

TITUS

Titus was a Greek believer and one of Paul's closest and most trusted fellow workers. Taught and nurtured by Paul, he stood before the leaders of the church in Jerusalem as a living example of what Christ was doing among the Gentiles.

Paul wrote this letter to:

- Instruct Titus about what he should do to correct the matters that were lacking in order to establish the churches in Crete.
- Give Titus personal authorization in view of the opposition and dissenters he was facing.
- Give instruction concerning this opposition; to warn about false teachers and give instruction concerning faith and conduct.
- Express his plans to join Titus again in Necropolis for the winter.

He explains how the grace of God is shown to us in the saving life and death of Christ. He instructs Christians to deny ungodliness and to live righteously and soberly as people of good works.

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365

Bible Reading Challenge

**WHAT IS IN THE BIBLE READINGS
FOR JULY?**

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was just twenty when he was called by God to be a prophet. He was raised in a priestly family and lived near to Jerusalem. For forty years he was God's spokesman to Judah, consistently and passionately urging them to act, but nobody listened.

He was poor and underwent severe deprivation to deliver his prophecies. He was thrown into prison and then into a cistern. He stood alone, rejected by everyone from kings to his family and friends.

He declared God's messages of doom, announcing the new covenant, and wept over the state of his beloved country. The basic theme of his message was simple: "Repent and turn to God, or he will punish you" Because the people rejected this warning Jeremiah then began predicting the destruction of Jerusalem.

In spite of the persecution he endured Jeremiah remained faithful and obedient. He courageously and faithfully proclaimed the Word of God.

1 THESSALONIANS

This is the earliest letter of Paul and is indeed the earliest Christian document that we have. It is important because it opens a window on the early church which we otherwise would not have.

The City of the Thessalonica was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia. Paul established the church there during his second missionary journey (AD 51) he wrote this letter a short time later to encourage the young believers there. He wanted to assure them of his love, to praise them for their faithfulness in the face of terrible persecution and to remind them of their hope which was the sure return of their Lord and Saviour.

He begins with a strong note of affirmation, thanking God for their strong faith and good reputation Then Paul reviews their relationship, how he and his companions brought the Gospel to them, how they accepted the message and how he longed to be with them again. Because of his concern he sent Timothy to encourage them in their faith.

Paul then presents the core of his message—exhortation and comfort. He challenges them to please God in their daily living by avoiding sexual immorality, loving each other and living as good citizens in a sinful world.

He comforts them by reminding them of the hope of the resurrection then he warns them to be prepared at all times because Jesus might return.

Paul concludes his letter with two benedictions and a request for prayer.

2 THESSALONIANS

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians was written to clear a misunderstanding on his teaching about the Second Coming which had caused some to stop working. He begins by

praising their perseverance in spite of their persecution and trials. He tells them not to listen to rumours and reports that the day of the Lord has already begun because a number of events must occur before Christ returns.

He urges them in the meantime to stand firm for Christ's truth and receive God's encouragement and hope. They should pray for strength, spread the Lord's message and warn those who are idle.

1 TIMOTHY

Paul wrote his letter to Timothy who joined Paul during his second missionary journey. His mother, Eunice and grandmother, Lois were Jewish believers and his father was a Greek. He is the first 'second generation' Christian mentioned in the New Testament.

In this letter Paul gives advice to Timothy on church organization and pastoral responsibilities. He offers encouragement to him in his ministry at Ephesus, warns him about false teachers and the methods they use and instructs him on the policy of the church.

2 TIMOTHY

This letter finds Paul very lonely and in prison facing execution. It contains his final message to his 'son' Timothy, passing to him the torch of leadership, reminding him of what was truly important, and encouraging him in the faith.

In spite of his own predicament, Paul is concerned about the welfare of the churches during a time of persecution under Nero. He urges Timothy to guard the gospel, to persevere in it, to keep on preaching and if necessary to suffer for it.