

# Titus 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

## Analysis

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**One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said**—Paul quotes Epimenides, a sixth-century BC Cretan poet-philosopher considered prophetic in Greek culture. **The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies**—the famous "liar's paradox" (a Cretan saying Cretans lie). The stereotype described Cretans as: ψεῦσται (pseustai, liars), κακὰ θηρία (kaka thēria, evil/malicious beasts), γαστέρες ἀργαί (gasteres argai, lazy gluttons—literally "idle stomachs").

Paul's citation of pagan literature occurs thrice in Acts-Pauline corpus (Acts 17:28, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Titus 1:12). He doesn't endorse paganism but uses their own witnesses against them—a rhetorical strategy. The characterization isn't racist but cultural critique: Cretan society had embedded patterns of deception, violence, and self-indulgence requiring gospel transformation.

## Historical Context

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"To cretize" (κρητίζειν) became a Greek verb meaning "to lie." Crete's cultural reputation for deception was proverbial across the ancient Mediterranean. This created both challenge and opportunity: the gospel had to radically transform notorious sinners, providing powerful testimony to grace's transforming power (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What negative cultural stereotypes accurately describe your society's particular sins—materialism, sexual chaos, pride?
2. How does the gospel address specific cultural sins versus offering generic religious platitudes?
3. Are you willing to speak unpopular cultural truth like Paul, or does fear of offense silence your prophetic voice?

## Interlinear Text

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εἶπέν	τις	ἐξ	αὐτῶν	ἴδιος	αὐτῶν	προφήτης
said	One	of	themselves	of their own	themselves	even a prophet
G2036	G5100	G1537	G846	G2398	G846	G4396
Κρηῖτες	ἀεὶ	ψεῦσται	κακὰ	θηρία	γαστέρες	ἀργαί
The Cretians	are always	liars	evil	beasts	bellies	slow
G2912	G104	G5583	G2556	G2342	G1064	G692

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 16:18** (Parallel theme): For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

**1 Timothy 4:2** (Parallel theme): Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

**Acts 17:28** (Parallel theme): For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

**2 Peter 2:15** (Parallel theme): Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

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