

# Pastoral Epistles: Session 14 — Titus 3

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Session 14

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## Keywords

Titus 3, good works, grace, Holy Spirit, rebirth, justification, Cretans, reconciliation, global church, leadership

## Abstract

In this lecture on Titus 3, Dr. Robert Yarbrough explains how the biblical call to devote oneself to good works stems from the profound theological foundation of divine grace and regeneration. He examines the historical context of Crete, demonstrating how the Gospel served as a transformative force that bridged deep ethnic animosities and brought moral order through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Dr. Yarbrough highlights that personal salvation flows directly into practical Christian living, practical ministry support, and corporate unity across cultural divides. Ultimately, he encourages believers with the historical and global expansion of the church, illustrating that God's grace remains an unstoppable force despite persecution and cultural resistance.

## Outline

### I. Introduction and Context of Titus 3

#### A. Pastoral Epistles as Apostolic Instruction

1. Applicable to pastoral leaders guiding the church
2. Equally vital for followers and general congregation members

#### B. Heading Context in the Book of Titus

1. Chapter 1: "Appointing elders who love what is good"
2. Chapter 1: "Rebuking those who fail to do good"
3. Chapter 2: "Doing good for the sake of the gospel"
4. Chapter 3: "Saved in order to do good"

#### C. Theological Grounding vs. Mere Moralism

1. Rejection of Titus as a superficial list of rules or external moral code
2. Addressing unhealthy doctrines and professions of faith lacking corresponding deeds

### II. Reminders for Living in Society (Titus 3:1–3)

#### A. Subjection to Rulers and Readiness for Good Works

1. Mandate to be subject to civil authorities and rulers
2. Zealous readiness for every good work

## **B. Relational Decency and Demeanor**

1. Refraining from slander and striving to be peaceable
2. Showing consideration and gentleness toward all people
3. Rejecting arrogance, class superiority, and cultural dismissiveness

## **C. The Universal Human Condition Apart from Grace**

1. Former state of foolishness, disobedience, and enslavement to passions
2. Pervasiveness of mutual hatred, malice, and envy in human societies
3. Historical parallels: Jewish-Roman antipathies and contemporary cultural conflicts

## **III. The Theological Foundation of Salvation (Titus 3:4–7)**

### **A. The Appearance of God's Kindness and Mercy**

1. Salvation rooted strictly in divine mercy, not works done in righteousness
2. The spiritual reality of the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit

### **B. The Role of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ**

1. Metaphor of rebirth denoting comprehensive spiritual transformation
2. Generous outpouring of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ our Savior

### **C. Justification and Eternal Heritage**

1. Justification by grace to become heirs according to the hope of eternal life
2. Old Testament covenantal background (Genesis 3:15, Abrahamic promises, Deuteronomy)
3. Eternal life understood as a present quality of covenantal fellowship and unending future duration

## **IV. Application: Translating Doctrine into Practical Action (Titus 3:8–11)**

### **A. Devotion to Good Works (Titus 3:8)**

1. Stressing core doctrines so believers devote themselves to excellent, profitable works
2. Good works flowing naturally out of a vibrant, personal relationship with God
3. Transformation from dormant faith to active, comprehensive Christian living

### **B. Contrast with Greco-Roman Religious Context**

1. Greco-Roman pagan religion lacked intrinsic connection to moral ethics
2. Judaism as a historical refuge emphasizing scriptural morality and human dignity
3. The revolutionary nature of Gospel-driven ethics in ancient Cretan culture

### **C. Handling Unprofitable Controversy and Divisive Persons (Titus 3:9–11)**

1. Avoidance of foolish controversies, genealogies, and legal quarrels
2. Process for addressing divisive individuals: two warnings before disfellowship
3. The principle of self-condemnation when willfully rejecting apostolic truth

## **V. Final Remarks, Global Impact, and Concluding Encouragement (Titus 3:12–15)**

### **A. Practical Instructions and Personal Greetings (Titus 3:12–15)**

1. Itinerant plans for Artemis, Tychicus, Zenos, and Apollos
2. Provisioning Christian workers as a tangible manifestation of good works

3. Greetings in the faith and closing benediction of divine grace

#### **B. Social Reconciliation and Community Life**

1. Outpouring of the Spirit producing cross-cultural unity, charity, and peace
2. Reconciliation across historical ethnic animosities (Jews, Gentiles, Cretans, modern global examples)
3. Christian community as "Life Together" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

#### **C. The Unstoppable Expansion of Global Christianity**

1. Historical demographic shift of global church growth (Africa, Asia, Latin America)
2. Resilience and expansion of the church under severe persecution (e.g., China)
3. The enduring power of God's grace ensuring the unstoppable advancement of the Kingdom