2 Timothy 4

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2 Timothy 4.

Topics.

- God and Christ Jesus will judge the living and the dead.
- Preach the word; in season and out of season.
- The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching.
- I have fought the good fight.
- All who have loved the Lords appearing.
- A crown of righteousness.
- Paul was rescued from the lion's mouth.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul told Timothy at the end of the age people will be lovers of self and always learning, but never arriving at the knowledge of the truth. He spoke of why the Bible lacks the power to change certain people, of weak women burdened with sins and led astray by various passions and of Jannes and Jambres and men like them who opposed the truth and told Timothy all who live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

2 TIMOTHY 4:1

God and Christ Jesus will Judge the Living and the Dead.

- **2 Timothy 4:1:** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

The word 'quick' in this context refers to those who are alive when Christ returns. When Christ appears in glory and in his Kingdom at the last day those who are raised to life out of the grave and those who are found alive whether they are ministers preachers or hearers will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give and account to the final judge the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: this is one of the reasons why brothers and sisters in Christ should not judge the heart or the salvation of another since we will all have to give an account for ourselves to the Lord. Because of this truth we should rest in the following words of Jesus:

- I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me (John 10:14).
- My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27).

Since the Lord knows those who are his we do not need to concern ourselves with judging who is saved and who is not and should rest in the truth that though some maybe masters in the art of deception and living a life of hypocrisy and pretence, not one of us can deceive the Lord. The words:

- By his appearing and his kingdom (v1).

Refers to that glorious moment when Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection

(Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

2 TIMOTHY 4:2

Preach the Word; in Season and out of Season.

- **2 Timothy 4:2:** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Due season: can mean any of the following, well-timed, an opportune or convenient time, in time of need, at the right occasion, a set or proper time, always, when opportunity or time is convenient and in a short time or while.

In season: in this context means when people are at leisure and ready to listen and refers to those special occasions that avail themselves to opportunities to share the Gospel.

Out of season: in this context refers to those occasions when there is no apparent probability of sharing the Gospel, but even in these times we cannot know if the Spirit of God may influence the listener's heart, which means, the expression, "In season and out of season" means share your faith and the Gospel at every opportunity regardless of whether the circumstances appear favourable or not.

NOTE: this does not mean force or impose the Gospel onto people; the context is difficult circumstances and persecution. Paul went into Gentile cities that were favourable to the message, but also went into cities of Judea where he knew the Jews would do all that was in their power to prevent him from proclaiming the Gospel, but it did not stop him from preaching Christ, thus in this sense he preached the Gospel in season and out of season (i.e., whether the circumstances were favourable or not). The words, "Reprove, rebuke, and exhort" (v2) shows that the work of a shepherd of the Lord is not only to call people to repent and believe and live a life that honours God, but also includes:

Reproving and rebuking: meaning they must be able to confront brothers and sisters in Christ in love and a gentle spirit who are acting in a manner that is damaging to their faith and bringing a bad testimony to the Lord and the Christian faith.

Exhort and encourage: meaning they should always encourage the faithful to endure to the end and patiently nurture them through troubles and suffering.

Teaching: they must teach, but they should teach with the understanding that those who are under their influence come from different cultures, different understandings of religion, different levels of education and different understanding concerning religious matters. Many will be from broken homes and have deep hurts and all sorts of different baggage. For these reasons a shepherd must be patient and graceful as they teach allowing as a natural parent does their children to grow in an atmosphere of love and security.

2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4

The Time is coming when People will Not Endure Sound Teaching.

- **2 Timothy 4:3-4:** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Myths: carries the idea of speculations, assumptions, philosophies and human reasoning. In Paul's time this most likely referred to endless discussions regarding fruitless arguments concerning genealogies, details of history and ceremonial law etc., and things that do not pertain to salvation and eternal life or to godly behaviour. Today it would also embrace all those who from every nation of the world are embracing teachings on a global scale (because of the internet) that appeal to self, ego and pride and doctrines that promise success, prosperity, wealth and worldly riches here and now. The minsters of these doctrines promise their followers that they can teach them the keys to a successful life and the secrets to obtaining to such great levels of faith that they will be able to bring to pass whatever they desire.

Multitudes worldwide are leaving the sound teachings of Paul and the apostles to chase after teachers who proclaim they can escape the hardships and troubles of life. These men not only speak with absolute confidence and authority but are also highly skilled in speech-making and the art of persuasiveness and by these and their eloquent speeches clothed in Scripture and Biblical language seduce many to follow their empty words and the myths and fables they teach. In total contrast to the life of Christ, the apostles and Paul many of these ministers live in opulent homes, wear designer clothes and Rolex watches, drive excessively expensive cars and only stay in the most luxurious hotels when they travel from country to country to share the word of the Lord. Since the spirit of the world craves after wealth and luxury those with itching ears (a worldly spirit) leave the high calling of the Gospel to follow the promise of these self-exalted and prideful ministers who use those who are under their influence as merchandise to expand their own religious empire.

2 TIMOTHY 4:5

Paul encourages Timothy to fulfil his Ministry.

- **2 Timothy 4:5:** As for you always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

Sober-minded: in this context means be cautious, careful mindful discreet and watchful.

Paul's words "Endure suffering" (v5) show why those with itching ears (led by self, ego and pride etc.,) forsake sound doctrine, obviously no-one wants to suffer, so when ministers appear proclaiming a Gospel of success, wealth and riches multitudes follow them. The tragedy in this is that their Gospel is a deception because in this corrupted world no one, not even the rich escape troubles of some sort that deeply affects them in some manner. Therefore, when a crisis hits, they have no comforter. Nowhere in the Bible do Jesus, the apostle or Paul ever imply that following the Lord will exempt a person from hardship no matter how faithful and devoted they are to Christ. But, it does promise those who willing surrender their life to the Lord and endure through the troubles and hardships of life that they will not only be filled with the love and comfort of the Lord, but also be strengthened with contentment, inner joy and peace which is really what the rich are chasing after but rarely ever find. Added to this those who remain faithful to Christ will inherit eternal life and everlasting joy in eternal glory whereas those who chase after empty promises only have a coffin and grave awaiting them.

2 TIMOTHY 4:6

Paul is poured out as a Drink Offering.

- **2 Timothy 4:6:** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

Being poured out as a drink offering is most likely alluding to the strong drink offering of wine the LORD at Mount Sinai ordained Moses to command the people of Israel to pour out at the appointed time in the Holy Place on the Sabbath Day upon their food offering which was a pleasing aroma to the Lord (Num. 28:1-7). Certainly, this is an appropriate picture of Paul's life since there is no-doubt his life was not only a sacrifice to the Lord, but also a pleasing aroma. The words, "I am ready" (v6) shows that Paul's was ready to be poured out even unto death.

The time of Paul's departure has come: (v6) some believe that these words of Paul's means that he is about to die or be put to death certainly the words "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (v7) in the following verse would seem to support this idea. But later Paul tells Timothy to bring Mark with him because he is useful to Paul for ministry and also says he has been delivered from his accusers (especially Alexander v14) and tells Timothy to try and come before the winter (v21). So, though some verses seem to imply that Paul was about to die it seems doubtful that this was what he was saying since other verses imply, he was going to carry on his ministry and expecting to be alive at least to the beginning of winter. When it is understood that Paul's goal was to proclaim the Gospel in Rome before those who sat in high places of authority which he has now done, a better understanding of what he is saying might be that he has finished the race in the sense he has reached his goal. Much like an architect who designs a building would say, "I have finished it is done" when the structure is completed, but it does not mean he is never going to design another great structure. Paul's words:

- I am already being poured out as a drink offering (v6)

In this context may simply refer to his imprisonment and trial at which Alexandar the coppersmith not only strongly opposed Paul, but did him great harm (v14-15) added to this all those with Paul deserted him (v16) while the words, "The time of my departure has come" (v6) most likely refer to the fact he has been acquitted at his trial (delivered from the lions mouth) (v17) and is therefore being released from prison, thus the departure is not referring to death, but to his departure from prison where it appears he was cruelly treated by Alexandar the coppersmith (v14) and perhaps his departure from Rome.

This would seem to be more in harmony with the rest of the letter since it seems that Paul was intending to continue his service in the Lord with Timothy and Mark. Whatever the reason is unimportant and certainly not cause for argument or division since the primary message Paul wants us all to understand is not the detail of his life, but the glorious truth that God has a crown of righteousness laid up in glory for all who with anticipated excitement and joy look forward to Christ's return.

2 TIMOTHY 4:7-8

I have fought the Good Fight.

- **2 Timothy 4:7-8:** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Enduring in the faith and proclaiming the Gospel is called "The good fight" (v7) because it is not fought with fist or weapons of war, but with love, mercy and grace and the end result of those who surrender is joy, peace, contentment and eternal life in everlasting glory.

The glory and beauty of the Christian race: at the Grecian games, only one could obtain the highest prize all the rest who contended in those games, no matter how numerous they were, or how skilfully they contended, or how much effort they made, were of course subjected to missing out on the highest prize they were competing for. So it is in respect to all the prizes which this world can bestow. In a lottery, only one can obtain the highest prize, likewise in a class in college, only one can secure the highest honour, but not so in the Christian faith. Here is the excitement the joy the thrill and the glory of running in the Christian race, no matter how numerous the competitors, or how worthy, talented and skilled any one of them may be all may obtain the prize; all may be crowned with a diadem of life of equal brilliancy. No one is excluded because another is successful; no one fails of the reward because another obtains it. Who, then, would not make an effort to win the immortal crown? Such is the wonder and splendour of God's love, grace and mercy in Christ and the joy of running alongside our brothers and sisters having the knowledge that all who reach the finish-line receive the prize and not just the first to cross over it.

To all who have loved the Lords appearing: (that love his appearing in KJV) (v8), some have wondered if these words, are referring to Christ birth or his return. In the context of what Paul is saying they clearly apply to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it would not be wrong to embrace the Lords birth since it was the most majestic and glorious event to take place amongst mankind and changed the entire religious world forever, had Christ never been born there would be no Christian faith which undoubtedly means that all who do look forward to the Lords return have clearly loved his birth. Nevertheless, the focus and context is looking forward to Christ return. This spectacular moment will not only change the world forever, but will manifest the awe-inspiring and mind-blowing energy of God in a manner that will cause the entire world to stand in awe

of God's breath-taking power. This is because when Christ returns God will not be resurrecting one man to eternal glory as he did with Jesus, but all who have died and all who are alive and who have trusted in:

- The promised seed of the woman in (Genesis 3: 15).
- The prophet Moses said was to come like him (Duet 18:15).
- The promised seed of Abraham.
- The promised seed of David.
- The one the Scriptures speak of and the Prophets proclaim.
- Israel's King the Messiah and Christ.
- The Son of God and Saviour of the world.

When Jesus returns in glory God will resurrect all the faithful of the Old and New Testament who with anticipated excitement have looked forward to his appearing and his return.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (soon it is most likely they will simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3). To believe in the return of Christ to judge the world and to desire with joy his return became one of the standards by which Christians were known since no others but faithful Christians believed in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and no others truly desired it. This has not changed it is the same even today the return of the Lord is one of the characteristics of a true Christian. All who know the love of Christ and God's grace not only sincerely desire the return of their Saviour, but the cry of their heart says, "Come Lord Jesus come" (Rev 22:20).

- Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him (Rev. 1:7).

NOTICE: Paul has absolute confidence and assurance the Lord will grant a crown of righteousness to him and to all those who are looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, he does not in any manner doubt his salvation added to this he also has full assurance that all those who are in Christ well be saved to eternal life.

The glory wonder, splendour of the Christian faith: in this race every brother and sister who runs may obtain the crown. The struggle is not between a believer and a competitor in the sense, that if one obtains the crown the other must be excluded; because it is a crown that all the faithful can obtain. All who run the race, all who fight the good fight, all who keep the faith, all who love the Lord's appearing and cross the finish line will win the crown. This is beauty and glory in which the rewards and prize of this race differs from all other races. The reward is great since it is a reward not of debt, but of grace and fit not only for an apostle, but for even the most common of us who belong to the global family of Christ. The reward is given not only to those with great gifts and talents, but to all who look by faith and with love toward the Lords appearing. At this present time, this crown is laid up and by faith is in view, but not in possession. There is laid up for all who look to the Lord's return with anticipated excitement a crown of righteousness.

The happiness of the future state of every brother and sister in Christ is signified by a crown on account of the glory and excellency of it; and in perfect agreement with the character of the those in Christ as kings who are raised to sit among princes and to inherit the throne of glory and have a Kingdom prepared for them. This is called a crown of righteousness, because it comes through the righteousness of Christ; it is his righteousness that gives those in the Lord the right to it. Without Christ's righteousness that is obtained and possessed by faith and not by works and self-effort it cannot be enjoyed.

This crown can only be possessed by faith and God's grace it cannot be usurped (as crowns sometimes are), by self-righteousness or self-effort in trusting in religious rites, ceremonial customs or traditions. It is God the Father's free gift to His children, it is what they are born heirs into, and have an anticipated excitement for through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace they have the legal title to it. This happiness, signified by a crown, is laid up in the covenant of grace for every faithful brother and sister in Christ, which is promised with God's oath and therefore guaranteed in Christ in whose hands their life of glory is hidden and secure laid up in heaven and reserved there for that glorious day of their Saviours return.

The crown of every brother and sister is a crown of righteousness, purchased by the righteousness of Christ, they have not yet attained this state it is certain (except by faith and God's grace), but it is laid up in glory for those who endure through poverty, pain, sickness, and the agonies of death to the finish line. No brother or sister in Christ should despair since their crown is not like the wreath of olive, laurel, pine, or parsley which could be presented only on one victor, but is an eternal crown that will be bestowed on all who endure in faith to the finish line. Such is the honour and glory, the splendour and beauty of the Christian faith. (author unknown)

2 TIMOTHY 4:9-13

Paul asks Timothy to do his Best to Visit Paul.

- **2 Timothy 4:9-13:** Do your best to come to me soon. 10For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you for he is very useful to me for ministry. 12Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

It appears Demas because he loved the present world more than Christ deserted Paul when he saw that even Paul the great apostle was not exempt from being cast into prison and threatened with death. It is easy for people to follow leaders who are famous and everyone looks up to, the real test of a person's friendship is not how long they stay with you while you are in some manner a benefit to their life, but how many remain at your side when trouble comes. This is the test of faith neither God nor Christ want people to love them solely because they can receive some form of blessing. This principal applies in all relationships no parent is going to be thrilled if the only reason their children love them is because they continually give them gifts. A husband is not going to be overwhelmingly thrilled if the only reason his wife loves him is because he has an income that allows him to buy expensive gifts, nor is a wife going to be endeared to her husband if the only reason he loves her is because she surrenders to his passions. I suspect this is one of the reasons God allows troubles and hardships since they test whose love and faith is of pure gold and whose is of muddy clay.

The books and the parchments: Paul, tells Timothy to bring, "The books, and above all the parchments" (v13). The Jews throughout the Old Testament had selected scribes who were painstaking fussy and meticulously careful to record on scrolls (also called parchments) in exact

detail all that the prophets spoke and because these scrolls contained the word of God they treated and protected them as the greatest treasures on earth. Added to this the LORD had told them to teach from generation to generation the words of the prophets and God's dealings with Israel throughout the Old Testament and commanded the fathers to teach their children thus the reasons they were enormously fastidious and careful about protecting these scrolls. By the time of Paul there were many other scrolls (parchments) that Jewish scribes had recorded and kept since the time of John the Baptist. These scrolls contained the messages of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and many others., and were available to read and study for men like Paul, Timothy and others who proclaimed the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:13).

All Scripture is breathed out by God: in the previous chapter Paul told Timothy that, "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16) this does not mean every individual word as some religious ministers teach is breathed out by God. If this was a true teaching then those who live in China and Mexico or speak any other language than what the Bible was originally written in could never read the, "Scripture breathed out by God" since their Bibles would certainly not be written in the same words as the original manuscripts. Paul's statement, "All Scripture is breathed out by God", refers to the messages that the individual words put together teach and not the individual words themselves. It applies to the messages spoken by the prophets and apostles (i.e., the sum total of what the individual words put together are teaching).

Sometime a prophet was given a message by the inspiration of God and they were instructed to speak the exact words God had given them to the people. At other times God spoke to the prophets and they spoke the messages to the people in their own words (especially if it was a vision or revelation). Though the words they used might have been different the messages remained the same. God's word was not corrupted simply because the prophets used their own words to explain to the people what God had said. If this was the case no preacher on earth (no matter how good) would be speaking the inspired word of God unless they were using the exact words the original manuscripts were written in.

A simple example: a preacher may go to a foreign country of which he cannot speak the language so he proclaims the Gospel in his language and an interpreter translates it into the common language of the people. They intern understand it and if they respond with a right heart attitude to the message, they hear they will be saved, clearly showing that it is not individual words that are the inspired word of God, but the messages the words present. This is why it does not matter what language the Bible is written in if the messages remain the same its power to save to eternal life those who seek God with a humble heart is in no-way diminished.

2 TIMOTHY 4:14-16

Alexander Strongly Opposes Paul.

- **2 Timothy 4:14-16:** Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15Beware of him yourself for he strongly opposed our message. 16At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!

Paul was at this time was in Rome and his trial was before pagan men who did not follow the Christian faith. The seating surrounding the tribunal (the court panel of judges) would have been full of Gentiles and others who had heard about this amazing man named Paul. While Paul was standing on trial making his first defence, not only did Alexander a man who obviously had great influence strongly oppose him and the Gospel message, but all who had followed Paul deserted him, no doubt for fear of Alexander who Paul warned Timothy to beware of when he arrives.

NOTICE: Paul prays that God will not hold their desertion against them clearly showing the enormous grace and understanding of the frailty and weakness of human nature that Paul had and the overflowing love, grace and mercy of Christ that dwelt in his heart.

2 TIMOTHY 4:17-18

Paul was rescued from the Lions Mouth.

- **2 Timothy 4:17-18:** But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Following are the most common thoughts of who the lion's mouth refers to:

- Nero because of his rage and oppressive cruelty.
- Helius Caesarinus since he was also a bloody tyrant and prefect of the city at this time.
- The chief accuser of the Jews.
- A real lion, since being thrown to lions in the amphitheatre was common in Rome.

It is certainly not uncommon for the Scriptures to compare tyrants and persecutors with ravenous wild beasts especially that of the mouth of a lion gaped wide open ready to devour its prey. Though the lions' mouth could apply to all of the above I would suggest in this context it refers to Alexander the coppersmith who not only strongly opposed Paul at his trail but did him great harm (v14). Obviously, Paul won his case in this instance and was therefore delivered from his strongest and most dangerous opposer at this trial who was clearly Alexander the coppersmith. Paul says the reason God delivered him from the lions' mouth was so that he could fully proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. Remember this court hearing was only Paul's first defence no-doubt he appeared many more times before his accuses to state his case. Rome at this time was the centre of the world and at all times there were multitudes of strangers in the city. Paul's trial therefore gave him a great opportunity not only of testifying to the Gospel of Christianity before those who sat in high places of authority, but also to the common people on the streets since it is certain many in their travels would have heard about Paul and attended the court hearings.

The Lord will bring me safely into his Kingdom: Paul when he was first being persecuted at his trial and everyone had deserted him said, "The Lord stood by him and strengthened him (v17) yet Christ is in heaven so what does Paul mean? Undoubtedly the strength Paul refers to is spiritual and mental it is in this same sense that Paul says, "The Lord will rescue him from every evil deed and bring him safely into his heavenly kingdom" (v18). Certainly there are times when it seems God has sent a heavenly host of angels that have kept us from certain disaster, but the primary strength the Lord gives to those who stand in courage against their adversaries is the spiritual and mental strength to remain strong in their faith in the face of persecution and suffering (i.e., many didn't in Paul's case they all fled from him). The words:

- Keep us safely for his heavenly kingdom (v18).

Do not mean keep us from, persecution or suffering since Paul constantly suffered these nor does it mean brothers and sisters will be protected from sickness since multitudes of Christians throughout history have suffered and still do suffer with all kinds of illness and diseases (i.e., Trophimus who Paul had to leave because he was ill) (v20). Neither does it mean we will be sheltered from natural disasters since there are many

faithful brothers and sisters who have been tragically devastated by these. The protection Paul is talking about is the strength of faith to remain faithful in serving the Lord despite all these hardships, troubles and suffering. I remember once watching a movie in which a Christian mother whose faith had already been shaken was told that her fourteen-year-old daughter had leukaemia, as instant tears welled up the mother's eyes she prayed, "God please don't give me a reason to be bitter against you." This is the kind of strength Paul is talking about; it's about strength of faith contrasted to failing faith. It is about being spiritually rescued from everything that would attempt to destroy our faith. God will always strengthen the faith of those who sacrifice their own well-being for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words:

The Lord stood by me and strengthened me" express a universal truth in regard to the faithfulness of God, though all others may forsake us in the face of disaster and danger the Lord never will.

2 TIMOTHY 4:19-22

Greet all who have been Companions and Friends.

- **2 Timothy 4:19-22:** Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. 21 Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers. 22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

The words, "All the brothers be with your spirit" (v22) show something wonderful, no brother or sister should ever see themselves as being spiritually alone, but have a mental mindset that they belong to a global family who all have the same love in their hearts and the same passion, desire and goals which of course it to faithfully serve their Lord and be a good testimony to his name until that glorious day when we will all be gathered together to be with him in eternal glory.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.