

## 2 TIMOTHY

With this lesson, we conclude our study of Paul's second letter to Timothy. We will begin by examining short Chapter 4, which concludes 2 Timothy; and then we will perform a quick review of the lessons Paul provides in both of his personal letters to Timothy (i.e., 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy).

Chapter 4 is essentially Paul's final charge to Timothy, including some personal instructions and requests he had of Timothy at the time, as well as Paul's highlighting some of the good and evil people who came into his ministry. Clearly Paul knew that he would soon be executed, and he wanted to reinforce his teachings with Timothy. He furthermore desired that Timothy would come visit him in Rome before he was executed. The specific time of Paul's execution and whether Timothy got to see him one last time are not known; but everything does point to this letter, 2 Timothy, as being Paul's last letter before his death.

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### *Read 2 Timothy Chapter 4 and consider the following:*

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1. What charge does Paul give Timothy, and under what operational assumption is he basing it on? (1 Timothy 4:1-5)
  - a. ANSWER 1: Paul's charge to Timothy is to push ahead and to continue the work that he and Paul started in Ephesus. Specifically, Paul charges him to preach the word, and to correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction—these are the tasks at hand for any pastor, teacher, or church leader. This is applicable both "in and out of season," that is, whether it is a popular time for the Gospel or a time of great resistance. Preaching the word, using the Word of God to teach, correct, rebuke and encourage; etc.—these are leadership responsibilities in the church today, just as in Timothy's day.

We can see today how this instruction still applies. As I write this lesson, the world is in a battle with the COVID-19 virus pandemic, and all of its social and economic impacts. The church is coming to the forefront in ministering to and meeting the needs of the church body and the community around it. At the same time, the church has to take a strong biblical stand on the responsibility of the church to follow the laws and rulers of the land; and in some places, this is a very tough challenge. Many people do not want to hear that message, and they challenge the church's view on government rule. However, Romans 13:1-2 is clear: Paul instructs us that these authorities and laws are in place within God's sovereign plan, and we are to obey them.

Similar attitudes and situations existed in Ephesus during Timothy's time as well; and Paul is careful to exhort Timothy to preach, teach, encourage and correct, "in and out of season." Today, this same instruction speaks to us and our responsibilities as Christians—living for Christ during a worldwide pandemic.
  - b. ANSWER 2: Paul is giving Timothy this charge because Paul wants Timothy, and all of us, to be ready when Christ returns and establishes his earthly kingdom. Paul believed that Christ's return was imminent, and he wanted Timothy to understand how important it was to stay on point, always working toward the return of Christ. In season or out, no matter the circumstance, he wanted Timothy to remain faithful until the end, when Christ returned.
2. As we can observe from Paul's charge to Timothy, Paul believed that Jesus' return was close at hand; and he wanted Timothy to stay faithful to his calling until Jesus came again. With this in mind, what did Paul warn Timothy about in the days that were coming, as Christ's return got closer and closer?
  - a. ANSWER: Paul warned Timothy that people would not put up with sound doctrine. Because when sound doctrine does not align with what people want to hear, they abandon it and gather teachers around them who teach what their "itching ears" want to hear. This occurs when they abandon sound doctrine and turn to myths and false doctrines, accepting them as the truth. This is apostasy, and Paul warns us that apostasy will be prevalent prior to Christ's return.
3. Apostasy, or "falling away from the truth," is something that Paul wrote about in several of his letters. Read the verses below, and list beside each what it teaches us about apostasy.
  - a. Matthew 24:10 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3
    - i. ANSWER: Apostasy is a great falling away from the truth, a rebellion against sound doctrine; and it will occur before Jesus returns.
  - b. 2 Corinthians 11:13-14
    - i. ANSWER: The teachers of false doctrine will appear authentic, genuine, and real teachers of truth; but they are not. They are instead deceitful, "masquerading" as true apostles of Christ. Paul points out that even Satan will be seen as an "angel of light." His followers will be subtle, knowledgeable, and silver-tongued. They will easily deceive many into falling away from the truth of the Gospel.

- c. Jude 1:4
- i. ANSWER: These false teachers sneak into the church. They are ungodly and will pervert the gospel; they will deny the sovereignty of Christ, and they will live immoral lives.
4. Running the good race: Paul shows Timothy how he ran that race and what awaits him following the end of his life on earth. Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and 4:18, and note below when Paul tells us that he will get his crown (i.e., his award or reward) and how he will get to heaven.
- a. ANSWER: It is interesting to note that Paul tells us that he will get his crown of righteousness when Christ awards it to him, at the establishment of Christ's kingdom—and not when Paul arrives in heaven. We know this because he references "on that day" he will receive his crown, and he further says that on that day it will be awarded to all people who have longed for Christ' appearing. Also note that Paul tells us that he will travel to heaven when the Lord brings him safely there.
5. As we noted above, Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 4:18 that the Lord will bring him safely to heaven. Have you ever thought about life after death as a journey in order to arrive in heaven? Read Luke 16:19-31 and note what it tells us about this journey for believers.
- a. ANSWER: This parable tells us that angels carried Lazarus to heaven. As believers, we should all be assured of this as well. We do not die alone; Christ's messengers, the angels, will be with us through the entire transition. Just as with Paul, Christ will bring us safely into heaven, our eternal home. What a beautiful picture.
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As Paul approached death, he was at peace—knowing that he had run the good race and that his eternal home was waiting for him. Yet while he looked forward to living eternally with his Lord and Savior, he nevertheless continued to have his eye on the work at Ephesus and his spiritual son Timothy.

Paul ends his letter with some personal requests of Timothy and a brief listing of those who had helped Paul's ministry—as well as those had been enemies of it. Paul also wanted Timothy to come and visit him before he was executed; and Paul ends his letter praising God and encouraging Timothy. In spite of his circumstances, Paul was always rejoicing—knowing that he was living every day in the will of God and that, through Jesus, his salvation was assured.

Reflecting on both 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, there are some common themes that we can take from them which apply to us today as well. These include staying true to our calling, being faithful in and out of season, holding firmly to the truths of the Gospel and not allowing it to be compromised, being on guard for the false teachers and anti-Christ's who are among us within the church, and doing all things for Christ with patience and love. These are as true today as they were in Ephesus during Timothy's days. Furthermore, as Christ's return draws closer, these verses carry added meaning. We are living in a time of apostasy and compromise within the church; and within the secular world. False teachers and anti-Christ's are attacking the followers of Christ and doing their best to discredit the infallibility of the Bible, God's Holy Word. Be alert, know sound doctrine, and do not allow your faith to be compromised when someone is trying to appeal to your "itching ears."

Just as with Paul and Timothy, let us run the race that God has set before us. May he find us faithful and working towards his coming again when indeed he does return!

In Christ,

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