better expanded for easier reading to: “not by works: those works that are done that are associated with righteousness.” In other words, no one is saved by works; those righteous acts that people do. Those will not save anyone. Given the fact that the emphatic nature of the sentence is usually lost in English and trying to produce the Greek structure only causes confusion, (what is a “work done in righteousness”?), it seemed much clearer to make “righteousness” adjectival and just go with “righteous works” (cf. NAB, NIV). It is amazing that the Word of God can so clearly in many places tell us that no one is saved by good works, and yet somehow when people do not do righteous works they feel their salvation is in jeopardy.

**“on the basis of his mercy.”** We cannot be saved on the basis of our works, but we can be saved on the basis of His mercy. *The Source New Testament* catches the sense of the passage, and reads, “due to His mercy.”

**“new beginning.”** The Greek word translated as “new beginning” is *palingenesia* (#3824 παλιγγενεσία). It is a compound noun made up of the words *palin* (#3825 πάλιν), meaning “again,” and *genesis* (#1078 γένεσις), meaning “origin,” or “beginning.” The Greeks sometimes used the word *genesis* when referring to birth because birth is the beginning or origin of our independent life on earth. However, *genesis* does not technically mean “birth,” and so we must be careful not to confuse *genesis* (#1078 γένεσις) with *gennēsis* (#1083 γέννησις), which properly means “birth” (the word *gennēsis* (#1083 γέννησις) does not appear anywhere in the best manuscripts of the New Testament.

[For more on *genesis* and *gennēsis*, see commentary on Matt. 1:18.]

In this context, *palingenesia* refers to the new beginning, or new origin, that Christians have when they are born again and receive holy spirit. It is one of the three words used for the individual New Birth of a Christian. The other two are *anagennaō* (#313 ἀναγεννάω), “born again,” (1 Pet. 1:23), and *apokueō* (#616 ἀποκυέω), “to give birth to” (James 1:18). These three words all refer to the New Birth that happens to the Christian when they make Christ the Lord in his life (Rom. 10:9), at which time the person is “born again.”

When a person gets “born again,” they are not the same person. They are truly “born again,” a brand new “baby,” if you will, because now the person is God’s child. The person has a “new origin” (Titus 3:5), and is a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). They have a new divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and that new nature is at war with their old flesh nature (Gal. 5:17). In spite of their sin, the person is “a holy one” (usually translated “saint;” cf. 1 Cor. 1:2), because they have holy spirit inside them (Eph. 1:13).

*Palingenesia* is also used of the new beginning, or new creation, of the earth in the Messianic Age (cf. commentary on Matt. 19:28).

**“renewal by the holy spirit.”** When a person takes Christ as lord they get “born again,” which is a new origin, and they are changed by virtue of having holy spirit born inside them. The Greek word translated “renewal” here in Titus 3:5 is *anakainōsis* (#342 ἀνακαίνωσις), and it means a renewal or a change for the better. Louw-Nida says that “renewal” here is “to cause something to become new and different, with the implication of becoming superior.” Friberg’s lexicon says it is “the action by which a person becomes spiritually new and different.” The *TDNT* says, “the reference in Titus 3:5 is to the first and unique renewing, the creation of a life that was not there before….”

Titus 3:5 says our new origin and renewal is “by the holy spirit.” It is “by the holy spirit” because when we are born again we receive God’s gift of holy spirit, which is God’s very nature and makes us “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). Children have the nature of the parent, so it is logical that when God, who is holy and is spirit, gives birth in us, God’s nature that is born in us is holy spirit. This explains why God’s born-again children are called “holy ones” (usually translated as “saints;” cf. Rom. 1:7).

When we fit Titus 3:5 into the big picture of what happens when people take Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9), we see that they get “born again” and have a brand new origin that comes from God. We had been “dead due to our transgressions and sins,” but upon getting born again we have a new origin and are “alive together with the Christ” (Eph. 2:5). Titus 3:5 says that God saved us, not because we did good works, but because of His mercy; and He saved us through the cleansing bath of a new origin and being made new and superior by the holy spirit.

[For more information on the New Birth, see commentary on 1 Pet. 1:23. For more on the holy spirit, see Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?” For more on our Christian salvation, see Appendix 10: “God’s Promise of Salvation.”]

**“by.”** There is no word “by” in the Greek text. The words “holy spirit” are in the genitive case: “renewal of holy spirit.” This is most likely a genitive of production.[[27]](#footnote-27493) That being the case, an expanded translation would be, “He saved us through the washing of a new beginning and a renewal *produced by* holy spirit.” In the salvation process, the “new origin” and the “renewal” are both produced by holy spirit.

**“holy spirit.”** This refers to the holy spirit that is the gift of God.

[For more information on the uses of “holy spirit,” see Word Study: “Pneuma.” For more information on the holy spirit, see Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?”]

Tit 3:6

**“poured out on us richly.”** The terminology that God “poured out” the holy spirit refers back to Joel 2:28 and Joel’s prophecy that a time was coming when the holy spirit would be “poured out” upon people, meaning it would be given liberally. In the Old Testament and Gospels, God only put the gift of holy spirit upon a few people, but the prophets foretold a time when the gift of holy spirit would be liberally given, and that time started on Pentecost in Acts 2. Today, every Christian gets the holy spirit when they are born again. The word “richly” indicates that the spirit would come with many attributes and enablements. Christ referred to it as a “helper” and “spirit of truth” (John 15:26-27; 16:7-15) and said it would glorify and testify about Christ, guide believers into truth, and show us things to come, and we know it does even more than that.

[For more on the gift of holy spirit, see Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?”]

**“through Jesus Christ.”** As the Bible reveals, the gift of holy spirit is given by God to Jesus Christ, to be administered or given to others (Luke 24:49; John 15:26; Acts 2:33; Titus 3:6. See commentary on Acts 2:33). John the Baptist also said it would be Jesus that would baptize in holy spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). It was promised in the Old Testament and is referred to as “the promised holy spirit” (see commentary on Eph. 1:13). Titus 3:4-6 shows that God gave the gift of holy spirit to Jesus Christ, who then poured it out upon believers.

Tit 3:7

**“declared righteous.”** The Greek is *dikaioō* (#1344 δικαιόω), and it means to “declare someone to be righteous.” It is not that we are “made righteous,” as if simply having faith in Christ made us good people. Rather, because of the work of Christ and our trust in him, we have been “declared righteous” in the sight of God: our sins have been paid for.

[For more on being declared righteous, see commentary on Rom. 3:22.]

**“we became heirs with the hope of life in the age to come.”** The Greek construction with the preposition *kata* shows that “the hope of life in the Age to come” is what we have because we are heirs. Although many English versions have something like, “heirs according to the hope…,” that translation is not clear. The Greek preposition *kata* can point to what we have as an heir. In that sense this construction is similar to that in Galatians 3:29 (see commentary on Gal. 3:29). Quite a few modern versions get the sense of this verse correct, although they word it somewhat differently, e.g., “heirs, with the certain hope of eternal life” (CJB); “heirs with the hope of eternal life” (HCSB); “heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life” (NET); “heirs having the hope of eternal life” (NIV); “heirs with the expectation of eternal life” (*The Source New Testament*). What Paul is doing by saying that we have “hope of life in the age to come” is pointing out that we do not currently possess the inheritance. The believer looks forward to the eschatological fulfillment of the promise of life in the age to come, at which time their salvation will be complete.

**“hope.”** This is the use of “hope” as something in the future that will absolutely happen. It is a “confident expectation.” God made promises about our salvation and everlasting life in Paradise, and He will bring those promises to pass.

**“life in the age *to come*.”** This is the everlasting life that begins with the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom.

[See Appendix 1: “Life in the Age to Come.”]

Tit 3:8

**“This statement is trustworthy.”** See commentary on 1 Timothy 1:15.

**“believed God.”** This is different than simply “believing in God.” A person can “believe in God” without believing or trusting what God says. Abraham “believed God” (Rom. 4:3) and obeyed him, and that seems to be the emphasis here as well.

**“on applying themselves.”** Literally, “to take the lead in.”[[28]](#footnote-19953) Christians are not to be slackers when it comes to good works. We are to excel in them. We do not feel “devote” is the best translation, because it seems too exclusive.

Tit 3:9

**“foolish.”** See Word Study: “Fool.”

**“speculations.”** There is a biblical custom behind this Greek word, *zētēsis* (#2214 ζήτησις), which can mean “speculations” or “questions.” Greek philosophy was prominent during biblical times, as can be seen by Paul’s reasoning in the Areopagus (Acts 17), and many Greeks speculated about many different things with no positive outcome whatsoever. Also, one aspect of Greek philosophy was the discovery of truth by asking questions, however, this was perverted into a skeptical sort of questioning that did not care to learn truth, but only be disputing. What Paul is warning against here is a nonproductive dispute caused by dishonest speculations and questions.

**“genealogies.”** The Jews had a great interest in genealogies, and they were important when it was essential to determine who were the priests, who were the Levites, who was of the line of David, etc. In that light, in the Old Testament and Gospels, a person’s genealogy could establish rights and primacy in Israel’s society. However, there is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ, and any Jewish believers needed to leave arguments about genealogy behind and fulfill their calling as individual members of the Body of Christ.

Tit 3:10

**“after admonishing *him*.”** The word translated as “admonishing” is *nouthesia* (#3559 νουθεσία), and it refers to admonishing, instructing, and warning, not just “warning.” Philip Towner writes, “This [admonition] includes instruction, correction, instruction, and warning with a view to regaining the offender (as in 2 Tim. 2:25-26). More than formal accusation, the process includes corrective teaching in the effort to convince the offender of the ethical or doctrinal error and win him/her back.”[[29]](#footnote-12460) The goal, and the heart of the Lord, is to win back the person who is divisive, not just to separate him from the rest of the believers.

Tit 3:12

**“make every effort.”** Paul was telling Titus to come to meet him. “do your best” as in some versions, misses the point here, because that phrase would make it seem okay if Titus did not come but “did his best” to come. “make haste” may even be better than “be diligent” in this context.

Tit 3:14

**“learn.”** When *manthanō* (#3129 μανθάνω) is used with the infinitive, it means learn or “learn how” not “learn that.”[[30]](#footnote-10066)

**“apply themselves.”** (see commentary on Titus 3:8)

Tit 3:15

**“are our friends**.” The Greek word we translate as “are…friends,” is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). It is hard to translate the Greek verb *phileō* in this context and keep the English as a verb. If we say, “love,” as most versions do, we lose the meaning of *phileō* here, and confuse it with *agapē* love. *Phileō* love has a deep attachment, like the attachment of true friends, while agapē love does not necessarily have any feeling of attachment at all, which is why we can “love” (*agapē*) our enemies. We could translate the word, “friendly to us” or “fond of us,” but these seem too weak. Also, the Greek verb *phileō* is in the present tense. Given that, it seemed that using the phrase, “are…friends” was the best way to bring the meaning of the Greek into the English. For a more complete understanding of *phileō*, see commentary on John 21:15.

1. BDAG, s.v. “κατά.” [↑](#footnote-ref-25112)
2. Cf. W. Mounce, The Pastoral Epistles [WBC]. [↑](#footnote-ref-30089)
3. Cf. P. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus [NICNT]. [↑](#footnote-ref-30369)
4. Cf. Hendriksen and Kistemaker; W. Mounce; “before time began” (HCSB). [↑](#footnote-ref-30491)
5. Cf. Robertson; Lange; “ages ago” (RSV). [↑](#footnote-ref-15235)
6. Philip Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus [NICNT]. [↑](#footnote-ref-23092)
7. Louw and Nida, s.v. “φιλάγαθος.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19833)
8. Towner, Letters to Timothy and Titus [NICNT], 689. [↑](#footnote-ref-18097)
9. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, 327-333. [↑](#footnote-ref-10987)
10. Cf. BDAG, s.v. “ὅσιος.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16423)
11. BDAG, s.v. “ἀνατρέπω. [↑](#footnote-ref-15243)
12. Robert W. Yarbrough, The Letters to Timothy and Titus [PNTC], Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 498. [↑](#footnote-ref-25614)
13. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and Philemon, 905. [↑](#footnote-ref-11589)
14. Philip H. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus [NICNT], 705. [↑](#footnote-ref-25735)
15. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of.St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon, 906. [↑](#footnote-ref-15199)
16. Cf. BDAG, s.v. “ἀδόκιμος.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28762)
17. Cf. E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, 137, “asyndeton,” “no ands.” [↑](#footnote-ref-23944)
18. Hendriksen and Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles, 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-18475)
19. Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, 3:419-20, entry on Titus 2:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-25270)
20. Walter Lock, The Pastoral Epistles [ICC]. [↑](#footnote-ref-28013)
21. William Mounce, Pastoral Epistles [WBC]. [↑](#footnote-ref-25927)
22. Mounce [WBC]. [↑](#footnote-ref-16822)
23. Bromiley, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “περιούσιον.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28014)
24. BDAG, s.v. “φιλανθρωπία.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16547)
25. Thayer, s.v. “φιλανθρωπία.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19134)
26. Friberg, s.v. “φιλανθρωπία.” [↑](#footnote-ref-22094)
27. Cf. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 104-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-27493)
28. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 4:607-08. [↑](#footnote-ref-19953)
29. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus [NICNT]. [↑](#footnote-ref-12460)
30. R. C. H. Lenski, St. Paul’s Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, 946-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-10066)