

**DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY  
OF PAUL'S SECOND LETTER  
TO THE BELOVED TIMOTHY**

**GOSPEL TEACHER  
In Times Of Turmoil**



**DICKSON**

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**Devotional Commentary  
Of Paul's Second Letter  
To The Beloved Timothy**

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## INTRODUCTION

In Galatians 2 Paul explained two very important incidents that happened in the early church. Both incidents in some way help us understand the social/religious/political environment in which Timothy served.

### A. Religious-political opposition:

#### 1. *Opposition in Jerusalem:*

The first incident was in reference to one of Paul's visits to Jerusalem. Fourteen years after his first visit to Jerusalem—this was after his baptism in Damascus, mission to Arabia, and then journey back home to Tarsus—he went up to Jerusalem for the Acts 15 meeting. He took Titus with him.

When he, Barnabas and Titus arrived in Jerusalem, there was tremendous church politics going on with some Jewish brethren in Jerusalem. They protested that Titus, a Gentile, should be circumcised. In fact, a few years after this encounter Paul wrote: "*But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was **compelled** to be circumcised*" (Gl 2:3).

"Compelled" is a strong word. It seems that there was great pressure placed on Paul and company that the Gentile Titus should be circumcised. There were some Jewish Christians in Jerusalem at this time who believed that if one were not circumcised, he

could not be saved (At 15:1). Nevertheless, Paul stood firm with Titus, and would not allow him to succumb to the religious intimidation of some Jewish brethren that he should be circumcised.

**2. *Opposition in Antioch:*** Paul wrote in the Galatian letter of another incident that again focuses our attention on the intimidation of those in the church who would seek to bind either religious or cultural practices on the church. The problem was so severe in this incident that when in Antioch of Syria, the apostle Peter momentarily stood condemned because he succumbed to the intimidation of some Jewish brethren who came from Jerusalem.

Paul later wrote of the Antioch ordeal, "*When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face **because he stood condemned***" (Gl 2:11). This seems quite strange in view of the fact that this was the same Peter to whom Jesus had earlier given the keys of the kingdom (Mt 16:18,19). This was the same Peter who stood up on the day of Pentecost and announced for the first time in history the activation of the eternal gospel that had been planned and hidden from before the creation of the world (At 2:14-39). This was the same Peter who in the face of possible beating, stood against

unbelieving religious leaders in Jerusalem. It was Peter who said to these leaders, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard”* (At 4:19,20). And this is the same Peter to whom God had opened a vision to go into the Gentile house of Cornelius (At 10–11). So why did this Peter stand condemned in Antioch?

Paul explained. While in Antioch, Peter, Barnabas and the rest of the Jewish brethren in the city were happily fellowshiping the Gentile brethren (Gl 2:12). However, when certain Jewish brethren came from Jerusalem, Peter *“withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision”* (Gl 2:12). Because of his actions, he stood condemned because he and others *“were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel”* (Gl 2:14).

Gospel living means that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Gl 3:26-29). It is the gospel that brings all men together into one united fellowship. If we behave in any way contrary to this principle of unity, then we are not walking straightforward according to the truth of the gospel. We thus stand condemned. For a moment, therefore, Peter and Barnabas, and the other Jewish brethren who followed them, allowed themselves to

be intimidated to behave contrary to the unifying nature of the gospel. They all stood condemned in doing such a thing.

And now we come to the social situation in which we find Timothy in Asia at the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy in A.D. 66. We are not told the nature of the intimidation that faced Peter in Antioch. Nevertheless, it was strong enough to motivate him to behave contrary to the truth of the gospel. Likewise, we are not told specifically either the intimidation or opposition that faced Timothy. But the outcome was similar to that of Peter. The difference, however, was that Peter behaved contrary to the truth of the gospel, whereas Timothy simply ceased fulfilling his ministry. He went idle.

The lesson in both cases is that no matter how strong one may think he is, or what advantages he may have enjoyed as a disciple, he can still fall into either idleness or behavior that is contrary to the truth of the gospel. *“Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”* (1 Co 10:12). For some reason, or reasons, Timothy was intimidated to the point of being discouraged to continue his ministry. Paul wrote the letter of 2 Timothy in order to encourage him to go to work in order to finish his course.

The social conditions in which

Timothy found himself were similar to those in which Peter and Barnabas found themselves in Antioch. There were both social and religious pressures placed on Timothy in Asia. Nevertheless, this disciple who joined with Paul on the second missionary journey had by the time of the writing of the second letter been intimidated into forsaking his gift and calling. He was silenced by opposition.

### **B. Social/Political opposition:**

But there were more problems that confronted Timothy than simply the opposition of a few intimidating brethren. During the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas in A.D. 47,48, John Mark had his moment of discouragement and retreat from the work (See At 13:13; 15:38). And now, Timothy was in a similar predicament.

On the second missionary journey of Paul in A.D. 49-52, Timothy had previously proved himself, and thus Paul desired to have him continue with him on his second journey (At 16:1-3). Timothy had witnessed in the life of Paul what could possibly happen to him in reference to being persecuted for Christ (See 2 Tm 3:10-12). Because Timothy had previously witnessed the persecution of Paul, he knew what he was getting himself into when he signed up with Paul. However, the idealistic Timothy in his

youth probably never believed that there would be times when he would become so discouraged that he would lay down his gift. Nevertheless, the time would come. It would be a time when he did not have the personal companionship of Paul, but would be working alone as a leader in teaching the word of God. In view of the fact that Timothy was a young man of strong character, we must assume that he was at the time Paul wrote enduring some very difficult circumstances.

The preceding explains that great opposition will often confront the one who does not conform to the accepted traditions of the religious establishment, or social conditions that are extremely unsettling. In the case of Titus, the tradition of many in the church in Jerusalem was that one had to be circumcised, regardless of whether he was a Jew or Gentile. In reference to Timothy in Asia, however, the challenge was far more intense than issues over circumcision. At the particular time of Timothy's residence in Asia, there was political upheaval in the Roman Empire.

In Peter's case of intimidation there was racial discrimination in reference to Jews associating with Gentiles. For example, when Peter returned from entering in and eating with the Gentile household of Cornelius, Luke many years later wrote of the reaction of some of the

Jewish brethren in Jerusalem, “*So when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were of the circumcision disputed with him, saying, ‘You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them’*” (At 11:2,3). This incident happened a little over ten years before Rome’s move against the Jews in the latter part of the 60s to squash a Jewish independence movement. The radicalism of the Jews in Jerusalem had increased since the days the Jews confronted Peter. A little over a decade after Peter entered the house of the Gentile Cornelius, the Gentile Romans would enter the house of God (the temple) in Jerusalem and burn it to the ground.

Jewish opposition that was brought upon the Jewish Christians of Judea was very strong for many years after the establishment of the church. It was so strong that those Jewish Christians who lived in Judea tried to live in harmony with the radical unbelieving Jews of the region. This at least explains why the elders of the church in Jerusalem asked Paul on his last trip to the city around A.D. 56,57 to honor the Jewish custom of paying taxes for the vows of four other men, and then enter the temple in a sanctified manner (See At 21:17-25).

When Paul was in Jerusalem for this last time, nationalistic Jews had spread the rumor that he was going throughout the Empire teaching “*all*

*the Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses*” (At 21:21). This was totally contrary to what the nationalistic Jews were trying to teach in order to build loyalty to an independent movement against Rome on the foundation of the law of Moses. If Paul actually taught against the rallying cry of the nationalistic Jesus, then he was considered a traitor. Therefore, this instigator who taught submission to Rome had to be eliminated (See At 23:12,13).

The tension between Rome and the Jews was so strong in Judea that it had before Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem around A.D. 56,57, spread north to Antioch of Syria where Peter was previously moved to separate himself from the Gentile brethren. As a result, he stood condemned before God because of his actions. But God knew all this would happen in the initial century of the establishment of the church. Nevertheless, the early Christians had to survive through this great opposition in order to preserve the truth of the gospel for human posterity.

Because we know that God knew that all this would transpire, we can better appreciate how He prepared the church for the onslaught of religious and political persecution that would eventually arise in the decades after the establishment of the church in A.D. 30. By knowing this historical

background of events that occurred in the middle and last half of the first century, we also can better understand how God worked among the nations in order to bring the religion of Judaism to a conclusion in order that the reality of the kingdom reign of Jesus be revealed to the world. God would even work in history to bring the opposition of state persecution to an end so that the preaching of the gospel would continue throughout history.

### **C. The opposition in the midst of social/political conflict.**

This brings us to the social/political environment in which Timothy and the church were living at the time of Timothy's moment of discouragement prior to A.D. 66. There arose in the early part of the decade of the 60s a great independent movement among the Jews. The nationalistic fervor among the Jews spread over into the Jewish families of the church. Therefore, there was more to the difficulties that faced Timothy than the early attack of Judaism against Christianity. The hard times of the disciples in the decade of the 60s had moved far beyond the persecution of the unbelieving Jews that transpired in the early days of the church in Jerusalem.

Some Roman history and background are in order to understand better the social turmoil of the decade of

the 60s that also made it difficult for the early Christians to survive in the societies in which they lived throughout the Roman Empire.

We are assuming the traditional date of A.D. 66 as the date when Paul put pen to parchment in order to address Timothy concerning the social/civic turmoil of the times in which Timothy lived. In this same year, there was a rebellion of the Jews in Judea against Rome. Young Jewish men throughout the Roman Empire were encouraged to take up a sword, betray the faith of their Christian parents, and then make their way to fight the Romans in Jerusalem. It was a time when a young son's love for his family grew cold (Mt 24:10,12). The adventure of fighting the Romans in Judea was greater than a son's loyalty to his father and mother.

In answer to the independent movement of the Jews in Palestine, the Roman general Vespasian was commissioned by Caesar Nero to put down this insurrection, which was considered the first Jewish/Roman War. The war lasted from A.D. 66 to 73. This was called the Great Revolt, or the first Jewish War. It was the first of three rebellions, two of which would occur in the second century.

Before the Roman military general Vespasian arrived in Galilee in A.D. 67, there was a great civil war going on in Palestine among the Jews

themselves. Opposing sides under the leadership of different priests struggled to determine who was in control of the Jewish struggle for independence from Rome. Therefore, in his march to Jerusalem to subjugate the Jewish independent movement, Vespasian first overpowered the Jews in Galilee. He then continued his march toward Jerusalem in order to strike at the heart of Jewish nationalism that plagued the Roman Empire. However, during this campaign against the Jews in Palestine, the psychopathic Nero committed suicide in Rome in A.D. 69 while Vespasian launched his vicious attack against the rebellious Jews in Jerusalem.

Because of Nero's suicide, Rome itself was plunged into a brief civil war. When Nero committed suicide, Galba succeeded him and was on the throne in Rome when the Empire entered the turmoil of the year A.D. 69. However, in A.D. 69, after only a few months as Caesar, Galba was killed by the Praetorium Guard. Otho then claimed the throne of Rome after Galba, but he too in a short time committed suicide. And then came Vitellius in the same year of A.D. 69, but he was killed by Vespasian's men.

In order to terminate the chaos in Rome in A.D. 69, Roman legions in Egypt, Judea and Syria hailed Vespasian to be Caesar. Vespasian subsequently returned to Rome in the

same year in order to settle the Empire of both civil and social unrest. A.D. 69 became known as the "year of the Caesars."

Upon Vespasian's return to Rome, Titus, Vespasian's son, was placed in command of the Roman army in Judea to complete the subjugation of the Jewish rebellion. As a result of his efforts, not one stone was left upon another in the city of Jerusalem (Mt 24:1,2). The temple was destroyed.

In order to settle the social and civil chaos in the capital of the Empire, Vespasian continued as Caesar of Rome from A.D. 69 to 79. During this period nationalistic Judaism suffered a crushing blow which began when Titus eventually finished the campaign against the Jews in Judea in A.D. 73 with the conquest of Masada.

The decade of the 60s, therefore, was a time of tremendous social and civil unrest throughout the Roman Empire. It was a time of treachery, betrayal, insurrection and civil war, both in Rome and in Palestine (See Mt 24:1-35). Christians struggled to survive during these years of chaos. We can only imagine the turmoil that was generated in the church as Jewish nationalists sought to recruit young Jewish sons from Jewish families throughout the Empire. Whether a family was Christian or not, Jewish

zealots swept through the Empire in order to recruit resistance fighters for the deliverance of national Israel from Roman occupation. The dream of an independent Israel as in the days of David and Solomon became the hope of fanatical insurrectionists. But it was all a misguided hope. It was a delusion that became a fable.

Nevertheless, the insurrectionists' zeal to fight against the Romans was strong throughout the Empire. The spirit of adventure to fight the Romans in Palestine was overpowering for many Jewish sons who eventually, with their swords, slipped out the back widow of their parent's house in the middle of the night and headed for Jerusalem. The tensions among Christian families was undoubtedly overpowering as unbelieving zealots of Judaism campaigned throughout the Roman Empire in order to draw Jewish family members to Palestine and Jerusalem in order to make a final stand against Rome, and then proclaim the restored state of an independent Israel.

It would not have been pleasant for those Christian families who were predominately Jewish. It may have been that even Timothy was intimidated by some Jewish zealots that he assert his Jewish heritage to defend Israel. Because we are two thousand years removed from the social/political conflict of those times, we have a

difficult time placing ourselves in the turmoil of the days, and thus, understanding the chaos of the time.

Timothy was possibly intimidated by some as those described by Paul who were in fellowship with the church in Jerusalem. There were *"false brethren secretly brought in, who sneaked in to spy out our liberty that we have in Christ, that they might bring us into bondage"* (Gl 2:4). In Asia, we would assume that there were also false Jewish brethren who had "sneaked in" to confront Timothy. They were those who were *"always learning [from the Old Testament Scriptures], and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* of the gospel about which the prophets spoke (2 Tm 3:7). They distorted "the hope of Israel." They thought the hope would be a national restoration of the state of Israel. But they misunderstood the point of what Jesus said to Pilate, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (Jn 18:36). Most of the Jews could not accept the fact that God was finished with national Israel.

All focus among Christians was now on the gospel reign of King Jesus. In fact, the more some Christian Jews focused on nationalistic Israel, the less they focused on King Jesus. The Holy Spirit subsequently wrote an entire document concerning this problem—Hebrews. Those today who are obsessed with the existence of the state

of Israel need to meditate through this book.

#### **D. Conflict literature:**

The student of 1 & 2 Timothy, with Titus, might wonder why Paul was not specific in reference to the current social upheaval of the times. We must not forget that Paul was in the prison of the military power that was bringing judgment on the insurrectionist movement of the Jews. He was a Jew with Roman citizenship in prison at the time. We would obviously conclude that he would not write anything in a letter that might be intercepted by officials, and thus be used in court as evidence against him.

When the Roman state eventually unleashed her wrath upon Christians at the end of the first century, John was also in such a predicament. He was banished by the Roman state to the island of Patmos. Therefore, he wrote in apocalyptic literary style in order to conceal from the adversaries of Christianity the victory of the saints. He wrote of *“things that must shortly come to pass”* (Rv 1:1). Therefore, Jesus, through him, *“sent and signified”* a message to the saints in a figurative writing style (Rv 1:1). The message of encouragement was thus revealed to the saints, but concealed from the state adversaries.

Though Paul did not write in the style of apocalyptic literature, he still refrained from directly identifying the problems that caused the social chaos in which both Timothy and Titus labored. Nevertheless, from our history books we can assume the trying times of the decade of the 60s.

The decade of the 60s, therefore, was the worst of times in reference to the climax of Jewish influence among the disciples. These were times of turmoil during which many prayers were being offered *“for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty”* (1 Tm 2:2). Those times were not peaceful.

Nevertheless, worse times would eventually come when the Roman State would turn its attention toward the early Christians. But this persecution would not come until the latter part of the first century. In the book of Revelation, Jesus would prepare the church for those times.

But in the 60s, it was a trying time to be a leader of God’s family in the midst of national social upheaval. It was a time when the Holy Spirit knew that a letter needed to be written to a discouraged leader, giving some advice as to what he should do and teach. The letter could be copied and circulated among the churches, and thus bring a great deal of encouragement to others who were in a simi-

lar situation as Timothy in Asia.

We better appreciate this letter, therefore, because the one to whom the letter was written would be an example for all leaders of the disciples in the centuries to come. We have the letter of 2 Timothy for our own encouragement today when we fall into discouraging times as did Timothy when the religious and social environ-

ment of Rome seemed to be totally against our faith. And for the Jews' nationalistic dreams, God through Rome was making His statement that Israel was over. While Jerusalem would be burning in a few years after the writing of 2 Timothy, Paul simply said to Timothy to stay focused: "*Preach the Word!*" (2 Tm 4:2).

## Chapter 1

# ENCOURAGING THE TEACHER

The words of this letter from the Holy Spirit through the hand of Paul are for every disciple who would arise to the challenge of being a leader through example and teaching. The letter was addressed to a specific individual, but the Spirit assumes that we will apply the encouragement of the message to ourselves as we seek to lead the people of God.

### A. An affectionate greeting (1:1,2):

These affectionate and final words of the aged mentor to his son in the faith are endearing. The writer identified himself that he was an apostle *“by the will of God.”* As an apostle who was personally sent forth by Jesus, Paul knew his destiny from the time he was blinded on the Damascus road. While waiting in some residence in Damascus after personally encountering Jesus, he was sent on his way into Arabia and the rest of the Roman world to preach the gospel (At 9:9).

He was one of the few, if not the only, apostle about whom it was said, *“For I [Jesus] will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake”* (At 9:16). When Paul responded to the call of Ananias to

*“arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (At 22:16), he knew all the hardships that he would eventually go through as an apostle *“of Christ Jesus.”* Nevertheless, he was willing to *“endure all things for the elects’ sake”* (2 Tm 2:10), knowing that anyone who would *“live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Tm 3:12). Timothy needed to recall all this that his mentor had endured for the name of the Lord.

It is not surprising, therefore, to see Paul address Timothy as *“a dearly beloved son.”* It was possibly on his first missionary journey with Barnabas that he personally baptized Timothy in Lystra. On the second journey through the region of Lystra, Derbe and Iconium, Paul wanted Timothy to go with him throughout the remainder of the second journey (At 16:3). And from that time to the writing of this letter, a lot of history had transpired as the two evangelists labored as soldiers in fellowship for the faith. In writing from a prison in Rome, it was now time for the aged mentor to say farewell to his trusted companion.

Since Timothy’s father was undoubtedly an unbelieving Greek, we can understand why Timothy attached

himself so strongly to Paul. This attachment was so endearing that Paul once wrote of his emotional attachment to Timothy: “*But you know of his [Timothy’s] proven worth, that as a son with his father, he has served with me in the gospel*” (Ph 2:22).

## **B. The power of faith (1:3-7):**

Paul had always conscientiously worked in obedience to God. He was a man of great faith, even when persecuting the church (1 Tm 1:13-16). He served God with “*a pure conscience.*” He could leave this earth without any guilt, though he had initially been in the bondage of the Jews’ religion (See Gl 1:13,14). But now it was time to move on from the one about whom he wrote, “*Without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day.*”

Though Timothy may at the time been in a state of discouragement, and thus temporarily feeling guilty about the cessation of his own ministry, he must remember that his mentor had previously in his life worked against the church of God prior to his obedience to the gospel. We view God’s forgiveness of Paul’s persecution of the church as an example of grace in action. No matter how far one might feel he or she is from God, God can come for us through His grace. When we consider this awesome grace, it is

a time to burst forth with a doxology: “*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out*” (Rm 11:33).

Paul’s prayers for Timothy were earnest because he sincerely desired to see Timothy for the last time. He remembered Timothy’s tears when they last parted from one another some time before. If he could see Timothy again, then he would be “*filled with joy.*” It is apparent that Paul knew that his journey on this earth was at an end. He would later say to Timothy, “*I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course*” (2 Tm 4:7).

Paul’s appreciation for Timothy brought to remembrance “*the genuine faith*” that was in him. Timothy’s faith was a spiritual inheritance from his “*grandmother Lois.*” This faith was passed on to her daughter Eunice, and finally from Eunice, Timothy’s mother, to Timothy himself. Eunice passed on this genuine faith by teaching Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul later wrote, “*From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures*” (2 Tm 3:15).

Since Timothy’s father was undoubtedly an unbelieving Gentile, we must give full credit to Timothy’s mother for her dedicated persistence to pass on to her son a genuine faith

through her teaching of the word of God.

In his childhood, Timothy may have endured some conflict between his mother and father in matters of faith. But the statement here seems to indicate that the faith of the forefathers of Israel won the victory. Paul wrote, “*I am persuaded that it [the genuine faith] is in you also.*” He could make this statement concerning Timothy’s faith because Timothy had proved himself through his faithful work and companionship with the apostle.

James challenged the faith of those who lacked performance: “*Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works*” (Jas 2:18). Timothy indeed showed his genuine faith by his committed years of ministry at Paul’s side. His was not a “church-house faith,” but a faith that drove him down the highways and byways of the Roman Empire preaching Jesus as the King of kings. Unless one’s faith is so demonstrated, it is as James reflected, a dead faith (Jas 2:26).

Nevertheless, the occasion for the writing of this letter to Timothy may have been that in the absence of the apostle, Timothy was somewhat discouraged because of the great opposition that had come against him. For this reason, the apostle wrote, “*I remind you that you stir up the gift of*

*God that is in you.*” This was possibly the miraculous gift of inspired teaching by the Holy Spirit, for there were no New Testament Scriptures at the time for Timothy to consult in reference to his teaching. There existed only the Old Testament Scriptures. Nevertheless, he knew the gospel by heart, and continued the edification of the church through teaching because of his gift that came to him through the laying on of Paul’s hands (See At 8:17,18).

We must not miss the imperative “stir up” in this statement. We must understand this from the directive of 1 Corinthians 14:32: “*Now the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*” There was nothing as that which is often proclaimed today, that one be “stricken by the Spirit.” Or, one must allow the Spirit to take control. Paul would not have encouraged Timothy to stir up the gift of the Spirit, if it were the responsibility of the Spirit to stir him into action. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit never took control of the prophet. The Spirit was in subjection to the prophet when the prophet was to exercise his or her gift to minister teaching to the church.

Timothy’s moment of discouragement may in part have been the result of his upbringing. Because he grew up in a divided family both in faith and culture—the father was an unbelieving Gentile—we could as-

sume that Timothy may have allowed his lack of confidence as to who he was culturally to overcome momentarily his genuine faith that he received from his mother. At least we know that when one grows up in a culturally mixed family he often struggles for some time to determine his own cultural identity. Timothy may have allowed his struggle for identity in the past to discourage him in the present. At least he may have had some lack of confidence in himself because of his past mixed cultural childhood.

Therefore, Timothy needed to be reminded, “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*” Timothy needed to remember that he did “*not receive a spirit of bondage again to fear*” (Rm 8:15). His fear originated from within himself. It was not from the Spirit of God. He also needed to remember the strength of the one who was writing this letter to him. Paul had also written to others, “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me*” (Ph 4:13). It was now time for Timothy to conquer his fears and get back to work. He needed to do so regardless of the opposition that he faced, or his background in growing up in a culturally mixed family.

We assume that Paul’s point is that no disciple who is truly a disciple

of Jesus can never blame his or her parents for any emotional dysfunctions that may have originated from one’s childhood. There is no excuse for being dysfunctional in reference to living the gospel because one grew up in a dysfunctional family.

One must allow Jesus to transform him or her in order to overcome all emotional dysfunctions of the past. Everyone must be transformed into that which is appropriate for eternal dwelling (Rm 12:1,2). Our confidence, therefore, must always be in the power of God to transform us, and not in ourselves. We must believe that God “*is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us*” (Ep 3:20). “*For this purpose I also labor,*” Paul wrote, “*striving according to His working that powerfully works in me*” (Cl 1:29). We must allow the power of the gospel to transform us into those who are worthy of eternal dwelling.

### C. Stand on and for the gospel (1:8-12):

Paul’s use of the word “therefore” encourages Timothy to reflect on what he just wrote. And what he just wrote was that Timothy must remember four things: (1) Remember “*my prayers night and day*” that are for you, (2) Remember “*the genuine*

*faith that is in you,”* (3) *“Stir up the gift of God that is in you.”* (4) *“God has not given us a spirit of fear.”* Because of these things, Paul encouraged Timothy, *“Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner.”*

We assume that Paul was in his second and last imprisonment in Rome at the time he wrote this letter. When Luke completed the book of Acts, Paul was in prison in Rome awaiting trial (At 28:30,31). This first imprisonment was around A.D. 61,62. Paul was then released, and subsequently left Rome. At some time after being released he made a hurried trip to the island of Crete where he left Titus (Ti 1:5). From Crete he possibly went on to Achaia and Macedonia where he was arrested again around A.D. 67. He was again taken to Rome where he was martyred for Jesus Christ. It is assumed that 2 Timothy and Titus were his last letters to his former associates. Realizing the finality of his life at the time he wrote 2 Timothy, he sought to encourage Timothy to *“share with me in the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.”*

Paul had formerly written to those in Rome, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel”* (Rm 1:16). And now he wrote to Timothy from Rome, *“Share with me in the afflictions of the gospel.”* In both statements he referred

to the power of God through the gospel to both save and transform lives.

But the power of the gospel depends on a very important motivation. God *“has saved us and called us with a holy calling.”* This calling could never be according to God’s obligation to accept us through the performance of our works. We must remember, *“Now to him who works [in order to justify himself before God], the reward [of heaven] is not credited according to grace, **but according to debt**”* (Rm 4:4). Heaven can never be a debt payment. It must always be a free gift. In reference to God saving us, God does not work on the basis of paying debts according to our works of merit. He rewards according to grace. Therefore, our salvation *“is of faith that it might be by grace”* (Rm 4:16). We must walk by faith knowing that God will reward us because of the grace that was revealed on the cross. Therefore, if our salvation is *“by grace, then it is no more by works”* of merit (Rm 11:6). It is *“by grace you have been saved”* (Ep 2:5). We work in response to grace, realizing that our works, no matter how great or abundant, can ever put God in debt to reward us with heaven. This is the meaning of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:15: *“For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace that is reaching many people **may cause thanksgiving to***

### ***abound to the glory of God.***

Paul reminded Timothy that his salvational relationship with God was not based on any meritorious performance of his preaching. It was “*according to His own purpose and grace.*” Before the preacher would seek to sanctify himself through his powerful sermon on Sunday morning, therefore, he must remember that he can find no justification for his sins through his performance of preaching. He must not seek to feel self-sanctified through his preaching performances. He must remember that he is already sanctified completely by the grace of God before he stands before the people.

The preacher cannot preach himself into the grace of God. It should be that he preaches because he has been saved by the grace of God. It is easy to identify a preacher who is seeking his own salvation through his performance of preaching, and the one who is preaching in gratitude of the grace of God. His life-style according to the gospel will reveal his motives.

Before the creation of the world, God determined that man whom He would create could never work himself into the grace of God (See Rm 16:25; Cl 1:26; 1 Pt 1:20). Therefore, grace had to be free. It had to be freely given, for no meritorious performance on the part of man could qualify one

to receive the saving grace of God. It was for this reason that God demonstrated “*His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Rm 5:8).

Timothy needed to remember that he had not fallen out of grace with God because of his momentary discouragement. If one feels that he or she has fallen out of grace with God, he often feels that he must work himself back into the grace of God. This concept is nowhere taught in the New Testament. It is simply meritorious religiosity to think that one can perform himself into the grace of God.

The preceding effort on the part of some is often embedded in the desire to have a “personal relationship” with Jesus. Meritorious religiosity is embedded in the desire to perform meritoriously in order to feel closer to Jesus. Unfortunately, this desire that we place on ourselves to establish a personal relationship with Jesus is often in contradiction to what God has requested through Jesus.

God reached out to establish a “personal relationship” with us through His Son. This “personal relationship” has already been offered through grace that was poured forth at the cross. It is our responsibility to accept God’s personal relationship that He extends to us through the cross. It is a relationship that He seeks to establish with us through our obe-

dience to the gospel (See Rm 6:3-6). Once we accept this personal relationship with God through our obedience to the gospel, then we are walking in the light (1 Jn 1:7).

We do not marginalize the cross by our efforts to subsidize the atonement of the cross with our works. We cannot subsidize God's efforts to connect with us. We do not work our way into His personal relationship when we are baptized into Christ. Our response to the gospel through baptism brings us into God's relationship that He has already offered through His Son. When one is baptized into Christ, therefore, he or she is there. This is the dynamic of being baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19).

Those who are asking Jesus "to come into their hearts" may have misunderstood the plea of God through His only begotten Son. It is not that we ask God to come into our hearts. **God is asking us to come into His heart.** Every time the statement is made in the New Testament to "believe on Jesus," it is a request for those who hear the gospel to come into the realm of God's grace that is in Christ. God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Pt 3:9). Therefore, He pleads through His Son, "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt

11:28). Jesus stands at the door of our hearts and continues to knock: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with Him, and he with Me" (Rv 3:20). This is a personal relationship.

God's plan to bring His creation into a personal relationship with Himself was determined before the creation of the world (1 Pt 1:20). In this predestined plan of reconciliation, God was righteous in creating man. If there were no plan through grace, then God would have been fiendish to create us without any chance of establishing a saved relationship with Him. Therefore, the fact that there was a predestined plan lies in the fact that the plan "has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus."

The cross, therefore, was not an afterthought. It was the predestined plan of God that was executed through the incarnation and crucifixion of the Son of God. We are humbled by the revelation of this mystery. Those who are outside this relationship with God should be looking for water in order to be baptized into Christ. It is only by joining with the crucified Christ in obedience to the gospel can we enter into a personal relationship with God (See Rm 6:3-6).

Jesus was the creator of all things

(Cl 1:16). But before the first words were stated, “let there be” in reference to man, the Son of God already had in store what He would do. “*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*” (Jn 1:14). This was personal. This incarnation of the Son of God was predestined before the creation. This was the gospel journey of the Son of God in order that He rescue us from this world in order to take us into eternity (See Ph 2:5-11). He came to establish a salvational (personal) relationship with us. We must accept this relationship through obedience to the gospel.

Some have proposed that when the Word was made flesh, the rejection of the Word by the Jews to whom He initially came somehow moved King Jesus to postpone His kingdom until His final coming (Jn 1:11). But the foundation of this erroneous teaching is in the fact that the rejection of the Word, and subsequently the cross, **was always the eternal mystery of God to reconcile us to our Creator through Jesus.** God “*has reconciled us to Himself through Christ*” (2 Co 5:18). When we view the cross, therefore, we must understand “*that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself*” (2 Co 5:19).

This is the message of reconciliation. If there were no reconciliation through Jesus, then our message of the gospel is empty. Therefore, before

one attacks the gospel message with the teaching that the cross was an afterthought of God when the Jews rejected Jesus, he must consider again that the cross was the eternal predestined plan of God. It was predestined in order that the world be reconciled to God through the incarnate Son.

It was through the cross that the Son of God “*has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*” This gospel was revealed as a mystery through the Old Testament prophets. After the event occurred, it was revealed through the apostles of Jesus Christ to the world (Mk 16:15; see Ep 3:3-5). The unveiling of the mystery was at the cross and resurrection of the One who created all those who through faith would respond to this good news. Paul had many years earlier written to the Christians in Rome, “*Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death?*” (Rm 6:3). And when this obedience of the gospel transpired in the lives of each disciple, it was then that “*life and immortality*” were revealed. This is exactly why the Spirit was redundant to say again through John, “*This is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son*” (1 Jn 5:11).

So Paul reminded Timothy, “*To this gospel I am appointed a preacher*

and an apostle and a teacher.” As a **preacher** of the gospel, Paul stood before unbelievers and announced the revealed mystery of the gospel. As an **apostle**, he was one who was sent forth by Jesus in order to announce the good news to unbelievers. As a **teacher**, he instructed unbelievers in the specifics of the gospel. As a teacher he also instructed the believers in the wonders of the gospel that was a mystery to mankind before it was revealed through the incarnate Son of God (See Ep 3:3-5).

Timothy needed to instruct the believers in living the gospel. But he was initially a gospel preacher to the unbelievers. He was sent forth by the laying on of the elders’ hands in Lystra, and thus as an apostle as Barnabas (See At 13:4), he went forth with Paul to preach the gospel to unbelievers. In his local circumstances at the time of the writing of this letter Timothy needed in order to draw on the power of the gospel to renew his commitment to teach gospel living to the saints.

Because the gospel worked powerfully in the life of Paul, he was willing to suffer for the gospel. So he encouraged Timothy that he was not alone in his suffering to teach gospel living to those who had obeyed the gospel. Paul wrote, “*For this reason I also suffer these things.*” When a teacher suffers in his efforts to lead

the flock of God in being an example of gospel living, he must remember that Paul also suffered for the same reason. Paul had previously exhorted Timothy, “*You be an example to the believers*” (1 Tm 4:12).

In living and instructing others in gospel living, Paul reminded Timothy, “*I am not ashamed.*” His statement is reminiscent of what he wrote to the disciples in Rome: “*I am not ashamed of the gospel*” (Rm 1:16). The reason he was not ashamed of the gospel was that the gospel “*was the power of God unto salvation*” (Rm 1:16). If others would want to be saved, therefore, then there is no room to be ashamed of the message that will take them into eternal life. Our love for the lost must always overpower our apprehensions to stand up for the gospel. Our motivation to preach the gospel must always be that which drove Paul to conquer his fears: “*For the love of Christ compels us*” (2 Co 5:14). And so John would remind us, “*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear*” (1 Jn 4:18).

In the immediate text, Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because he was assured that Jesus Christ was truly the revealed Son of God who was incarnate in the flesh of man in order to go to the cross. “*I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I*

*have committed to Him until that day.”* Paul had committed his life to the Son of God, and thus he was assured that Jesus Christ would remember his sufferings as a preacher, apostle and teacher of the gospel. Peter essentially said the same: *“Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to Him in doing right, as a faithful Creator”* (1 Pt 4:19).

#### **D. Stand firm (1:13-18):**

Because of the power of the gospel that works in our lives, we can *“hold fast the pattern of sound words.”* We can do so *“in faith and love that is in Christ Jesus.”* This is the beauty of living the gospel. The gospel is not only about salvational matters, it is also about being motivated to live the holy life. In fact, and in another context, Paul exhorted, *“If you then were raised with Christ [in obedience to the gospel], seek those things that are above”* (Cl 3:1; see Cl 3:5-16). It is the grace of the gospel that causes *“thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God”* (2 Co 4:15). We stand firm as disciples of Jesus because we walk in gratitude of what He did for us at the cross, and what He will do for us when He is revealed from heaven.

We must not make the mistake of interpreting *“the pattern of sound*

*words”* to refer to a legal document of law by which we can judge ourselves meritoriously performing correctly for our own justification. Such an interpretation would be entirely contrary to the grace that inherently defines the gospel. We would interpret what Paul said in this text according to his commentary of the thought that he wrote to the Corinthian Christians:

*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached [with words] to you, which also you received [through words] and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast to that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain* (1 Co 15:1,2).

Through the words of Paul God had communicated the gospel to the Corinthians. If they continued to hold fast to his word by which he communicated the gospel to them, then their obedience to the gospel would not be in vain. The Corinthians must continue to believe the word by which he communicated the gospel. The solid foundation of the gospel upon which they stood, would be firm only if they continued to believe.

In the text written to Timothy, the exhortation was to *“hold fast the pattern of sound words”* by which the gospel is communicated to all men.

It was communicated “*in faith and love.*” Timothy was not to make any changes to the message. It was to be held as a “pattern,” for if the message was corrupted in any way, then it would become the “other gospel” about which Paul wrote to the Galatians (See Gl 1:6-9).

The gospel was “*the good thing that was committed*” to Timothy. If he doubted the pattern of the message of the gospel that was verbally committed to him, then his faith would be in vain. We assume, therefore, that Christians must continually be reminded with Scripture and hymns that speak of the old story of the cross.

*Tell me the old, old Story,  
Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory,  
Of Jesus and His love;  
Tell me the story simply,  
As to a little child,  
For I am weak and weary,  
And helpless and defiled.*

(George Bernard)

It is this story that we “*keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*” It is not that the Holy Spirit keeps the story in us. It is “kept by the Holy Spirit.” “Keep” refers to guard, and thus because the Holy Spirit dwells in us, then we guard the gospel in our lives in order not to bring shame on the Son of God. It is the same as what

the Holy Spirit said to some Jewish Christians who were falling away from the gospel: “*They crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame*” (Hb 6:6). But if “*God is not ashamed to be called*” our God (Hb 11:16), then we must not shame Him by treading under foot the blood of His incarnate Son (Hb 10:29). It was this Son who is “*the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame*” of the cross for us (Hb 12:2).

Nevertheless, Paul wrote, “*All those who are in Asia turned away from me.*” It was not that all the Christians in Asia turned away from Paul while he was in Rome in prison. It was only that those of Asia who were in Rome at the time Paul was in prison who turned away. For example, “*of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.*” At the time of writing, Paul wrote, “*Only Luke is with me*” (2 Tm 4:11).

If Timothy was in Asia at the time of writing, then the “*house of Onesiphorus*” was also there (See 2 Tm 4:19). At the time of writing, Onesiphorus was in Rome with Paul in order to encourage him. Of him, Paul wrote that he “*was not ashamed of my chains.*” When Onesiphorus came to Rome, “*he eagerly sought me out and found me*” in the custody of a prison guard. Onesiphorus was not

like some arrogant preachers who had forsaken Paul during his first imprisonment. Of these political opportunists Paul wrote, “*The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not with pure motives, supposing to add distress to my chains*” (Ph 1:16). He said this of those political preachers who “*preach Christ even from envy and strife*” (Ph 1:15).

It seems that Onesiphorus had a long acquaintance with Paul. When Paul was in Ephesus, it was there that Onesiphorus “*ministered to me.*” And now when Onesiphorus found out that Paul was in distressing times in a Roman prison, he caught the first ship to Rome in order to encourage

Paul in prison. Such is the character of love. Such defines true fellowship that we have in preaching the gospel to the world.

Ministry is our work for others in helping those who are in need. If one is in need of the message of the saving gospel, then we minister the gospel. If one is in distress, then we minister a message of comfort. Ministry, therefore, is always focused on others. When we keep our ministry focused on others, then we are worthy of the words that were written by Paul concerning Onesiphorus: “*The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day.*”

## Chapter 2

### LIVING THE TEACHING

In the context of this chapter Paul gives some very important instructions concerning those who would be both evangelists in preaching the gospel to unbelievers, as well as teachers of the word of God to the disciples. As he goes through this list of instructions, it is necessary that we note each point of instruction as a guideline for living according to the gospel. We must do so because it is the Holy Spirit who is writing these instructions in order that one be an effective leader of God’s people.

#### A. Instructions for gospel teachers (2:1-3):

**1. “Be strong in the grace” (2:1):**  
The imperative in this statement assumes that one enjoys the effect that the grace of God has on his behavior. Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 4:15 may be the commentary that would give us some light to understand the mandate that he here gives to Timothy: “... *the grace that is reaching many people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*”

Understanding that we are saved by grace is powerful in reassuring the human spirit that we do not stand alone in our relationship with God. Too many people have revealed the frustration of living religiously because of their inability to perform perfectly their self-imposed religious rites and rituals. In frustration, many have fled to the grace of God. This was the frustration that Paul expressed to Peter on the occasion when Peter momentarily withdrew from some legalistic brethren who came up to Antioch from Jerusalem:

*We who are Jews by nature and not sinners among the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but by the faith of Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, not by the works of law, for by works of law no flesh will be justified (Gl 2:15,16).*

Grace causes grateful appreciation because we are encouraged to walk in gratitude of what we already have in Christ. **When one realizes that his walk in religion leads only to frustration, then he is drawn to grace.** This is what Jesus meant when He said, *“If I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Me”* (Jn 12:32).

We are made strong in the grace of God because we are encouraged to trust in God and not in ourselves. Grace is reassuring. It is confidence building. The more we understand the magnitude of the grace of God that was poured out for us, the more we are inspired to walk in thanksgiving of God for all that He did for us through His Son.

**2. “Teach” (2:2):** The first thing that grace encourages is our own appreciation for what we have learned. We are driven to share the message of grace. This point was so important that Paul expanded on the subject in his letter to Titus:

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age (Ti 2:12).*

Paul personified grace as the teacher. It is the “teacher” who encourages us to live godly. In appreciation for what God did for us through the offering of His only begotten Son, we are driven to *“live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age.”*

Timothy had indeed learned from Paul the tremendous grace that God had extended to this former persecutor of the church. So the mandate to Timothy was to commit the same “to

*faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*” The more we understand the magnitude of the grace of God, the more we want to share it with others. Gospel preachers, therefore, are such because they are highly motivated by the gospel of grace to teach the grace that comes to them through the gospel. It would be true, therefore, that if we do not share the gospel of grace then we do not fully appreciate God’s grace.

When we see others struggling with their own religiosity in order to self-sanctify themselves before God, the more we are moved to deliver them from the bondage of religion by preaching grace. If we came to those who were struggling in religion with just another system of legalism that is cloaked in a “form of righteousness,” then we would be as the Pharisees about whom Jesus said, *“For they bind up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders”* (Mt 23:4). *“For you [scribes and Pharisees] travel sea and land to make one proselyte. And when he is made, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves”* (Mt 23:15).

Legal religiosity does not bring the freedom of grace to those who are in the bondage of religion, even though the doctrinal outline of the legal religionist is punctuated with one law after another. Law is important, but we, as Paul, *“conclude that a man*

*is justified by faith apart from the [perfect] works of law”* (Rm 3:28). Religion would assume that we are justified by our efforts to keep law perfectly. But in reference to law, *“There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Rm 3:10). This does not mean that we *“make void law through faith”* (Rm 3:31). *“On the contrary, we establish law”* by faith (Rm 3:31). We seek to live by the law of God because of our faith in God’s grace, not in our own ability to keep His law perfectly.

**3. “Endure hardship” (2:3):** If grace is preached in a world of meritorious religiosity, then preachers will incur the same persecution that came upon Jesus when He did the same preaching to His generation of religionists. When Jesus preached the preceding message of grace to the religious leaders of the Jews, they unleashed on Him nails and a cross.

In preparing His disciples for the same reaction from the religious leaders they would encounter, Jesus said, *“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its works are evil”* (Jn 7:7). Therefore, Timothy must remember what Jesus said to His disciples, *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you”* (Jn 15:18). It was then that Jesus revealed an axiomatic truth for those who would live according to the gospel that He introduced into the world:

*If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (Jn 15:19).*

But Jesus would remind all of us, “*He who hates Me hates My Father also*” (Jn 15:23). Timothy needed to remember this when he was “*enduring hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*” (See Mt 5:10-12).

**4. “Focus” (2:4-7):** In order to endure the hardship that will come upon the one who preaches the gospel that the religious world hates, one must stay focused, “*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross*” (Hb 12:2).

In order to stay focused in the warfare in which we have engaged Satan in this world, we must not entangle ourselves “*with the affairs of this life.*” In his first letter to Timothy, Paul cautioned the young evangelist with the words, “*For the love of money is the root of all evils*” (1 Tm 6:10). If one entangles himself with the love of money, then he must be reminded that “*some [Christians] coveting after [money] have strayed from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows*” (1 Tm 6:10). Therefore, in order to “*fight the good fight of the faith*” (1 Tm

6:12) in the war in which we are engaged with Satan in this world, we must not entangle ourselves in that which will divert our attention away from our mission. If we follow this directive as evangelists, then we will “*please him who enlisted*” us as soldiers of the cross.

“*If a man competes as an athlete,*” he does not receive the prize for the race unless he runs according to the rules. And so it is with our walk by faith. Unless we walk according to the gospel, we will not receive the crown that is laid up for us at the end of our race on earth. We will not unless we stay focused (2 Tm 4:8; see Hb 12:1,2).

The objective of the gospel race is the crown. Receiving the crown is as the “*laboring farmer*” who expects to “*first partake of the fruits*” of his own labors. As he runs the race of farming, he remains faithful to his duties in expectation of the food that he will enjoy when harvest comes.

When Paul reminded Timothy that “*the Lord will give you understanding in all things,*” we must reflect on the gift of understanding that came personally to Timothy as a result of the laying on of Paul’s hands. Reference here could be to the “*word of wisdom*” that Timothy may have received as a miraculous gift that was distributed to Timothy through Paul (See 1 Co 12:8). Since “*one and the*

*same Spirit works all these things [gifts], distributing to every one individually as He wills,”* (1 Co 12:11), then we could assume that Paul here assumes that the Holy Spirit would bless Timothy with understanding concerning these things about which he wrote. Timothy had no written New Testament to consult. He had only the miraculous gifts that he had received through the laying on of Paul’s hands.

(Some wonder why there is no great emphasis placed on the historical function of the miraculous gifts among the early Christians. The answer to this lack of focus on the gifts in the New Testament is in the fact that Jesus did not send forth this measure of the Spirit as something that would be permanent throughout the history of the church. The miraculous gifts were given only to establish the early church in the faith in the absence of the written word of God. After the written word was completed, the Holy Spirit expected it to carry the church throughout the centuries until the coming of Jesus.

In reference to the miraculous gifts, it was always according to what Paul wrote, *“For we know in part and we prophesy in part”* (1 Co 13:9). The miraculous gifts were always partial in reference to the complete revelation of the word of God that would by the end of the first century be com-

plete. Therefore, while the early Christians experienced the benefit of the miraculous gifts in the absence of the written word of God, it was always as Paul metaphorically stated, *“When I was a child I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child”* (1 Co 13:11). The early church was taught partially through the miraculous gifts. But the church would be able to grow into spiritual adulthood only through the complete revelation of the word of God in written form. Paul explained:

*But where there are prophecies, they will be abolished. Where there are languages, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will vanish away”* (1 Co 13:8).

The gifts were understood in the historical context that *“when that which is complete has come, then that which is in part [the miraculous gifts] will be done away”* (1 Co 13:10). For this reason the New Testament does not focus on the importance of the miraculous gifts among the early disciples. We understand, however, that the gifts are in the background as they are noted occasionally in this letter to Timothy. They are mentioned only in passing because the Holy Spirit was preparing the writing of the New Testament for the time when the gifts would fade away, which thing hap-

pened by the end of the first century. That which was in part was to firmly establish the church. But the written word of God would continue for centuries after the last person died who had hands laid on him to receive a miraculous gift.)

**5. “Remember” (2:8,9):** The gospel is not only the incarnation and crucifixion, but also the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead. Timothy must gain strength through his remembrance “*that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.*” This was the good news that Paul first preached in Timothy’s hometown of Lystra (Compare 1 Co 15:1,2). What Paul is calling on Timothy to do is to remember that he initially responded to this gospel message that he and Barnabas preached in Lystra about twenty years before. It is thus good sometimes to remember back when we first obeyed the gospel in order to remind ourselves of that to which we committed ourselves for life.

The intensity of Paul’s belief in the gospel was revealed in his suffering hardship (See 2 Co 11:16-29). For the gospel, Paul reminded Timothy, “*I suffer hardship even as an evildoer in bonds.*” Paul was under the same sentence of death as those who had committed crimes that were deserving of death. However, he wanted to remind Timothy and ourselves that

“*the word of God is not bound.*” People can burn the Bible, but the message of the gospel will continue. There can also be prejudiced paraphrased versions of the Bible, but the message is not corrupted. Muslims consider the Quran to be sacred paper and ink, but it is the message of the Bible that is precious to Christians. The message of the gospel cannot be corrupted, even by the worst translation that may exist. Christians glorify the God of the Bible, while Muslims glorify Allah, but also the paper and ink of the Quran.

**6. “Live with Jesus” (2:10-13):** For the preceding reason, Paul continued to “*endure all things for the elects’ sake.*” He was focused on those who would eventually be elected out of this world for eternal glory. God had predestined before the creation that He would save all those who would individually and voluntarily come into the fold of His people. He “*predestined us [the church] to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to Himself*” (Ep 1:5). Therefore, in Christ “*we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined [as the church] according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will*” (Ep 1:11).

In our individual obedience to the gospel, we voluntarily made a choice to become a part of those whom God would eventually elect out of this

world for eternal glory. Christians are thus “the elect,” because when the final chapter of the gospel is revealed when Jesus comes again, He will elect us out of this world for eternal dwelling. After speaking of these things to those in Thessalonica, Paul concluded, “*Comfort one another with these words*” (1 Th 4:18; see 1 Th 4:13-17).

A committed teacher of the word of God is dedicated to those who will be elected out of this world for eternal glory. It is for this reason that there are those who work among the disciples in order to look out for their souls (Hb 13:17). Through their teaching, they are preparing the elect for eternal dwelling.

If one would live with Jesus now, then he must die to himself in order to be a part of those who will eventually be elected out of this world. Timothy knew exactly that to which Paul was referring in this text. He had heard the following message many times:

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk in newness of life* (Rm 6:3,4).

There can be no “newness of life” if there is no death with Christ on the cross. If we would live with Him in this life, then we must have died and been buried with Him.

Paul then expanded on his reference to our obedience to the gospel. “*If we suffer*” as he was suffering in a Roman prison, then “*we will also reign with Him.*” Paul was not diverting Timothy’s attention to something of the future. Timothy was being encouraged in the present to “*endure hardship as a good soldier.*” Paul’s emphasis, therefore, was encouragement of the young disciple in reference to his present situation. Jesus left the example of suffering with Him: “*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps*” (1 Pt 2:21).

Romans 5:17 is the commentary on what Paul meant:

*For if by one man’s offense death reigned through the One, much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.*

This promise to reign with Christ is something that is experienced **in this life**. Walking in the newness of life after we are baptized is our reign over

all trials and tribulation in this life (See 1 Co 10:13). We died with Christ in obedience to the gospel, and thus we now reign with Christ who is our King of kings and Lord of lords.

There are some who are confused about this present reign of the saints with King Jesus. They rob the saints of this precious reality in life by forwarding the “reign” to some future fantasy of Jesus reigning on this earth. But the reign under consideration by Paul is spiritual, not carnal. Those who postpone the reign to the future assume that there will be some carnal reign of the saints over unbelievers. But this concept of a reign of the saints is earthly and carnal. It is a distraction from the spiritual reign of the saints with Christ who is over “*all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named*” (Ep 1:21). Though we do not yet see that all things have been subjected to Jesus at this time (Hb 2:8), we can be assured that He is head over all things for the sake of the saints (Ep 1:22).

Since we have the victory through our obedience to Jesus’ gospel work at the cross, we too have conquered the spiritual forces of evil that war against us. Timothy needed to be reassured that as a good soldier who was engaging the enemy, he would eventually gain the victory. If John were writing to Timothy, he

would have written, “*This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith*” (1 Jn 5:4).

Therefore, Paul said to Timothy in a time of discouragement, “*If we are faithless, He remains faithful. He cannot deny Himself.*” When we are in those times when we feel that Jesus is a long way from us, we need to remember that we are reigning in this life with Him. We may have a momentary slip off the throne with Him, but He is still there. Since we are a part of His body, He cannot ignore His body parts. This is a good time to sit back and read **Romans 8:28-39**.

## **B. Instructions in gospel living (2:14-26):**

In this context, Paul seeks to encourage the young teacher (See 2 Tm 3:15,16). In his encouragement, Paul reminded Timothy with a charge “*before the Lord that they [the disciples] do not strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.*” When brethren involve themselves in disputes over nonsense, they give themselves over to the Devil to work mischief through them. There are words (discussions) that have “*no profit.*” In other words, these are discussions that are not profitable for spiritual growth.

The one who knows his Bible can discern those “words” that are not

profitable for spiritual growth. He or she can separate Bible from Baal by “rightly dividing the word of truth.” However, those who do not know their Bibles cannot discern those words that are to no profit.

Since Paul’s admonition came to Timothy as a “charge,” then he must “*be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed*” of those things that he teaches. One should never be apprehensive about teaching the word of God. The word that he or she teaches, did not originate from the one who delivers the word. The word originated from God. If one is apprehensive about the word of God, therefore, he will not have confidence in teaching it to others. In fact, the teacher must know that if he or she does not teach, then those disciples who believe and propagate the words of no profit will do so “*to the ruin of the hearers.*” A church, therefore, can be ruined if members are taught by one who does not know the Bible.

Any group of people who call themselves a church of Christ who do not open their Bibles and study, is not a church of the word of God. They are a religion that is being led astray by those who do not know their Bibles. Of such teachers Jesus said, “*Let them alone*” (Mt 15:14). He explained why they should be left alone: “*They are blind leaders of the*

*blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch*” (Mt 15:14).

We have discovered that those churches that are determined to exist apart from the preaching of the word of God are driven by excited “blind guides” who with great zeal propagate from the pulpit exhilarating words that are sterile of the word of God. In their experiential excitement the people leave the presence of the preacher being no wiser in the word of God than when they first showed up at the assembly. They are the blind who have itching ears to be led by blind preachers (2 Tm 4:3).

Too many teachers and preachers propagate “*profane and empty babblings.*” These false prophets “*will increase to more ungodliness.*” In reference to the time when Paul wrote these words, these babbling preachers were not far in the future in Asia. In the church of the city of Pergamum, and some of the other churches of Asia, Jesus judged,

*But I have a few things against you because you have there those who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication (Rv 2:14; see Rv 2:20; 3:2).*

Ungodliness is spread through words that either condone or encourage wicked living. It happens as Paul wrote, “*Their word will spread like gangrene.*” Paul’s example of two teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, proves that some will stray from the truth when they preach that which destroys the foundation of the gospel.

The foundation of the heresy of Hymenaeus and Philetus was that they taught “*that the resurrection is already past.*” When this fundamental fact of the gospel is denied, it opens the door to what Paul argued in 1 Corinthians 15. “*If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die*” (1 Co 15:32). If there is no resurrection to come, then the impetus for living the gospel becomes meaningless. It is meaningless because the gospel cannot bring hope without the resurrection. There is no “good” news in the gospel if there is no resurrection in the future.

If this life is all there is, then we should live a life that satisfies every hedonistic desire in order to be happy. And such is the world in which we live today. When people take pride in their fornication, then we know that civilization as we know it is in demise. Fornication in a society is an attack against the family. It is an attack even against marriage. When marriage and family are destroyed within a particular society, then that society is on its

way out. The society becomes as it was in the days before Noah when “*the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (Gn 6:5).

The only way to detour a society that is headed for doom is to teach the moral standard of the word of God. This principle is axiomatic. It is not within the power of man to determine his own moral standard of living. For example, this is the problem with fornication. Fornication is the satisfaction of the sexual lust of man for one’s own selfish pleasure. If a society determines that there is no stigma attached to committing fornication, then the society as a whole establishes its own moral standard that fornication is acceptable between “two consenting adults.” But according to the moral standard of the word of God, fornication is sin. It is sin from which one must turn if he or she would be a disciple of Jesus (See 1 Co 6:9; Rv 21:8).

Though we may live in a morally digressed society, we must always remember that “*the firm foundation of God stands.*” The seal (signal) of this foundation is that “*the Lord knows those who are His.*” He knows those who are His because of their commitment to live the moral standards that He has communicated through His word. It is imperative,

therefore, that the mandate of 2 Timothy 2:2 be carried out: *“The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others.”*

Therefore, *“let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”* When one commits himself or herself to the Lord, this means that he or she has committed themselves to a moral standard of authority that is based on the word of God. Paul said the same in another context: *“If you then were raise with Christ,”* then put off those things that identify one with a world of iniquity (Read Cl 3:1,8-11). At the same time, one must *“put on as the elect of God”* those behavioral standards that identify one to be living the holy life (Read Cl 3:12-14).

In the house of God, it is as with any physical house. In a physical house there are *“vessels of gold and of silver.”* But in the same house, and at the same time, there are vessels *“of wood and of earth”* that are always temporary. The vessels of gold and silver bring *“honor”* to the house. But the vessels of wood and earth bring *“dishonor.”* Only the vessels of honor are *“sanctified and useful for the Master”* for they do not perish with the using. Only these vessels are *“prepared for every good work.”* Those vessels of dishonor, however,

bring disrepute on the house of God. They disgrace the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ because they lead to the ruin of the house of God.

Lest we think for a moment that such iniquity as fornication cannot invade the house of God, we must not forget the house of God in Corinth. *“It is actually reported,”* Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“that there is fornication among you”* (1 Co 5:1). When there are those teachers among us who are weak in teaching against fornication, the practice will often come into the church when such becomes an accepted moral behavior of society. The result of being weak in teaching against all forms of fornication is that the faith of many is ruined.

In reference to those in Corinth who condoned the fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh through fornication, Paul instructed the faithful to *“deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh”* (1 Co 5:5). The faithful were to *“purge out the old leaven”* of worldly living (1 Co 5:7). If a church is not willing to purge out those who seek to live according to the flesh, then they are doomed as those churches of Asia who did not repent of their iniquity. Jesus would say to every church that condones sexual immorality, *“Therefore, repent, or else I will come to you quickly. And I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth”* (Rv 2:16).

Paul’s answer for keeping one-self pure of fornication can be encapsulated in one word: Flee! *“Flee also youthful lusts.”* There are those lusts that are strong in youth, and from these the wise apostle encourages Timothy to stay away from the presence thereof. Fleeing is defined in the text when we *“pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace”* with those who are fellow Christians (See 1 Tm 6:11). In other words, in order to keep one-self undefiled by the iniquity of the world, he or she as a young person must stay in the company of righteous people. Evil companions do corrupt one’s thinking. In order to keep one’s heart and mind pure, then one must stay in the companionship of those who are godly.

In this context of moral purity, Paul inserts an admonition: *“Avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they generate strife.”* Senseless talk will lead to nonsense. And talk over issues of nonsense only digresses into strife. When the conversation turns to *“foolish and unlearned questions,”* it is time to move on to those subjects that generate *“righteousness, faith, love and peace.”*

In order not to be misunderstood on this subject, Paul explicitly stated, *“The servant of the Lord **must not quarrel.**”* If one finds himself in a quarrel with another over questions

of nonsense, then he knows that he has momentarily turned from the standard of *“righteousness, faith, love and peace.”*

The character and behavior of those who seek to live in response to the demeanor of the gospel is to *“be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves.”* If one would persist to engage in *“foolish and unlearned questions,”* then he will become one of *“those who oppose themselves.”* And if one finds himself in such a situation, then it is time for repentance.

In this context of behavior, repentance is expressed with the subjunctive. If one adheres to the instructions herein given in reference to godly behavior, then it may be that God *“will grant them repentance leading to a full knowledge of the truth.”* And in this context, we would add that it is necessary that one be led into a *“full knowledge of the truth”* of the gospel (See Gl 2:5,14). If one is looking unto Jesus as his example of behavior, then he must *“let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. **But He made Himself of no reputation**”* (Ph 2:5-7). If one would live after this gospel example of Jesus, then he too must make the gospel journey.

If one would seek to live after the example of Jesus, it is then that Paul says, “*they may come to their senses out of the snare of the devil.*” In contrast to being “*held captive by him to do his will,*” the one who would obey

the gospel has brought himself into the freedom that is in Christ (See Gl 5:1). In the freedom in Christ one should never allow himself to be led into the captivity of any sin.

## Chapter 3

### LEADING THROUGH PERILOUS TIMES

Paul not only realized that the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecies concerning the consummation of national Israel was now upon the Jews, he gave some final statements to Timothy in order to prepare him for the imminent social upheaval that was coming. We have found that biblical interpreters traditionally pay little attention to this historical transition in the existence of national Israel that transpired in the first century. The termination of national Israel through whom God had worked for centuries to bring the Messiah and Savior into the world was now beginning in the lifetime of Timothy. We conclude that this letter was written around A.D. 66, prior to Paul’s beheading in Rome in possibly A.D. 67. Therefore, we would naturally view the context of Paul’s statements to both Timothy and Titus—the last two letters that Paul wrote—that his thoughts would make some references to this catastrophic finality of national Israel. The Jew-

ish wars of Rome against the Jews that transpired over a period of about three years in Judea, culminated in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The finality of Rome’s campaign in Palestine culminated in the conquest of Herod’s getaway resort of Masada that was south of Jerusalem.

The consummation of national Israel was traumatic for the Jews. Over 1,500 years of history were coming to a close. For this reason, Jesus went into detail in Matthew 24 in order to explain for believers what would transpire in the few years that would lead up to the end (see also Lk 21). The fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus was made about thirty-five years before it came to pass at the time Paul wrote this letter. Jesus had personally said to His immediate disciples during His earthly ministry many years before, “*Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone*

***upon another that will not be thrown down***” (Mt 24:2). He made this statement in reference to the temple and Jerusalem. And now, both Timothy and Titus were in these last days when the stones were still standing upon one another, but would soon be cast down.

Now suppose we were leaders of the disciples during these times when a greater part of the church was composed of Jewish Christians. What instructions do we suppose the Holy Spirit would give to us concerning the finality of the Jewish heritage that had now come upon the Jewish nation? With this question in mind we must come to the context of 2 Timothy and Titus. From chapter 3 in the 2 Timothy letter, Paul prepared Timothy to deal with both doctrinal and social problems that would threaten the body of believers during these final days of Israel.

The content of this chapter is divided into two sections: (1) Paul reflects on Jesus’ prophecy concerning the nature of a society that is fallen (3:1-9). (2) Paul then exhorts those leaders of the church who must endure the fallen social environment in which they ministered (3:10-17).

### **A. The fallen society (3:1-9):**

In the first letter, Paul had prepared Timothy for these last times: *“Now the Spirit clearly says that in*

***the latter times some will depart from the faith***” (1 Tm 4:1). In this letter, the warning is *“that in the last days perilous times will come.”* The civil and social times before and after A.D. 66 were certainly trying. Timothy lived during these days of Jewish rebellion and Roman subjugation of the Jews. As a leader it was his task to hold the people of God together and keep them encouraged. This was not a time in history to draw back from one’s leadership responsibilities.

We must not become “prophecy thieves” by stealing these statements from Timothy and others who were responsible for preparing the disciples to endure the troubling times that were near. Some modern-day prognosticators are quick to scurry through the Scriptures for some statements by which they can scare their audience into false hopes in the immediate times. But doing such robs Timothy and those to whom he ministered, of some encouraging preparatory instructions by the Holy Spirit that they endure the next few years of social turmoil. This would be particularly true in reference to the Jewish Christian families whose national heritage was going to be greatly disrupted.

But with these statements of Paul to Timothy, those today who would apply them to ourselves have missed the fulfillment by over two thousand years. We twist the Scriptures to our

own destruction when we steal Bible prophecies that were relevant to those in whose lifetime in the first century they were fulfilled. We would caution those who would use these statements of the “end of times” in our own generation, which thing has been done for centuries.

One important point to keep in mind is that **the Bible nowhere teaches the imminent return of Jesus**. We need to be clear on this matter. “Imminent” means “right now,” in one’s lifetime. Nowhere in the New Testament is there a promise that Jesus would come in His final coming in the lifetime of the disciples of the first century. When James wrote, “*for the coming of the Lord is near,*” **he was not deceiving his readers into believing that Jesus was about to come in His final coming in the lifetime of his immediate readers** (Jas 5:8). If the Holy Spirit through James had prophesied such in this statement, then the Holy Spirit would have lied to the people, for Jesus has not yet come for over two thousand years.

Therefore, if statements as “latter times,” “last days” and “near” do not refer to an imminent final coming of Jesus in the lifetime of the first recipients of the New Testament autographs, **then there are no statements in the entire New Testament that teach Jesus’ imminent final**

**coming in our lifetime**. If the New Testament did not teach the imminent return of Jesus in the first century when the words of prophecy were first written, then it does not teach such today. The “end-of-time” prognosticators need to take another look at their Bibles, especially to those passages as the one under consideration in our immediate text that speaks of the “last days.”

Paul prepared Timothy and the church by stating “*that in the last days [of national Israel] perilous times will come*” (See introduction). “Perilous times” refers to both social and civil conflict. Social unrest produces civil conflict. And in the historical context in which Paul wrote, the Jewish insurrection had grown so strong in the Roman Empire that the Romans decided to terminate the source of the problem. Jerusalem, and national Israel, had to be subjugated.

In the text, Paul then went to the heart of the problem. And the heart was the chaotic social environment of the Jews at the time. When Paul said, “*For men will be,*” we assume that he takes his discussion outside the fellowship of the church, though the Jewish insurrection also affected the Jewish members of the church. His primary focus, as Jesus in Matthew 24, was to identify the social upheaval of society that stirred the Romans into dealing with the Jewish problem in

the civil society of the Roman Empire.

Jesus had touched on the social upheaval that would prevail until the final consummation of national Israel in A.D. 70. He prophesied, “*Many will be offended and will betray one another and will hate one another*” (Mt 24:10). “*Lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold*” (Mt 24:12).

Paul reiterated the meaning of these statements in the contexts of his message to Timothy. In verses 2-5 he described the lawless society in which Timothy and the disciples lived at the time of writing:

*Men will be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, irrec-  
oncilable, slanderers, without self-  
control, brutal, haters of good,  
treacherous, reckless, conceited, lov-  
ers of pleasures rather than lovers  
of God, having a form of godliness,  
but denying the power thereof.*

This description of a wretched society that prevailed at the time of Timothy underlines the social environment in which Timothy and Titus labored. Such social conditions prevailed in the decade leading up to the consummation of national Israel. We could assume that this description was

relevant to the society of Jews at the time because it was the Jewish insurrection that Rome sought to put down. We make this application in view of the statement that some had “*a form of godliness.*” The statement is reminiscent of what Paul wrote of the Jews in Romans 10:3: “*For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness, **have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.***”

By establishing their own righteousness, they created religious behavior after their own desires. And in the context of the times, the Jews religious behavior was lawlessness in reference to Roman law. In the statement that some “*will betray one another*” (Mt 24:10), we would assume that with the families of many Jewish Christians, there would be betrayals. When those who thought that they had a God-given destiny to deliver Israel from Roman oppression, imposed on all their Jewish relatives to take up the sword against Rome, then we would assume that there would be betrayals even within families.

Peter wrote 2 Peter in the middle 60s, about the same time that Paul penned his letter to Timothy. Peter reaffirmed what Paul wrote when he described some apostate Christians:

*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the*

knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, **they are again entangled in them and overcome** ... it has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pt 2:20-22).

Paul was writing to Timothy concerning those who were “wallowing in the mire” of sin from which they formerly may have been delivered through obedience to the gospel. However, whether he was speaking specifically of apostate Christians, or Jewish unbelievers in general, his instructions to Timothy were pointed: “*From such people turn away.*” In other words, Timothy was to give the lawless insurrections over to the judgment that was coming upon them.

Jude, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, quoted a statement that was initially made by Enoch who lived before the flood of Noah’s day. Enoch referred specifically to those who were destroyed in the flood. Jude applied the same type of punishment to those of his generation. He also wrote in the middle 60s in reference to the judgement that was coming upon national Israel for their rejection of the Son of God:

*The Lord came with ten thousands of His saints [angels] to execute judg-*

*ment on all, and to convict all who are **ungodly** among them of all their **ungodly** deeds that they have committed in an **ungodly** way, and of all the harsh things that **ungodly** sinners have spoken against Him (Jd 14,15).*

The prophecy was appropriate for the times in which Timothy lived. The description that Paul made concerning the social conditions of the times are exhausting to read. Nevertheless, they give us some idea of what God thinks of ungodly behavior, and especially of those who forsake Jesus and trod under foot His precious blood by which they were formerly cleansed (See Hb 10:29). Timothy and the other leaders were to strike from their prayers those who lived an ungodly life that led to death. The apostle John stated this in reference to such ungodly people, “*There is a sin unto death. I do not say that he [the concerned leader] **should pray for this***” (1 Jn 5:16). Tragic, but sometimes true in reference to some in our lives who have given up on Jesus and walked back into the vomit of sin and the mire in which pigs wallow.

The early church met in the homes of the members, and thus, Paul’s urgency here is in the fact that there were those who go from house to house with the heretical beliefs and conduct that he has previously described. “*Gullible women weighed*

down with sins” were the primary targets of those who go from house to house with their social unrest. “Gullible women” are susceptible to being carried away by those who preach lawlessness. In the first letter to Timothy Paul described idle women who were “wandering about from house to house” (1 Tm 5:13). Here the focus is on those who are laden with sin and seek to propagate their “various lusts.”

Because of the presence of “idle women” and “gullible women” among the disciples, we can understand why both Paul and Peter focused on women being in subjection to the men of the body of Christ (See 1 Tm 2:11-15; 1 Pt 3:1-6). The marriage and family were tested in the social upheaval that prevailed in those times. In order to help prevent the disruption of the body of Christ, the two apostles deemed it necessary to remind the women not to become a part of the problem.

It is in this context of house to house wandering that Paul identified those who had difficulty in living the gospel that they obeyed. They are those who are “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” of the gospel. We must attach the gospel to the phrase “the truth.” “The truth” in this context is not a catechism of rules. It is easy to learn a catechism of law. But this

meaning does not seem to fit the context of these about whom Paul speaks. In Ephesians 1:13 Paul wrote a commentary on what he meant by “the truth”: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard **the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation.**” When the Holy Spirit used Paul’s hand to refer to the truth, He assumed that in this one word we would understand that He was referring to **the truth of the gospel.**

There were those who went from house to house speaking those things that were contrary to the truth of the gospel. For example, Peter and Barnabas, with some faithful Jews in Antioch, experienced some of these who came up from Jerusalem to the church in Antioch (See Gl 2:11-13). These legal teachers came up from Jerusalem with “another gospel” of circumcision, which thing they considered to be “the truth” (See At 15:1). Even to the disciples in Philippi Paul wrote that such Jewish teachers were as “dogs.” “Beware of the dogs. Beware of the evil workers. Beware of the false circumcision” (Ph 3:2). False teachers often establish catechisms of law that they consider to be “the truth.” They then set out across the world to teach “the truth.” But in teaching their “truth,” they have denied the truth of the gospel. They are preaching “another gospel.”

It could have been such “dogs”

about whom Paul warned Timothy, that would arise in the last times in which he was living. These were those who were continually learning from and quoting their Old Testaments, but they were never able to discover the gospel about which Moses and all the prophets directed Israel to accept.

It was even difficult during the earthly ministry of Jesus for the disciples to connect all the dots in reference to Jesus fulfilling all the prophecies concerning His Messiahship. After His resurrection, and prior to His ascension, Jesus said to the disciples,

*These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled that were written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms, concerning Me (Lk 24:44).*

But just before the ascension, the apostles asked Jesus, “*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*” (At 1:6). They still did not understand the spiritual nature of His gospel reign in heaven. We can understand, therefore, those to whom Paul wrote the following statement: They were “*always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” of the gospel.

The Jews knew their Old Testa-

ment Scriptures. However, because of nationalistic motives at the time, they were behaving as insurrectionists of the Roman Empire. They could not understand that King Jesus was on His throne in heaven. All those prophecies of the law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms had been fulfilled. Jesus was King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). If the insurrectionist Jews would have accepted this kingdom reign of Jesus, then they would have cared less who was Emperor in Rome. Their nationalism would have been dissolved and their faithfulness transferred unto the spiritual kingdom of Jesus (See Gl 3:26-29; Cl 1:13). Unfortunately, their nationalistic and earthly view of the prophesied Messiah distorted their understanding of the prophecies.

Paul then explained why some were never able to come to a knowledge of the truth of the gospel. They are “*men of corrupt minds.*” Such were Jannes and Jambres who “*withstood Moses*” (Ex 7:11,12,22; 8:7). They were as those about whom the Spirit described who lived before the flood of Noah’s day: “*They did not like to retain God in their knowledge*” (Rm 1:28). Therefore, “*God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things that are not proper*” (Rm 1:28). And thus they are “*rejected concerning the faith.*”

Those with “depraved minds”

would be exposed, and thus rejected by God. As Jannes and Jambres were exposed before Pharaoh, so will these be exposed among all the Jews (See Ex 7:11,12; 8:18; 9:11). *“Their folly will be manifested to all men.”* At the conclusion of the parable of the tares, Jesus spoke of the same exposure, but in reference to those obedient subjects of His kingdom reign. After the destruction of national Israel in A.D. 70, it would be then that ***“the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”*** (Mt 13:43). **After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the unbelieving Jews were exposed to have been rejected by God. The believing Jews were exposed to be the righteous of God.**

## **B. Responsible leadership in times of social chaos (3:10-17):**

Timothy was not unfamiliar with the beliefs and behavior of his mentor. The statement, *“you have fully known,”* indicates that there were no secrets between Paul and Timothy. Timothy’s knowledge of Paul’s persecutions began over fifteen years before when Timothy personally witnessed the stoning of Paul on his first missionary journey (See At 14:19,20). He had personally witnessed this stoning in Lystra (See At 14:8-20). In Timothy’s present situation, Paul

wanted Timothy to know that *“out of them all the Lord delivered me.”* We are not told how the Lord delivered Paul from all his persecutions, but the fact that he walked away from his persecutions proves that in some way God is able to deliver us out of great persecution.

We must be assured that *“the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations”* (2 Pt 2:9). He knows how to *“deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Hb 2:15). Paul was so confident in the deliverance of God that in his last penned words he stated, *“The Lord will deliver me from every evil work”* (2 Tm 4:18). Sometime and somewhere in Asia before Paul wrote these words, the sentence of death was upon Paul. But, he wrote of that experience, the Lord *“delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver”* (2 Co 1:9,10).

But we would qualify Paul’s deliverance from death by the fact that he was specifically in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra for the purpose of preaching the gospel. His was not a passive persecution, that is suffering persecution for simply being a Christian. He was specifically on a mission to preach the gospel to the lost in order to fulfill his Christ-given destiny as *“a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and*

*kings and the children of Israel” (At 9:15).*

Though he suffered persecution specifically for preaching the gospel, Paul added here a truth that is relevant to all who would live the gospel: “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*” David wrote, “*Many are the afflictions of the righteous. **But the Lord delivers him out of them all***” (Ps 34:19). Jesus certainly had this principle in mind when He stated in the Sermon on the Mount, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt 5:10).

Nevertheless, until that last time before the fall of national Israel in A.D. 70, “*evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse.*” These impostors, because they are deceived into believing that Israel would gain her independence from Rome, sought to deceive others into joining in the ranks of Jewish resistance to free Palestine from Roman occupation.

More is in this context than doctrine. There is Jewish nationalism involved for Timothy would have to endure a doomed social order that was headed for the “last times.” Paul was leaving the picture, but he wanted Timothy to prepare both himself and the Jewish brethren for the final hour.

He exhorted Timothy to “*continue in the things that you have*

*learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.*” It may have been that Paul knew what would transpire in the coming few years that would eventually lead to the defeat of the Jews in Palestine. They would be very trying years, and thus Timothy needed to be reassured that what he had learned from his mentor must not be forgotten. In the face of persecution in Iconium, Antioch, and Lystra, Paul did not back down, nor did he turn back from his Christ-given destiny. He wanted Timothy to maintain the same vigilance in standing for the truth of the gospel in the midst of numerous deceivers who would be wandering from house to house.

In this context, it seems that Paul was assured that Timothy would connect the dots between prophecy and fulfillment in reference to the last times of national Israel in which he now lived. He could do this because “*from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.*” Timothy knew his Old Testament Bible. He knew the prophecies about which Paul spoke, prophecies of both Jesus as the Messiah and the end of national Israel about which both Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied (See Dn 10—12).

As a point of reassurance of Timothy’s faith in the Holy Scriptures

that he had been taught from childhood, Paul reminded Timothy that these Scriptures were breathed out from God by the Holy Spirit (inspired). They were “*given by inspiration of God,*” and thus, Timothy must conclude that the events that were about to transpire in Palestine were not outside the plan of God. Everything that would happen with Israel was in the predestined plan of God.

Because the Old Testament Scriptures have come from God, they are “*profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” These instructions from God “*were written for our learning*” (Rm 15:4). And in reference to the historical context in which Timothy lived, “*they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*” (1 Co 10:11).

The end of the ages for national Israel had come. It was the last times. It was the last days. If Timothy had any doubt concerning what was about to transpire in the next few years, Paul knew that he needed to be reassured that God had planned the end of Israel from centuries before.

God never intended that the vehicle through which he would bring the Messiah and Savior into the world

would exist throughout history. The Christians prior to A.D. 70 needed to know that it was now the last hour for Israel. So James would say to Timothy and that generation of Christians with whom he was a participant in society as a Christian, “*You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near*” (Js 5:8). And indeed it was near. The ink had not yet dried on Paul’s letter to Timothy when Rome put down the Jews of Galilee and were headed for Jerusalem.

For this time of social turmoil, therefore, the “*man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” for the age in which Timothy lived. It was an age similar to those ages in the history of Israel when the nation formerly faced the captivities of Assyria and Babylonia. For the age in which Timothy lived, the encouragement of the prophets in those days would be appropriate. And if these prophecies prepared Timothy to face the trials that were coming, then we suppose that we too should not throw away our Old Testament Scriptures. These Scriptures are still profitable “*for our learning,*” especially in times of social and civil chaos (Rm 15:4).

## Chapter 4

### FINALITIES IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Whenever one is in the final years of his or her life, and at the point when there is a sense of death, the natural feeling is to bring one's friends and family near. This seems to be part of the reason behind what Paul wrote in these final words.

However, there were more reasons for these final words than simply the sentiments of a gospel preacher who had finished his course. The reason for these final words is Paul's last call for others to complete his Christ-given mission, which was a reflection of the great commission that Jesus Christ left all His disciples upon His departure from this world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16).

This mission was given personally by Jesus to Paul in the words that He spoke to Ananias: "*Go your way, for he [Paul] is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel*" (At 9:15).

As a chosen vessel of Jesus, Paul had preached the truth of the gospel of salvation and reign of the Messiah throughout his life. He had stood before the Gentiles, kings and the nation of Israel in order to proclaim that all the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets had been fulfilled in

Jesus as Lord and Christ. These prophecies had been fulfilled even to the gospel reign of King Jesus at the time he wrote these words.

And now he sees the continuation of his calling in those as Timothy who must rise out of the ashes of social chaos among the Jews in order to preach the word of the gospel. The reason that the proclamation of the gospel reign of King Jesus was so important at this time in history was in the fact that all the world of the Roman Empire was in chaos. But after the military campaign in Palestine was completed, it would be a time to reach the disheartened Jews. The Jews' insurrection to produce an independent state in Palestine had pushed the Romans to the breaking point.

The Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel had now reached its finality. The rebellious Jews needed to know that there would be no national Israel as in the days of David and Solomon. They had rejected the Messiah who was at that time sitting on the throne of David (See At 2:22-34). But they had rejected King Jesus. And because of their rejection, the fruit of their rejection was now ripe and ready to be spoiled by Rome.

Jesus “*came to His own* [race of people, the Jews], *and His own did not receive Him*” (Jn 1:11). When Paul penned his final words to Timothy, the consequences of this rejection had now reached its climax. Because the Jews rejected the Son of God as the Messiah of Israel, God was now bringing down judgment upon them. All the conflict that prevailed throughout Palestine was the consequence of the Jews’ rejection of Jesus as the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning His atoning sacrifice on the cross and His existing kingdom reign in heaven at the right hand of God. The last hour for national Israel had now come.

All the social stress of the time resulted from the Jews’ false hope that their messiah would reign on this earth. This was their “hope of Israel” (See At 1:6). Their hope was that their king would lead Israel in an independence movement against all nations that had occupied them since the last captivity of the Babylonians. When Jesus did not conform to their hope of an earthly king who would reign in Jerusalem on a literal throne of David, they sought to rebel against Rome. They sought to prepare the way in order that their messiah come and reign on earth.

Does this sound familiar with some who have the same false hope today? Such carnal and earthly thinking of the Jews was not much differ-

ent than those today who have a false hope that world events are presently aligning national Israel for the coming of a messiah. But they forget that the Messiah has already come. He is already reigning as King over all things. It was never God’s intention to establish another earthly kingdom to replace Israel. If such were to transpire in the future, then Jesus would have to give up His present galactic reign in order to reign on a speck of dust (the earth) of the universe (See Mt 28:18; Ep 1:21-23; Hb 1:3; 8:1).

Because the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah and rightful heir to reign on David’s throne, the world in Timothy’s day was in chaos. Their rejection of Jesus was the very reason why there was political turmoil throughout the Roman Empire. We must not forget this.

The Roman wars against the Jews had already begun by the time the first word was written in the 2 Timothy letter in A.D. 66. The Roman army had already arrived in Palestine and was on its way to Jerusalem to administer the final blow to Jewish nationalism. We can only imagine the stressful times in which the early Jewish members of the church struggled. This is especially true in reference to those Jewish families who had sons who were tempted to go to Jerusalem in order to defend Israel.

The book of Hebrews was writ-

ten to these Jewish Christians. In the book, the writer—undoubtedly Paul—argued persuasively that apostate Jewish Christians who took up their swords to war against Rome would not escape the destruction that Jesus had pronounced on the city in Matthew 24. The Hebrew writer wrote in reference to those who would turn back to Judaism in order to fight Rome for an independent nation, “*How will we [who fall back to national Judaism] escape if we neglect such a great salvation [of the gospel], which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard (Hb 2:3).*” The fact would be that by the end of the decade of the 60s they would not escape if they headed for the doomed city of Jerusalem to fight for an independent Israel.

In view of the struggles that were going on throughout the Roman Empire at the time, we would certainly approach the context of the words of 2 Timothy as a document of exhortation to all leaders of the church who labored in those trying times. These were the words of exhortation to one individual who represented many of those leaders of the churches during those years of social chaos. Through these words, Paul sought to stir up Timothy to assume the task of reminding the Jewish brethren that the truth of the gospel still stands. Jesus was

still the Messiah and Savior of the world. As he had reminded Timothy in his first letter, Jesus was still King Jesus (1 Tm 6:15). This truth of the gospel must prevail in the minds of those to whom Timothy preached.

### **A. Final charge in a time of social turmoil (4:1-5):**

When Paul wrote to Timothy a charge, we assume that Timothy stood at attention before God whom he served. What is communicated to Timothy as a military charge is serious business because of the social and civil chaos that was transpiring in the religious and civil environment at the time Paul wrote. A military “charge” was used by Paul in order to get Timothy’s attention in the midst of his personal discouragement concerning current events.

This was a charge “*before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” It does not get more serious than this. This was a charge that was based on the One who would “*judge the living*” at the time of His final coming (2 Cor 5:10). King Jesus would also judge those who had died (See 1 Th 4:13-17). He had been appointed by the Father to be the judge of all who lived on the face of the earth (See At 17:30,31).

The validation upon which Jesus was given the right to judge was in

the fact of both His gospel revelation from heaven and His authority as King of kings (Mt 28:18). John used a metaphorical picture in order to explain a reality that now exists in the heavenly realm. He pictured in Revelation that the “*living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him [Jesus] who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever*” (Rv 4:9). “*The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him*” (Rv 4:10). They proclaim the following concerning King Jesus who now has authority over the universe:

*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power [authority], for You created all things, and because of Your will they were created and have their existence* (Rv 4:11).

John revealed the primary reason why Jesus had the right to judge all men. He was the creator of all things, and thus, He has the authority and right to judge all His creation (Cl 1:16). As the reigning God on the throne of David, He has the right to call all creation before Him in judgment. He only, because of His incarnational journey into this world (Ph 2:5-11), is worthy to judge the world. John revealed this truth:

*You are worthy to take the scroll and*

*to open its seals, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and language and people and nation* (Rv 5:9).

In the next few years Timothy needed to understand that regardless of the turnover of Caesars in Rome, and the crushing of the independence movement of national Israel, there was still one King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). In times of civil war Christians must never forget this. There is only one judge in which the Father “*has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus] whom He has ordained*” (At 17:31).

In view of the Son’s right to judge “*the living and the dead,*” Paul personally ordered a mandate to Timothy, which mandate extended to every church leader during those times of social chaos: “***Preach the word!***” This mandate takes us back over thirty years to the early preaching of the word of the gospel. As a result of their preaching of the early Christians, “*many of those who heard the word [of the gospel of Jesus] believed*” (At 4:4). When persecution arose in Jerusalem in those years, “*those who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word*” of the gospel of grace (At 8:4).

After his conversion, Paul himself eventually ended up in the Ro-

man province of Achaia. He later reminded those in Achaia to whom he preached the word of the gospel not to forget the word of what he preached. His use of the word “word” in the text under consideration explains what he meant when he wrote, “Preach the **word!**”

*I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you [with words], which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast to **that word** which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain (1 Co 15:1,2).*

In the preceding statement, Paul did not refer to a church outline of doctrine that he preached to those in Corinth on his initial visit. He explained in the following two verses what he had preached in Corinth and throughout Achaia: “*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day*” (1 Co 15:3,4). This is the “word” of the gospel. This was the word that Timothy was to be persistent in preaching to all those unbelieving Jews who wanted to take up their swords and go to Jerusalem to fight against the Romans. In his commentary of the word of the gospel that he preached to those in Corinth, his exhortation to the Christians in all Achaia was that

they continue to believe the word by which he had communicated the gospel to them. If they did not, then their faith would be in vain (1 Co 15:2).

The same situation had developed in reference to the faith of many Jewish Christians in Asia at the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy. Their faith was becoming vain. In their apostasy from the blood of the sacrificed Lamb of God in a senseless effort to defend national Israel, their faith was becoming useless in reference to their salvation. They were refusing to heed the Hebrew writer’s exhortation, “***Let us hold firm to the confession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful who promised***” (Hb 10:23).

If we willfully turn from King Jesus and His kingdom reign, then “***there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins***” (Hb 10:26). If those Jewish Christians to whom Timothy ministered the gospel, chose rather to willfully turn from King Jesus, then all they would have in the eyes of God is “*a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation that will devour the adversaries*” (Hb 10:27). In the fiery judgment that was coming upon Jerusalem, they would experience the same. They would not have been without warning, for Jesus spoke many times of the fiery indignation that would come upon Israel because the Jews rejected His only begotten Son (See Book 3, *The Sov-*

*ereignty of Deity*, in the Biblical Research Library, [africainternational.org](http://africainternational.org)).

When we understand the immediate social and civil environment in which Timothy lived, then we can understand better the urgency by which Paul issued the mandate, “Preach the word!” Paul was encouraging Timothy to preach in order to save lives. If the patriotism of some Jewish sons overcame their faith, then they could possibly have been caught up in the zeal of the day to fight for the independence of Israel. If preaching the gospel of Jesus’ kingship could detour them from heading for Jerusalem, then those who would be detoured would save their lives.

Timothy’s preaching the word of the gospel to the believers, therefore, was as Paul’s reminder that he wrote to the Corinthians. If those to whom Timothy ministered the word of the gospel forsook their faith in King Jesus, and headed for Jerusalem, then their faith was in vain. They would subsequently be caught up in the fiery indignation that God would pour out on unbelieving Jews because they rejected the incarnational offering of the Son of God (See Ph 2:5-11). If they rejected the blood of Jesus, then they would have rejected their only hope of surviving this world, which itself was headed for termination.

If one would take ownership of being a disciple of Jesus, then he or

she too has no option but to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom reign of Jesus and His coming at the appointed time to judge all men. It is interesting to note that the Greek word that is used in this text is *kerusso* (preach). It is the word that is used to enjoin on all disciples the responsibility to announce the gospel. It is the same word that Jesus used in Mark 16:15: “*Go into all the world and preach [kerusso] the gospel to every creature*” (See also Rm 16:25; 1 Co 1:21; 2:4; Ti 1:3). Paul was not invoking Timothy to be a preacher, but to *kerusso* (announce, proclaim) the good news to the world. This is exactly what the early Christians did when they went into all the world (At 8:4). This is the function of every disciple in reference to making the gospel known to the world.

In this text, as in other texts where the word *kerusso* is used, reference is to proclaim the good news of Jesus. It is not a word that is used in reference to teaching an outline of doctrine to the church. The word is always used in the New Testament in reference to the proclaiming, or affirmation of the gospel.

In the face of the social unrest of his day, Timothy was here encouraged by Paul to continue proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to his generation, as well as reminding the believers that Jesus was still King of kings and Lord

of lords. Nothing had changed in heaven where Jesus was seated at the right hand of God “*far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named*” (Ep 1:21). Though all these “principalities,” “powers,” as well as all the mighty Caesars may change on earth, such changes will not unseat King Jesus. Jesus’ kingdom reign has never been and will never be determined by any activities of or conflicts between the nations of the world.

However, in the midst of the transitions among world kingdoms, one should pray for opportunities to proclaim the word of the gospel. Therefore, it is assumed that one will “*be ready in season and out of season*” when the opportunity presents itself to preach the word of the gospel.

It is often in the midst of civil war that opportunities are presented to preach the gospel. This is especially true within the few years following a civil war. It is then that the pendulum swings from the carnality of the civil war to the spiritual side of those citizens who are now repugnant of war. This is the season for the preacher to be ready.

Paul knew that after the A.D. 70 crushing of the aspirations of the Jews, there would be thousands of religiously disoriented Jews who finally realized that God had rejected national Israel. It would be a season

of great receptivity to preach the gospel once again to a very receptive audience of Jews. Peter reflected on this opportunity when he wrote:

*But sanctify Christ as Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear (1 Pt 3:15).*

Since Peter wrote these words in the early 60s, we believe that he wrote them in view of the fact that after the decade of discouragement for the Jews, there would be a tremendous opportunity for Christians to share the gospel with thousands of disheartened Jews. Christians, therefore, were to keep themselves pure (sanctify) by continuing to keep Jesus as their only Lord God. In order to do this, they must resist the temptation of joining those who were bent on fighting the Romans for Jewish independence.

In their discussions with patriotic Jews, the early disciples should give no opportunity for the unbelieving Jews to think that they were questioning their own faith. This answers why the Hebrew writer was so stern in denouncing those Jewish Christians who were in the process of betraying King Jesus in their apostasy to restore national Israel. In doing such, they were bringing shame on their King.

The message of the gospel is not complex, and thus, being ready to preach the gospel to others does not assume that one has a great deal of knowledge of the Bible. When we preach the gospel, the focus is on the message of the Bible, not the Bible itself. If we say that we are to “preach the Bible,” then we must understand that in reference to the gospel, the Bible is the “newspaper.” It is the newspaper that reports to us the message of the gospel. It is the authority upon which our knowledge of the gospel is founded. Therefore, we preach the gospel with the Bible being our library of research material. We must not forget that the Bible is not primarily about us, but about reminding us how God brought His only begotten Son into the world. It is how He will also bring Him back for us.

If one is not announcing the gospel, it is assumed that he or she is not motivated by the gospel. And if one is not motivated by the gospel, then it is assumed that one is not studying the gospel of the Bible. In the case of Timothy, it was not his lack of knowledge of the prophecies and fulfillment in reference to the gospel. He had known the sacred Scriptures since the time of his youth (2 Tm 3:15,16). His apprehension about preaching the word of the gospel was because of the circumstances in which he found himself in Asia. The difficult times in

which he lived caused him to withdraw from his duty of preaching the gospel.

Paul moved on in the text to the responsibility of a teacher or leader of the disciples. He charged, “*Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching.*” Herein is when the teacher must know the Bible. It is the word of God that informs us with information to accomplish these mandates. In other words, one is to “reprove” the disciples with the word of God when they are moving away from the truth of the gospel. One is to “rebuke” the wayward with the authority of the word of God in order to turn the wayward back to the right way. And one is to “exhort” the discouraged by teaching the encouragement that the word of God offers. The persistence of the teacher must be characterized by his or her “longsuffering” (patience) with those to whom the word of God is communicated through teaching.

The reason for the urgency of Timothy to carry on with his calling as a teacher was in the fact that “*the time will come when they will not endure sound teaching.*” And that time was soon upon Timothy.

The teacher of the word of God always teaches in the present with his mind on the future. In Timothy’s historical situation, it would come in his near future that the radicalism of the

nationalistic Jews would permeate the Jewish families of the Roman society. Sometimes, it would influence even the spirit of the faithful. The Jews' call for independence from Roman occupation of Palestine would overpower the senses of many of those with whom Timothy and other teachers ministered.

Those whom Timothy was to influence through healthy (sound) teaching would be influenced by the wayward hopes of those who believed that Israel would gain her independence through insurrection against Rome. Therefore, Timothy's ministry of teaching was urgent because the time of civil upheaval was imminent in Judea. The foundation of the church needed to be thoroughly based on the truth of the gospel in order to discourage as many Jews as possible not to be entangled in the political affairs of the times.

The statement, "*for the time will come,*" was not a reference to something that would transpire over two thousand years later. It was a "time" that was imminent. The time was "at hand." We assume from the context, therefore, that it was urgent that Timothy remind the people of the truth of the gospel reign of King Jesus. It was urgent because there would be those radical Jews coming through town who would announce "another gospel," the gospel of being loyal to one's

Jewish heritage. And because people would be stirred into Jewish patriotism, some Jewish Christians would "*not endure sound [healthy] doctrine [teaching].*" They would forsake the kingship of King Jesus for the vain hope of another messiah.

The Jewish Christians, specifically, would have the "*itching ears.*" It would be them who would be seeking for "signs of the times," and information from Palestine about the "Jewish wars" against Rome. And because they were obsessed with the independence movement of the nationalistic movement that was transpiring among those in Palestine, they would "*surround themselves*" with "*teachers who will agree with their own desires*" to fight against Rome.

In the historical context of Paul's use of the term "itching ears," we must assume that the "news media" of the day was constantly sending out reports on wars in Palestine. They were obsessed with reports concerning "*wars and rumors of wars*" (Mt 24:6). But many years before, Jesus forewarned His faithful disciples, "*See that you are not troubled, for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*" (Mt 24:6). Timothy's immediate audience was living in the time of the rumors of wars. But the end of Israel did not come until A.D. 70. It was after that date that the reports of the wars by

the news media ceased. It was over.

The interpreter must keep in mind the historical context of the 60s when Paul penned these urgent words. There were certainly doctrinal matters involved in Paul's exhortation, but there were traumatic things taking place in the political environment of the times, specifically in Palestine. These were events that surrounded all the writings of the New Testament documents that were written in the 60s.

In reference to "doctrinal" matters, there were certainly no matters under discussion concerning the "right church," for there was only one church. And it would be senseless to assume that Timothy was charged to teach matters on the Lord's Supper, church assemblies, or some outline that defined the "true church." To assume that such was in the mind of Paul when he penned these words is certainly shallow. We must not allow our obsession with matters of opinion today to twist our understanding of those matters in which Timothy and the other first century teachers labored in the first century. They labored diligently in teaching in order to preserve the faith of those who were on the verge of being faithless as the Hebrew writer stated: "*Now the just will live by faith. But if any man draws back, My soul will have no pleasure in him*" (Hb 10:38).

After the Hebrew writer explained all the arguments for the present kingdom reign of King Jesus and His priesthood, he assumed that his readers would join him in remaining faithful to Jesus. He wrote, "*We are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul*" (Hb 10:39). This was the task that Paul was instructing Timothy to follow in his leadership to take the church through troubling times.

In those troubling days in which Timothy and others were messengers of the gospel, something tragic would happen within the church. Timothy was cautioned that in the last times of national Israel, even some of the disciples "*will turn away their ears from the truth [of the gospel] and will be turned to fables.*" The fables that were being broadcast throughout society was the restoration of national Israel to the days as Israel was in the days of David and Solomon. Those who had itching ears were looking for someone other than Jesus to be the messiah and king. They sought for any news from Palestine in reference to the "independent movement."

Their obsession on political matters diverted their attention from the reign of Jesus who was "*upholding all things by the word of His power*" (Hb 1:3). It is an axiomatic truth in reference to spiritual matters that

whenever one becomes obsessed with political matters on earth, his mind is distracted concerning spiritual matters. This is why Paul wrote, “*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth*” (Cl 3:2).

The “truth” about which Paul wrote was not an outline of catechisms. If this were the subject under discussion, then certainly this would place every teacher in the precarious predicament of having to determine what the details of the “truth” of the catechism should be.

In the historical context of the times, the truth that would be forsaken was the truth of any aspect of the gospel. This was the truth that Peter momentarily forsook in Antioch of Syria (Gl 2:11). If he “stood condemned” because he was not behaving straightforwardly concerning the truth of the gospel, then those who would forsake the truth of the gospel reign of Jesus also stood condemned if they joined the resistance movement to free Palestine of Roman occupation.

Timothy was living in the times about which the Hebrew writer wrote: “*How will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him*” (Hb 2:3). The Hebrew writer then gave a commentary on the precarious times for the church in which Timothy was to reaffirm the

word of the truth of the gospel:

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame (Hb 6:4-6).*

This was the historical environment in which Timothy and others labored. It was in the midst of such apostasy that Timothy was exhorted by Paul to preach the word of the gospel.

Those with itching ears were being tempted to take up a sword and make their way to Jerusalem. These were those who were “once enlightened” by their obedience to the gospel. They were now treading under their feet the blood of Jesus with every step toward Palestine in order to fulfill their desires to restore Judaism. It was impossible to turn them back to be “partakers of the Holy Spirit” because their patriotism for the Jewish independence movement was more important to them than their former deliverance from the bondage of sin. They crucified (betrayed) the Son of God on their way to a carnal war that God had destined to happen.

They forsook their faith in Jesus for the fable of the supposed rejuvenation of national Israel. They were thus headed for destruction (Hb 10:39).

Paul, therefore, enjoins on Timothy what he must do to prevent the apostasy that was occurring even at the time he wrote. He was to be watchful for those who would lead in the apostasy. He must “*endure afflictions*,” realizing that “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Tm 3:12). He was to rise up and “*do the work of an evangelist*.” Regardless of persecution, he must continue to be one who proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ. He must do the work of evangelizing the lost.

It is not that Paul was here assigning a title to Timothy as an “evangelist.” He was reminding Timothy of the function of a faithful disciple. That function was that he continue to proclaim the good news of King Jesus. If he did this, then he would be fulfilling his ministry that he committed himself to do many years before. He would also be sparing the lives of those who sought for another king on earth to lead the supposed restored national Israel.

We must not forget that the Jews’ independence movement was a total denial of the gospel. If the Jews were right in their insurrection against Rome, then Jesus was a fraud. He was

not who He claimed to be. There was no reign of the ascended Jesus at the right hand of God. If He were not who He said He was, then the unbelieving Jews were right in their rejection of Him as their Lord and Christ. All such things were against the gospel of the incarnate God who came in the flesh of man, but ended up at the right hand of God with authority over all things. All the unbelieving Jews should submit to Him, but they did not (Ph 2:10,11).

### **B. Personal farewell (4:6-8):**

The year is A.D. 66, and possibly into 67. At least we know that Paul realized that his ministry was about to be terminated with his beheading in Rome. “*The time of my departure is at hand*,” he wrote to Timothy. About six years before he had written in reference to his death while in the same prison in Rome, “*For I am torn between the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is much better*” (Ph 1:23). Though Paul was released from that first imprisonment of A.D. 61,62, God was going to grant his desire to depart this world in this second imprisonment. From traditional history we learn that Paul was probably beheaded in Rome in A.D. 67.

The reason Paul was ready to move on from this life is discovered

in his final words: “*I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course.*” There is a sense of satisfaction in these words. There were no regrets or unfinished business. The course that Jesus had personally given to him many years before in Damascus had been completed (At 9:15).

Contrary to those who had itching ears, and subsequently forsook their faith in Jesus, Paul had “*kept the faith.*” He had not turned from his destiny. He had not turned back to destruction (Hb 10:39). When he exhorted Timothy to “*fulfill your ministry,*” he was expecting the same from Timothy.

There is no doubt on the part of Paul in his final words: “*There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*” Paul’s life was all about that which James wrote: “*Blessed is the man who endures temptation [trial], for when he is tried, he will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him*” (Js 1:12). Paul was an example of a man who was to be blessed with the crown of life. He was to be blessed because he had remained faithful in the midst of great persecution and trials.

The crown was not reserved for a select few among the faithful. On the contrary, because the Lord is righteous, He will give the crown “*also to all those who have loved His appearing.*” Again, Paul reflects on the

gospel of the incarnate Son of God when such was first announced to some shepherds at the time of Jesus’ birth (Lk 2:10,11). Those who loved His appearing in the flesh would be blessed because they were motivated by this gospel revelation to submit their lives to preach the gospel to the world. Unfortunately, Timothy and the other New Testament teachers had preached to a Jewish audience, many of whom had rejected Jesus (Jn 1:11). There was continued rejection even as Paul wrote these words.

We do not miss the past tense in the verb in the statement, “*have loved His appearing.*” Reference to this “*appearing*” **was not something yet in the future.** The statement is in reference to the revelation of the Son of God in the flesh **in the past** (See Jn 1:14). Those who loved the appearing of the Son of God in the flesh were those who would be blessed in this life, but also with the crown that will be given to the faithful.

But in the historical setting of the statement, there were those who did not love His appearing in the flesh, and subsequently rebelled (See Rm 9:1-3). They did not accept the fact that Jesus fulfilled all prophecies concerning the Redeemer. And in the historical context of this letter, they did not accept Him as the Messiah of Israel. These were those unbelieving Jews who were about to receive the

fiery indignation of God in the destruction of national Israel. Their punishment for rejecting Jesus was imminent.

### C. Personal farewell greetings (4:9-22):

Paul knew that his end was near, and so to Timothy there was urgency in his last words, “*Be diligent to come to me soon.*” No one likes to die alone, and at the time when one knows he or she is facing death, family and friends are called upon to be close.

However, in reference to the call to the ministry of the word of the gospel, Paul wrote, “*Demas has forsaken me.*” It seems that Demas “*loved this present world,*” and thus headed back to Thessalonica where there were some wealthy women in the church (See At 17:1-4). If this statement could have been written at the time of the apostle John’s writings, then Demas should have read John’s note on this matter: “***Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him***” (1 Jn 2:15).

We are not told why Crescens left for Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. We would assume that because of Titus’ faithfulness, both went from Paul to preach the gospel, or to reassure the saints that the end of the world was not at stake. They were to remind the

disciples that it was the end of Israel. Because Paul did not mention any negative comments in reference to Crescens and Titus, we assume they were sent forth to prepare the Jewish disciples for the end of Israel. We assume that they were to reassure the disciples. The disciples must remain faithful in view of the end of Paul’s ministry, as well as the end of the independence movement of national Israel. They were to remind people that the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24 was being fulfilled. So, “*only Luke is with me.*” And what would we expect of the great physician?

Timothy was evidently acquainted with Mark, and thus, possibly knew where he was living at the time Paul wrote. “*Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*” Paul called for one who had formerly turned back from the work in his younger years, but now was profitable for the work (At 15:37,38). Paul now needed Mark for the ministry, not to minister unto him, but possibly to be directed to another field in order to prepare the Jewish disciples for the defeat of national Israel in Palestine, Mark’s original home.

Mark had previously had his momentary time of withdrawing from the ministry of the word, but now he had grown spiritually to be willing to join with Paul in a prison environment.

Mark had the example of his life as a witness to others that though one may fall from the work, he or she can pick one's self up in order to be profitable for Jesus. We must remember that no matter how far down we fall, the grace of God can come and fetch us for His benefit. We are thankful that the Holy Spirit deemed it wise to include the example of John Mark in the Holy Scriptures in order to encourage us.

But then there could possibly have been another reason why Paul called for Mark. It may have been that Paul wanted to send him hurriedly on to Jerusalem in order to get his relatives, and particularly his mother—if she were still alive—out of the city of Jerusalem.

Mark had grown up in Jerusalem. We assume, therefore, that he had many friends and family still in the city. As Paul personally sent Crescens to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia, he wanted to send Mark urgently to Judea. Mark's mission was one of extraction. Paul wanted to reassure Mark, and then send him on to Judea in order to extract his family and friends out of the doomed city.

Once the companion of Paul on his journeys, Tychicus was sent to Ephesus (See At 20:4). We assume, therefore, that the wording of the statement infers that Timothy is not in Ephesus at the time of writing. For this reason we affirm that Timothy

was in Asia, but not specifically in the city of Ephesus. And we might assume that Tychicus went to Ephesus for the same reason that Paul possibly would send Mark to Judea.

And so it was cold in a dungeon in Rome. Timothy was encouraged to bring the "*cloak that I left in Troas with Carpus.*" Wherever Timothy was in Asia, he had to come through Troas on his way to Rome.

Ever the student, Paul also requested that Timothy bring "*the scrolls, especially the parchments.*" We have no idea what the scrolls and parchments were in reference to reading or study material. We can only assume that they were some Old Testament documents, or possibly some copies of other New Testament letters. Since Paul was close to death, we would assume that Paul wanted Timothy to bring this material in order that it be left for the church in Rome.

It is interesting that the Holy Spirit would direct the hand of Paul to mention Alexander the coppersmith who did him much evil. We are not told whether this was a brother, or simply one in the community who persecuted Paul. But if this is the same Alexander as 1 Timothy 1:20, then he and Hymenaeus shipwrecked their own faith and the faith of others. Subsequently, Paul wrote, "*I have delivered [them] to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme*" (1 Tm 1:20).

If indeed this Alexander was the same Alexander of 1 Timothy 1:20, then this Alexander did Paul harm by assigning to Satan the message of the gospel that Paul preached. Paul’s delivering of Alexander to Satan was for the purpose that he might be taught not to blaspheme the message of the gospel. In other words, one was not to mess with a Christ-sent apostle, for such an apostle had the authority of the rod of discipline (See 1 Co 4:21).

Alexander suffered the destruction of the flesh in life, so Paul requested, “*May the Lord reward him according to his works*” in the final judgment. Wherever Timothy was at the time, Paul warned him to be on guard against the blasphemy of Alexander. It seems that Alexander never learned his lesson, and thus the Lord would have to finish what Paul started in reference to reaping what he sowed.

It may have been that Alexander was not able to connect his ailment in the flesh with his blasphemy against the message of the gospel. His evil was a personal attack against Paul. In some way, he may have seen Paul as a personal threat to his power and position. As Paul had at one time during his ministry blinded an individual for working against the preaching of the gospel, so Alexander also did the same, but in doing so he personally attacked Paul (See At 13:11).

If one would be a leader for Jesus, then there will be times when one has to stand alone in the midst of many “Alexanders.” “*At my first defense,*” Paul wanted Timothy to know, “*no one stood with me, but all men forsook me.*” We must remember that Paul was possibly in prison as a supposed Jewish “*ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,*” for rumors were spread abroad that he was such (See At 24:5). To the Romans, all such Jewish ringleaders, regardless of what sect of the Jews they may have led, were to be eliminated. And for this reason Paul was facing his final day. Therefore, if one were a Jew, he certainly did not want to be identified with Paul, especially when Paul went before the Roman court of Nero. Nevertheless, Paul was forgiving and understanding: “*May it not be counted against them.*”

“*But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.*” This one statement of Paul should answer the question we have all asked. When we are in times of great trial—in Paul’s case it was literally a trial for his life—we ask for strength and deliverance from the trial. God does both. This one statement of Paul is reassuring in that we may not know how God gives strength and deliverance in times of trial, but He does (See At 23:11). Paul reminded those in Corinth,

*No temptation [trial] has overtaken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted [tried] beyond what you are able to endure, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape so that you may be able to endure (1 Co 10:13).*

One of the missions that was given specifically to Paul when Jesus called him was that he would stand before kings (At 9:15). So we deduct from the circumstances of this trial in Rome that God was using Paul to bear witness to the gospel before the highest court in the world at the time. He was standing in Nero's court.

We could suppose that Paul's arrest and extradition to Rome at this time in history was the direct result of God's work in the affairs of man. We know this was the case for his first imprisonment (See At 23:11). The year of Paul's second imprisonment and trial was A.D. 66. This was a critical time in the history of Rome. God needed a Christian in Rome at this time while Rome's army was already in Palestine and marching toward Jerusalem. God needed a witness before the Roman court in Rome to testify why Christians were in no way responsible for the Jewish insurrection. God needed a witness before Rome to testify that the independence movement among the Jews resulted

from the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Christians had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but Jesus never intended to establish a kingdom on this earth. The kingdom of the Christians was not of this world, just as Jesus had witnessed before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate thirty-five years before (Jn 18:36).

The Lord stood with Paul in order "*that through me the preaching [of the gospel] might be fully accomplished.*" His mission would be fully accomplished in his testimony of the gospel before the Roman court. In this case, his witness before the court was for the purpose "*that all the Gentiles might hear.*"

In this case of the personal strengthening of the Lord, Paul "*was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*" Paul may have been delivered from condemnation at his first trial. The Lord will deliver those who trust in His deliverance. "*The Lord will preserve you from all evil. He will preserve your soul*" (Ps 121:7). Being preserved by the Lord does not necessarily mean being spared from death. In the case of Paul, he was not spared from death, but preserved "*unto the heavenly kingdom.*" This is all that is important for the Christian to remember. Regardless of his initial deliverance from death, the psychopathic Nero may have simply commanded that "the Jew" in prison must die.

Death is simply a transition to a better state of existence. It is as Paul wrote to the Philippians, “*For I am torn between the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is much better*” (Ph 1:23). And because it is “much better,” then “*to Him be glory forever and ever*” because He made such possible through the incarnational offering of His Son.

Since the days when Paul first encountered Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth, they had been fellow workers with him in preaching the gospel (See At 18:1-3). Paul, Priscilla and Aquila labored together in Corinth and in Ephesus. And at this time after many years of working together in kingdom business, Paul now referred to Priscilla with the endearing short name, “Prisca.”

Timothy was also to salute for Paul the “*household of Onesiphorus*.” Onesiphorus was not ashamed to visit Paul in a Roman prison. He “*often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains*” (2 Tm 1:16). Onesiphorus had obeyed the admonition of Jesus to visit those who were in prison for the sake of the gospel (See Mt 25:36). It seems that Onesiphorus was back home by the time this letter to Timothy was written, and thus, Paul asks Timothy to salute him.

When Paul was released from the first imprisonment of A.D. 61,62, he

made a hurried trip through Crete where he left Titus (Ti 1:5). He evidently went through Corinth where he left Erastus, and then on to Miletus.

Paul leaves us with an interesting incident in reference to healing. “*Trophimus I have left at Miletus sick*.” We have found that those who persist in claiming that confirming miracles continue today, are often left without words in reference to this incident. This is especially true of those false preachers who seek to sell miracles for money. If one does not have a correct understanding of the miraculous work of God, then he will have difficulty with this statement of Paul.

In answer to our prayers, God is able to heal the sick today, as He did in the first century (See Js 5:14). God does work today through our sincere prayers to bring healing. However, this healing is not as the confirming miracles of the first century that even the unbelievers could not deny (See At 4:16). The nature of the confirming miracles of the first century was different than the healing in answer to prayer.

The confirming miracles were immediate and visibly displayed before all, even unbelievers. The purpose of the confirming miracles was also different. Confirming miracles were worked in order to validate both the message and messenger of the

gospel (Mk 16:20). When the message was confirmed, there was no longer a need for confirming miracles (See 1 Co 13:8-10). But God's healing within our bodies is not for the purpose of confirming the gospel. His bodily healing is neither openly manifested, nor instantaneous, which makes such healing different from the confirming miracles of the first century.

But we still have not answered the dilemma that is posed by Paul leaving Trophimus sick in Miletus. There are three things to consider in this case. First, miraculous healing was instantaneous, whereas prayer for healing is gradual. In the case of Trophimus, Paul evidently prayed for his healing, but then understood that it would take time for him to heal completely. He was thus left in a state of healing while Paul traveled on. It was simply understood by this time in the history of the early church that "prayer healing" occurred over time. It was not instantaneous as in the raising of a cripple or the dead.

Second, we could also conclude that the age of confirming miracles was coming to a close by the time this statement was made, if they had not already concluded. We must keep in mind that events of history were coming to the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which was God's last evidence that Israel was

over and that Jesus was alive. No more confirming miracles were needed to witness to the message and messengers of the gospel. The gospel had already been confirmed (See Mk 16:20). It had been preached and confirmed throughout the world of the Roman Empire (See Cl 1:23).

The Hebrew writer placed such confirming miracles in the **past tense** in the Hebrew letter. The writer wrote that the message of the gospel, "*first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was **confirmed** to us by those who heard Him*" (Hb 2:3). God bore "*witness with them [disciples], both with signs and wonders and with various powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit*" (Hb 2:4).

There is a reason why the Hebrew writer placed the confirming miracles of the gospel in the past tense when he wrote the Hebrew letter. The reason was what those to whom the letter was addressed were turning from the confirmed gospel of Jesus' atoning death and His current gospel reign and priesthood. The recipients of the letter were admonished to focus on who Jesus was, not on confirming miracles that had already proved who Jesus was. The Hebrew writer wrote on the basis of the power of the word of God (Hb 4:12). He **did not** seek to prove his arguments on the power of miracles. The miracles had already proved the mes-

sage. The readers, as we, must focus on the power of the fulfilled prophecies, not on the continuation of confirming miracles. The more we would focus on the miraculous, the less we focus on the gospel of Jesus.

By the time Hebrews was written, and at the time Paul left Trophimus sick, the miraculous witness of the gospel was spoken of as something that had happened in the past. It may have been, therefore, that Paul left Trophimus sick in Melitus because he could not miraculously heal him.

At least we arrive at this impression because Paul also did not directly heal Epaphroditus in A.D. 61,62 when Epaphroditus was nigh unto death in Paul's presence in Rome. Paul wrote to the Philippians of Epaphroditus' situation, "*For indeed he was sick to the point of death*" (Ph 2:27). But God healed him directly. "*God had mercy on him*" (Ph 2:27). It was not the work of Paul to heal him, so through his prayers God healed Epaphroditus for the sake of Paul: "*God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow*" (Ph 2:27).

Third, we find few miracles in the New Testament that affected the saints directly. Miraculous healing was not for the benefit of the saints. If they were, then everyone would sign up to be a member of the church, among whom there would be no sick-

nesses or lame people. If one were cursed with headaches, all he or she had to do was become a member of the church. But confirming miracles were never poured out in order to keep the saved saved.

If the Spirit healed everyone physically who came out of the waters of baptism, then there would be no sick people in the church. People would thus be drawn to obedience for selfish reasons and not in response to the gospel of the grace of God. If members were healed upon obedience to the gospel, then the gospel would have had little appeal to the hearts of the people. It is for this reason that direct and instantaneous miraculous healing was never for the benefit of Christians. And because of this, Paul had to make a healing prayer for Trophimus, as he undoubtedly did for Epaphroditus. After the prayer for Trophimus, Paul then left him on his sick bed in Melitus and moved on.

Paul then closes this touching letter to Timothy with an urgent appeal that Timothy come before winter. Paul needed the cloak that he asked Timothy to bring. At the time Paul signs his farewell in this letter, it seems that several brethren were with him, brethren whom Timothy knew.

What better way could a letter as this have been concluded than with the words, "*The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.*"

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**