

## Inductive Paragraph study: Titus 2:1-15

1. **Structure** (skeleton): Clarify the author's thought development or argument.
  - a. Main point (claim) - state the central point of the paragraph.

Speak the things fitting for sound doctrine (v. 1)
  - b. Supporting points - list as individual summary phrases (with verse number), the basis for the main claim: *why* it's true or *how* we should do what it says.

How? Older men are to be . . . (vs 2)  
How? Older women likewise are to be . . . (vs 3)  
How? Likewise urge the younger men to be . . . (vs 6)  
How? Urge bondslaves to be . . . (vs 9)  
Why? Godly behavior "adorns" the gospel. (vs. 5, 8, 10)  
Why? For the grace of God has appeared... (vs. 11-12)
  - c. Literary/theological context—what is the main point of paragraph before and after?

**Main point of paragraph before:** Reprove false teachers (who sever the connection between doctrine and practice).  
**Main point of paragraph after:** Those who have believed God (should) be careful to engage in good deeds.  
Paul urges Titus to establish order in the churches on Crete. Having instructed Titus to reprove the false teachers, he now tells him to address the lifestyle of church members.  
**State how the paragraph fits into the argument of the section:** Paul continues to explain HOW Titus should "set in order what remains."  
Specifically, he should appoint good leaders, refute "rebellious men", and in this paragraph, teach behavior that is consistent with sound doctrine.
2. **Theology** (muscle): Understand the content and meaning of the paragraph.
  - a. Identify and define unfamiliar, historically significant, and key words; note use of Old Testament passages.
    - "bond slave" (v. 9) - See New Bible Dictionary or a good commentary.
    - "sensible" (v. 5,6,12) - This word is repeated several times in chapter 2. See *Vines Expository Dictionary of NT Words* for a definition.
    - "sound" (hugiano) = "healthy" - The metaphor of physical health describes the effect of sound doctrine on the church.
  - b. State the theological meaning of claim and supporting points, including how the theology of supporting points relates to the claim. For example, what does this passage teach about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, ministry, etc.

Christian leaders must persuade their people of the importance of maintaining integrity in their lifestyle.  
The reputation of the gospel is tied to the conduct of God's people. We can "adorn" it by proper conduct, and we can "discredit" it by improper conduct.  
Christians from every social group play a role in maintaining the reputation of the gospel.  
The "grace of God" contains a basis and command for morality.  
God: Initiated bringing salvation to mankind through his grace.  
Grace: It "instructs" us to live a Godly life.  
Jesus: Our savior who has redeemed us from our sins and who will appear again in glory.
  - c. What other passages might bear on your interpretation?

Ephesians 5:22-6:9; Colossians 3:17-4:1; 1 Peter 2:11-3:9
3. **Application** (skin): Understand what to do based on the meaning of the paragraph.
  - a. How is the argument of the paragraph intended to affect the original audience in terms of actions, attitudes, and convictions?

This paragraph provides another key way that Titus is to "set in order what

remains." Paul wants Titus to challenge people in the churches under his care to pursue a lifestyle consistent with sound doctrine. Titus needs to assert his authority and clearly teach the importance of ethical behavior motivated by grace and a concern for the reputation of the gospel.

- b. How is the argument of this passage relevant to me/my group?

Are we following our own culture, which severs the linkage between spirituality and ethics?

Do we, as leaders, teach clearly and strongly on the importance of being a good witness in our various social roles? Do we shepherd people personally on this issue? Are we helping them to develop convictions about how they affect God's reputation? Is their behavior motivated by God's grace?

View the Colossians 2:1-15 Paragraph Study Worksheet

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## The Gospels

What is a gospel?

The four Gospels form a unique literary genre. They are...

1. Parallel accounts of Jesus' life and teachings.
2. Selective, but accurate history.
3. Often organized thematically.

How does a gospel differ from a biography?

1. The gospel writers provide relatively little information about Jewish history and culture, or about the climate, geography, and setting of the events they describe. Biographers typically provide readers with more information than the gospels do about the historical and cultural setting of their main subjects.
2. No attempt is made by any of the gospel writers to delve into Jesus' mental or psychological development as many have in the 20th century.
3. The Gospel writers are teacher-theologians. They are not biographers trying to portray Jesus as a success story (it could be taken as a story of defeat); they were not diarists who kept a day-by-day chronicle of his deeds and movements.
4. None of the gospel authors claim to be exhaustive in his account of Christ's life (Jn. 20:30,31; 21:24,25).

Mark and John have no birth narratives. None have childhood stories (except for the brief mention of Jesus in the temple at age 12 in Luke 2). Nor do any of them claim to be writing a precise, chronologically ordered history. Instead, each author sets out to write a story in order to teach a point, or several points. For the synoptic authors, writing a gospel was much like an extended teaching or sermon. Each gospel, therefore, is an authoritative interpretation of Christ's life and sayings.

Interpreting Gospels

1. Study the historical context...

- ...of Jesus Himself.

This includes developing an awareness of the culture, geography, history and religion of first-century Palestine.

Where can you find this kind of information? See Blomberg's book, *Jesus and the Gospels*, dictionaries like the *New Bible Dictionary*, books that survey the New Testament, and good commentaries.

- ...of the authors and their reasons for writing.

It is difficult to determine for certain, but we can be fairly sure of each author's interests and concerns by the way that they select, shape, and arrange materials.

2. Note to whom Jesus is speaking.

It is important to note whether Jesus' audience was His close disciples, the larger crowds, or His opponents. (e.g. The Sermon on the Mount)

3. Note the form of teaching that Jesus uses.

We should note that Jesus used a variety of forms in teaching: parables, hyperbole (Mt. 5:29-30), proverbs, similes, metaphors, poetry, questions and irony.

Why are there four gospels?

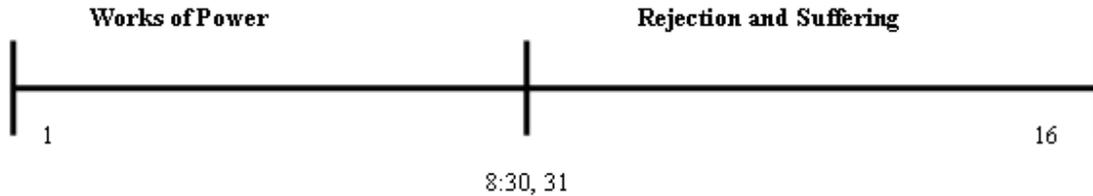
They each have different readers in mind with different needs. So each has different themes.

Mark's Gospel

MAIN THEME(S):

Jesus as the Servant Ruler (Mk. 10:45).

STRUCTURE:



The first 8 chapters: Mostly action-packed narratives that focus on the power of Jesus & the amazement of the crowds

The last 8 chapters: A "slowing down" of the narrative focusing on Jesus' apparent weakness, rejection by the crowds, suffering and death.

What was Mark trying to do by sharply contrasting Christ's "successes" and his "failures"? Why does half of his Gospel focus on his mighty deeds and half on his suffering and death? Mark emphasizes that Jesus was not killed because He was weak, but because He chose to be a servant. His suffering was not a sign of failure. The evil one is not winning through persecution.

MARK'S READERS: According to Papias, a church father writing at the beginning of the 1st century, Mark was written to persecuted Christians in Rome.

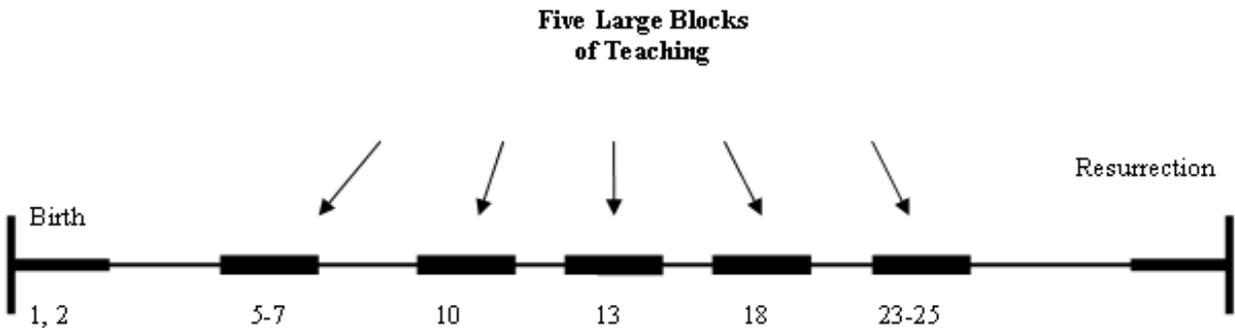
Matthew's Gospel

Comparing Matthew with Mark, we notice that Matthew incorporates larger blocks of Jesus' teachings than Mark does. (see 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1)

MAIN THEME(S):

Jesus as the authoritative teacher/messiah.

STRUCTURE:



MATTHEW'S READERS: Jewish Christians.

Luke's Gospel

Part of a two volume work (see Acts 1:1). Written by Luke, a Gentile doctor who traveled with Paul (Acts 16:10ff).

MAIN THEME(S): Jesus is the savior of the lost.

Luke 19:10 arguably provides a one-verse summary of the entire Gospel: "For the Son of Man came to **seek and to save what was lost.**"

Evidence that "Jesus is savior of the lost" is a central theme in Luke:

- Gabriel tells Mary to name him "Jesus" which means "YHWH saves" (1:31).
- Mary exults in "God my Savior" (1:47).
- In Luke 2:11, the angel announces, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

- Simeon holds Jesus and prays, "My eyes have seen your salvation" (2:30).
- "Savior" is the most distinctive title for Jesus in Luke.
- The Greek words for Savior and salvation (soter, soteria, soterion) occur eight times in Luke, nine times in Acts, and nowhere else in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
- Luke also emphasizes God's desire to seek and save everyone, especially outcasts and outsiders. Jesus is the savior of all: every race (Gentiles, Samaritans, Jews), both genders, all economic classes, and people of high and low social status.

1. Samaritans and Gentiles (10:25-37; 17:11-19; 14:15-24). Only Luke records the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-27) and the story of the ten lepers who were cleansed, with only the Samaritan leper returning to give thanks.

Good Samaritan (10:25-37).

10 lepers cleansed (17:11-19).

2. Women. Luke has far more women in his account than do the other Gospels.

The birth narratives are told from the perspectives of Elizabeth and Mary (chaps. 1-2).

The prophetess Anna appears alongside her male counterpart Simeon (2:25-38).

Jesus affirms the notoriously sinful woman who anoints him with oil despite the complaints of his pharisaic host (7:36-50).

He praises Mary's (Martha's sister) devotion to his teaching, against the cultural norms of the day (10:38-42).

And only Luke describes Jesus' itinerant ministry as being funded in part by the contributions of several well-to-do women who traveled with him (8:1-3).

3. The Poor.

In Matthew, Jesus blesses "the poor in spirit," in Luke he blesses "you who are poor" (6:20).

Jesus was anointed by God "to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

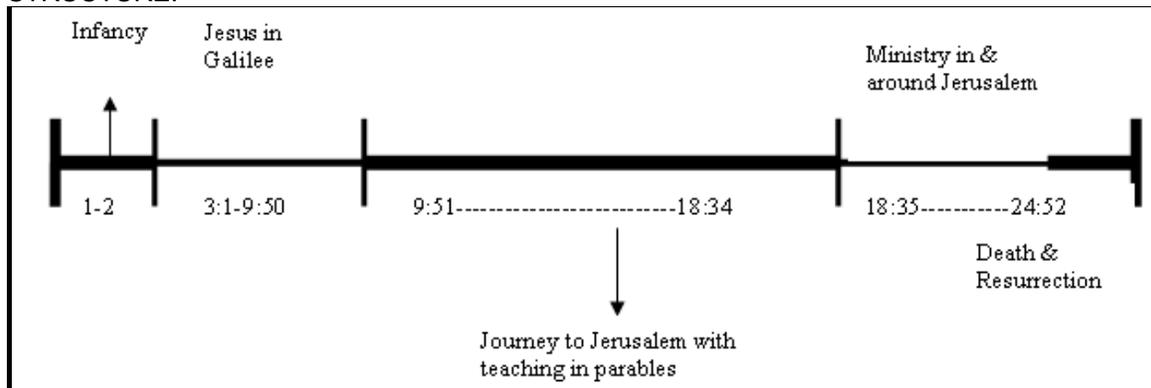
The various teachings in 14:7-24 all demonstrate God's concern for the sick and dispossessed who are unable to help themselves or return favors.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus vindicates the poor beggar at the expense of his counterpart wallowing in luxury (16:19-31).

4. Tax collectors and sinners (5:30, 7:34, and 15:1).

Not only does Luke use the phrase, "tax collectors and sinners," to characterize those who gathered around Jesus to hear him and were welcomed by him, but Luke alone tells two stories in which tax collectors were heroes - the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (18:9-14) and the conversion of Zaccheus (19:1-10).

STRUCTURE:



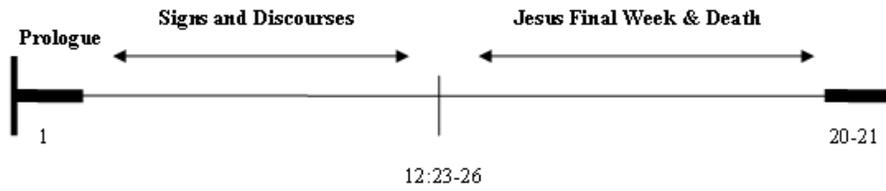
LUKE'S READERS: Primarily intended for Gentile readers.

John's Gospel

MAIN THEME(S): Jesus as the Life-Giver (20:31; Jn. 10:10; 5:24).

For John's purpose statement, see 20:31. He's writing to non-Christians to help them have faith. John is also eager to tell readers that he was an eyewitness of the events he describes (19:35 & 21:24).

STRUCTURE:



JOHN'S READERS: Gentile non-Christians.