

TITUS: ADDRESSING WEAK CHURCHES IN DETERIORATING CULTURES
Part I: The Need Of An EFFECTIVE Ministry Of The WORD In Deteriorating Cultures
(Titus 1:1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. It is a readily defensible belief that today's world cultures are in a state of significant moral decline.
- B. Ministering to churches in such cultures takes a special focus, and we are blessed by Paul's letter to Titus on discipling Cretans who were reputedly "always liars, evil brutes [and] lazy gluttons," Titus 1:12 NIV.
- C. The epistle reveals on how God wants us as a Church to operate effectively in *today's* needy world:

II. The Need Of An EFFECTIVE Ministry Of The WORD In Deteriorating Cultures, Titus 1:1-4.

- A. While writing the introduction to **this** pastoral epistle to **Titus**, Paul gave an unusually **prolonged** introductory emphasis on the preaching of God's Word, Titus 1:1-4a with 1 Tim. 1:1-2a; 2 Tim. 1:1-2a:
 - 1. In his other two pastoral introductions, Paul mentioned his calling and ministry of God's Word briefly in a single verse in each case, cf. 1 Timothy 1:1-2a and 2 Timothy 1:1-2a.
 - 2. However, in Titus, Paul dwelt at length on his call and ministry of the Word in three full verses, 1:1-4a.
- B. Well, Paul wrote to Titus who worked in a decadent culture known for "liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons," Titus 1:12, Ryrie St. Bib., KJV ftm. Hence, we view this text's special emphasis on the minister and his ministry of the Word to see how it keys into effectively discipling folk in morally failing cultures:
 - 1. **Unlike** his reference to himself as an **apostle** in his *other* pastoral epistles, Paul referred to himself at the outset as God's **SLAVE** in Titus 1:1a. Hence, **effective work in deteriorating cultures requires a discipler to be SUBJECT to GOD opposite the undisciplined, rebellious folk about him!**
 - 2. **Like** his announcements in his other pastoral epistles, Paul mentioned his **office** as an **apostle**, one "commissioned" by God (T.D.N.T., v. One, p. 422) to minister His Word, Titus 1:1b. Hence, effective ministry in deteriorating cultures needs disciplers who are sent by God -- not man -- for the task!
 - 3. **Unlike** his other pastoral epistles, Paul's introduction focused on the way a knowledge of God's truth leads to godliness in *living*, Titus 1:1c NIV. Hence, effective ministry in deteriorating cultures needs a ministry of God's Word that AIMS for a CHANGE from deceitful, abusive and undisciplined lifestyles to truthful, constructive, disciplined living in godliness.
 - 4. **Unlike** his other pastoral epistles, Paul's introduction mentioned the Gospel that leads to eternal life as coming from a God "who does not lie," Titus 1:2 NIV. This is a key emphasis in a culture known for its people being "always liars", Titus 1:12. Hence, effective ministry in deteriorating cultures needs a ministry that EMPHASIZES the INHERENT TRUSTWORTHINESS of God and His Word!
 - 5. **Unlike** his other pastoral epistles, Paul's introduction referred to God's promise of eternal life **before the beginning of time**, Titus 1:2b NIV. As such an emphasis provides a strong orientation to the purpose of history, producing a sense of **security**, effective ministry in deteriorating cultures needs a ministry that EMPHASIZES the ETERNAL STABILITY of God and Scripture to OFFSET the instability that rises out of the deceit, abuse and undisciplined living of decaying cultures!
 - 6. **Unlike** his other pastoral epistles, Paul's introduction mentioned the timely fulfillment of God's eternal promise of eternal salvation, and of Paul's assignment at God's command to deliver that Gospel of it, Titus 1:3a. Hence, **effective ministry in deteriorating cultures needs a ministry in which the discipler called of God is KEENLY AWARE of his DIVINE APPOINTMENT so as to keep a steady hand on the work when the instability, deceit, abuse and undisciplined natures of his hearers will often seek to TEST his resolve to STAY TRUE TO the Lord's will!**

Lesson: *The FIRST order of business in discipling in a decaying culture is for there to be a solid ministry of God's Word. Such a ministry has (1) the DISCIPLER being (a) SUBJECT to God opposite the rebelliousness of the culture around him, (b) one being sent by GOD and not man (c) and one who is aware of God's APPOINTMENT that will keep him aligned amidst efforts of the undisciplined about him to get him off course. (2) Then, his ministry must (a) focus on the STABILITY and (b) inherent TRUSTWORTHINESS of God and His Word, and (c) aim to get his hearers to SHIFT from deceitful, abusive, undisciplined, godless living to live truthful, constructive, disciplined, godly lives!*