

Paul's View on Racism

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Titus 1:5-16 ⁵The reason I left you in Crete was that you would set in order what was unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. ⁶An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, having children who are believers and who are not open to accusation of indiscretion or insubordination. ⁷As God's steward, an overseer must be above reproach—not self-absorbed, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not greedy for money. ⁸Instead, he must be hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the faithful word as it was taught, so that he can encourage others by sound teaching and refute those who contradict it. ¹⁰For many are rebellious and full of empty talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹who must be silenced. For the sake of dishonorable gain, they undermine entire households and teach things they should not. ¹²As one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sternly, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of men who have rejected the truth. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure; but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. Indeed, both their minds and their consciences are defiled. ¹⁶They profess to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed. (BSB)

"Paul is here endorsing something like a racist stereotype—perhaps more accurately, an ethnic prejudice—an apparently common slur against the entire nation of Cretans generally."
(p. 72) *The Bible Made Impossible* by Christian Smith

I. Here are the details of this passage.

- A. Paul had left Titus on the Island of **Crete** to finish the task of establishing the church on that island. V.5
- B. One of the specific tasks that Titus had was to select **leaders** for all of the local churches. V.5
- C. The designations used in this passage for leaders are **elders** V.6 and **overseers**. V.7-9
- D. Paul then mentions some **behaviors** of those who are coming to Christ in Crete. V.10-14
- E. In this list he mentions a **quote** from a Cretan philosopher: Epimenides of Gnosus. (In Philosophy this is called the Epiminides Paradox.) V.12
- F. Paul then goes on to instruct Titus to help the **new converts** to be discipled as to how a real Christian behaves. V.13-16

II. What can we learn from this?

- A. Paul's writings do not endorse **racism**. In fact, his writings have led western society to end it!
Galatians 3:26-28 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (BSB)
- B. What he does teach is that we must **break away** from our culture when we **embrace** Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. (BSB)