

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE 2 TIMOTHY

January 23, 2019

Answers to Lesson 38 – 1 Timothy

Different Characteristics of This Letter

There are no discussions on the great Christian doctrines so characteristic of Paul. Some words used in the letter are nowhere else in the New Testament (including those of Paul). Historical events included in these letters do not fit into the account of his travels.

Godliness

Godliness describes life centered on God. Original meaning of the word signified an attitude toward God that expressed itself in actions that were pleasing to God. Some equated godliness with devotion. Godly people live no longer to their own will or to that of the world but only to the will of God. All things are to be done in the name of God.

Instructions to Timothy

Command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer.
Hold on to faith and have a clear conscience.
Warn others of the heresies that are being taught.
Train to be godly and cultivate a centeredness in the Christian life.
Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young.
Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture – to preach and to teach.
Command those who are rich not to make wealth the foundation of their hope.

Prayer

It is a significant statement because (at the time of this writing) Nero was the Roman emperor. He was notorious for his brutal persecution of Christians. As the church (the pillar and foundation of truth) they were to pray for the most unworthy ones.

Propriety

Women should dress modestly and refrain from wearing any expensive clothes. Clothes should not draw attention to the self. Paul also expected women to be in full submission to their husbands.

Service as Leaders

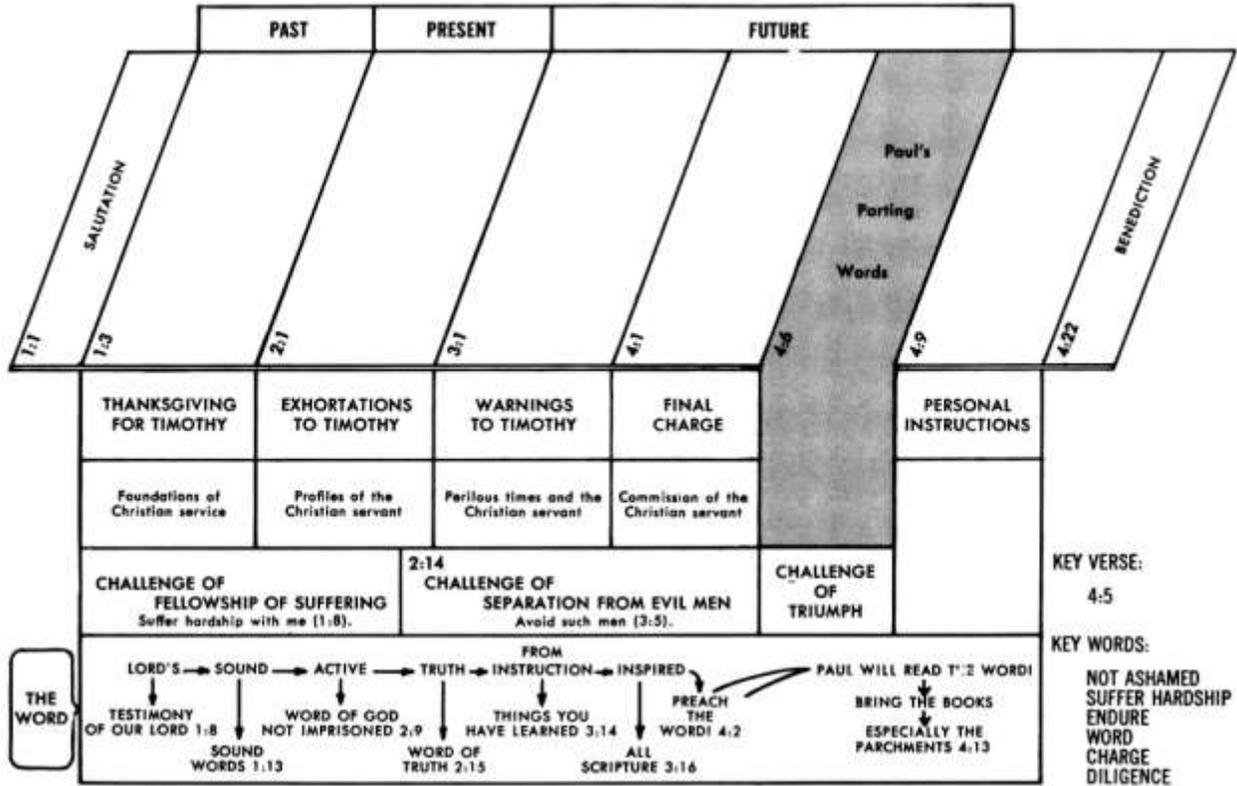
Overseers are to be above reproach, self-controlled and respectable. Deacons must also be sincere and worthy of respect. In every way the leaders in the church are to be models and examples in conduct.

Widows

Church has an obligation to help widows who are truly in need. Widows over sixty (and who are well-known for their good deeds) can remain on the list. However, believers need to assume responsibility for their widowed relatives. They should put their religion into practice by caring for their own family.

Elders

Author reminds the church that elders are worthy of double honor.
 It is an overflow of their godliness to honor and support their leaders.
 Author is very concerned about their actions.



The Pastoral Letters

Some scholars like to talk of the theology or ecclesiology of the Pastoral Epistles as one unit. Often misleading since 2 Timothy has a significantly different scope. Concerns for the good order of the church and the household are absent in 2 Timothy. Tied into this is the question of the order of the letters. Traditional order was determined largely by length. 1 Timothy was the longest and Titus the shortest. But all three do have the same broad characteristic: Paul gives counsel to two of his most important aides and coworkers.

Living tradition within Israel's history:

Several different streams of tradition are strung together as one.

Each originates with an authoritative earlier figure.

It is elaborated and extended within the immediate circle of that person's disciples.

It is retained under the name of the originator of the tradition.

Pentateuch

Book of Isaiah is the work of two or three generations

Corollary: If this practice was accepted at the time of the writing of the Pastoral Letters then it follows that the pseudonymous writing would be attributed to the originator only if it was deemed to be an appropriate elaboration or extension of the original.

Differences of style and content would not have denied Pauline authorship to these letters.

At the time they would have been deemed authentically Pauline.

Therefore their attribution to Paul would have caused them no problem.

Two choices for the personal notes within the body of the letters:

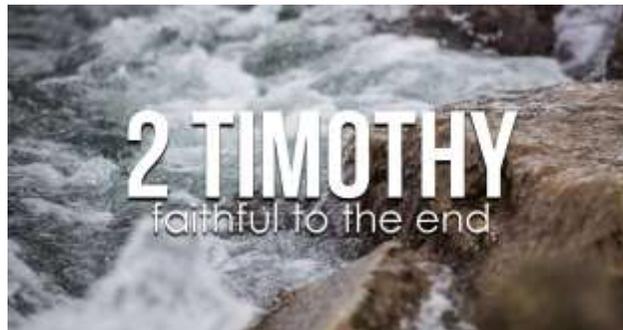
- 1) We have to envision Paul writing later in his career and assume that his style of writing changed because of his experiences later in his ministry (that extended beyond the limits suggested by Acts).
- 2) These personal notes were just brief notes kept and treasured by the churches that received them and used as a basis for the Pauline elaborations that have become known as the Pastoral Epistles.

If written by Paul himself then we have to speak of a *late Paul* and of an *early Paul*.

If not written by Paul then they are not to be devalued and treated as somehow *sub-Pauline*.

It gives us a glimpse into how the churches perceived and evaluated their founding apostle.

It demonstrates the kind of heritage he left with them.



Introduction to 2 Timothy is more typically Pauline than either of the other Pastoral Epistles.

Verses 3-7 follow the characteristic pattern of an initial thanksgiving and prayer for others.

It also includes his desire to see them and expresses confidence in their good faith.

Theological emphasis is on continuing what had gone before:

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.

Grace of God worked in conjunction with the mercy of God.

His service in the gospel is in continuity with the worship of those who have gone before.

Sincere faith of Timothy was inherited from his mother and grandmother.

Stands in marked contrast with other portions of church history.

Christianity established its own identity by divorcing themselves from its ties to Judaism.

Christianity came to be known through the *gospel* and Judaism for its *laws*.

2 Timothy 1:8-18

Letter stands out from the other two letters as being more of a farewell address.

Hallmarks include a reminder, warning and charge.

In these verses we see both the charge and the reminder.

Actual farewell comes in 4:6-8.

Appeal to the past is complemented by an appeal to Paul's own experience.

Ministry of Timothy will be based on the gospel that was entrusted to Paul.

Paul had the authority to discharge that gospel to Timothy.

Author is clear about those who abandoned him as well as those who stood by him.

Two prominent themes in this section 1) do not be ashamed and 2) be persistent in faith.

Shame is determined by a failure to live in accordance with gospel expectations.

Gospel changes priorities and relationships.

Timothy is to emulate Paul in enduring suffering and shame.

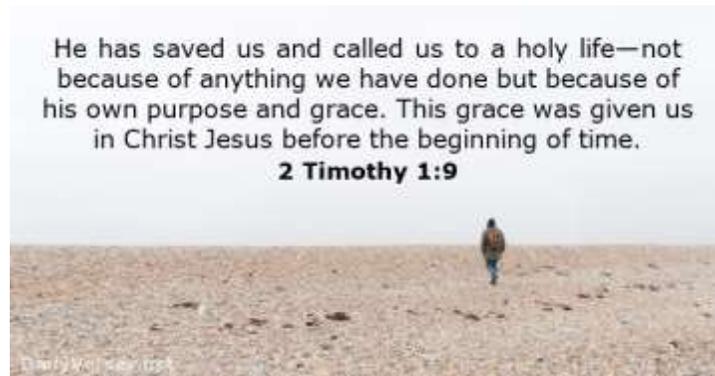
Suffering indicates neither dishonor nor failure when the gospel is involved.

Suffering also does not nullify the grace of God.

Paul comes across as one modeling how to die.

He does this by giving instructions about how to live confidently.

He also models ways to instill in others confidence in the promises of God.



2 Timothy 2

Chapter contains some of the most detailed charges put to Timothy.

Begins with the commission to ensure an effective succession for the deposit of faith.

Timothy is reminded of what is required of him.

Leads to more conversation about the suffering and endurance indicated in the gospel.

Imagery contrasts the good worker and the sound foundation.

At the end of the chapter, Paul hopes to win back those who have been snared by the devil.

In verse 8 the advice turns to consider the example of Jesus Christ.

Christ remains the sure sign that the Word of God (gospel) is not chained.

Jesus could not be confined by death and so the good news cannot be confined by shame.

Paul enacts the gospel message through his willingness to suffer persecution faithfully.

Preaching by example is to encourage perseverance among the saints.

Verses 11b-13a read like a Christian hymn:

Asserts the positive outcome of identifying with Christ and the need for perseverance.

Our denial of Christ results in his denial of us.

Our faithlessness will not be reciprocated by faithlessness on the part of Christ.

Christ will remain faithful to his own self and character.

Elsewhere in the letter there is hope for those he considers to be opponents of Timothy.

Full message of the letter also indicates that the gospel will not nullify the faithlessness of others.

2 Timothy 3

Further warnings follow as to the sort of evil people who may be expected in the last days.

Implication is that Timothy should already know who and what to expect.

Included is a final appeal to the role of the inspired Scripture in giving instruction.

Timothy is to persevere in true knowledge and belief.

Timothy has confidence (from his exposure to Scripture during his childhood).

Theme in this passage is to learn from tradition and to be realistic about the lessons learned.

Tradition can provide practical lessons and further insights from the accounts of faith.

History of tradition also teaches us the infinite gradations of deception.

Point of Scripture is to teach and equip us for effective living as a Christian.

2 Timothy 4

In the whole letter Paul has been the example to follow.

But it has been the Lord who makes such faithfulness possible.

Lord makes perseverance a reality.

People Timothy and Paul serve are not their own but they are the Lord's.

Lord possesses authority to issue rewards and punishments.

End of this letter displays an interesting tension.

On the one hand it is the desire of Paul to have friends rewarded and enemies penalized.

On the other hand his conviction is that payback belongs to God by virtue of his power.

Letter longs for faithful friends to receive benefits and for opponents to get their due.

It emphasizes the understanding that any such recompense is the business of God alone.

The author has a propensity to paint his portrait in heroic colors.

However, he does not do so without acknowledging the role of God in all of this.

In this final chapter we have a moving self-testimony at the end of a life-altering career.

His testimony was not only about his conversion but about his continued discipleship.

He offered the reality of grace in everyday life.

Author also gives us a personal equivalent of the psalms of lament.

In his honesty we have his unashamed confession.

Paul makes no attempt to impress others but shows his relief to be able to voice his concerns.

His frank confession of human weakness opens him to pray for the comfort and grace of God.

Assignment for January 30

Complete the Exercises from Lesson 39 on Pages 201-205

Read *Titus and Philemon* or the portions outlined on Page 205