

Notes on

Paulus' Second Letter to Timotheos

Authorship and Date Issues

The two issues, those of authorship and date, are in some sense tied to one another. Generally speaking, there are three schools of thought regarding the authorship and dating of the two letters to Timotheos (and the letter to Titus):

- The letters were written by a second century follower of Paulus. They were written in his style and therefore in his name.
Proponents of this view point to what they perceive as an acceleration in the development of positions within the church (e.g., 3:1ff.). Recognizing that the "genuine" Pauline letters do not display this level of structure, supporters of this viewpoint conclude that the letters were written later. Also in support of this view is the fact that the earliest collections of Paulus' letters do not contain the three "pastoral" letters.
The difficulty with this opinion is that if the assumption is removed that the author was writing about an increased church structure in chapter three, then there is little reason to suppose that the letters were written as late as the 2nd century. The target audience of the three pastoral letters was different than that of his more general letters, so one would expect differences in style and the like, but there also seem to be Pauline themes in the letters.
- The letters were written by Paulus after the end of the book of Acts.
Supporters of this view contend that Paulus was released from his "chains" and made a Fourth Missionary Journey, which included Spain (since Paulus had intended to visit Spain). They regard the three letters as not fitting into the framework established by Acts and yet as genuinely Pauline. Consequently, the letters must have been written after the termination of Acts.
The difficulty with this opinion is that there is no evidence of a Fourth Missionary Journey, inside or outside of the New Testament. The fabrication of Paulus' release in order to establish Pauline authorship seems too convenient for some scholars.
- The letters were written by Paulus within the timeline established by Acts.
Supporters of this view (such as John A.T. Robinson) argue that with little imagination, the events mentioned in the letters may very well have been recent. In the case of 2nd Timotheos, we read of Paulus' abandonment by Daemas and of Lukas' presence. As with the other "pastoral letters," we are reminded of his trip following Acts 20 and the issues that arose there. Titus is mentioned as having departed (4:10), and by all counts this was recent, indicating that the second letter was written not very long after the first and mentions numerous personal details which would place the letter within the timeline of Acts. In this case, a revision is necessary in the traditional interpretation of various passages (including the identity of Timotheos' opponents).
The difficulty with this opinion is chiefly that the traditional interpretations of the entire book are labeled "wrong" by its supporters. Additionally, it is quite possible that a later

author would mention genuine events in Paulus' life (like the Makedonian journey) if writing in his name.

This commentator dates the second letter to Timotheos some time during fall of 57. Near the end, Paulus asks for his winter cloak and hopes that Timotheos will reach him before winter. The mention of Daemas appears to place this letter shortly after the one to Filemon.

Commentary

Paulus, an envoy of Anointed Jesus through God's wishes, according to a promise of life in Anointed Jesus.

To Timotheos, beloved child.

Paulus refers to himself as having been sent by Jesus on account of God's wishes. Thus, his service was given to him not only by Jesus but by God as well. Timotheos knows this, but the persecutions that surround him appear to give him feelings of doubt. From the context, it appears that Timotheos has become angered in fruitless debates with his opponents. These emotions have prompted him to shrink back and be somewhat silent, even failing to exercise the spiritual gifts that God had given him.

Timotheos is called "beloved child" not only because of his youth but (most likely) also since it was Paulus who was ultimately responsible for Timotheos' having learned about the Messiah.

The "promise of life" refers to the afterlife, which (as we will see) is a matter of contention between Timotheos and those who are speaking against him.

1:2 *Generosity, mercy, peace from Father God and Anointed Jesus our Lord.*

I have thanks for God, whom I have been serving from my forebears with a clean conscience, as I have an unceasing memory of you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, remembering your tears, so that I might be filled with joy, taking remembrance of the trust without hypocrisy that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunike. Now I am persuaded that it is in you also.

Again and immediately, Paulus defends his own trust in God -- not for the benefit of his friend's knowledge but as a way of appealing to the faith in God that Timotheos recognizes in Paulus. Here, Paulus places himself firmly within the ranks of Jewish tradition. Following the traditions of his Jewish ancestors, Paulus has always served God with a clean consciousness.

Still, Paulus' reminder is not only for himself, for he turns quickly to the faith of Timotheos. Just as Paulus served God in following the traditions of his ancestors, so also Timotheos followed the traditions of his Jewish ancestors (for Timotheos' father was a Greek, as the Actions of the Envoys indicate at 16:1). Paulus expresses that he is firmly convinced not only that he himself is following the right path, but also that Timotheos too is honoring God.

For this reason I am reminding you to kindle God's gift which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God didn't give us a spirit of cowardice but of power and love and a sound mind. Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner. But suffer bad things together with me for the good message, according to the power of God--the one who saved us and called us with a holy calling--not according to our deeds, but according to his own purpose and that generosity that was given to us in Anointed Jesus before the times of the ages but which is now displayed through the appearance of our savior Anointed Jesus, who has indeed robbed death of energy. But he has illuminated life and incorruptibility through the good message, for which I was placed as a herald and an envoy and a teacher.

Having bolstered his friend's faith by reminding him of the Jewish tradition which both of them have been following faithfully, Paulus turns his focus to the present. He wants Timotheos to use the miraculous signs that had been given to him. These signs were intended to confirm the message, and in Timotheos' case the holy breath had been conferred to Timotheos as Paulus gave his blessing; therefore it was right for Paulus to urge Timotheos to use the abilities God had given him.

"For God didn't give us" -- Paulus refers here explicitly and once again to himself and Timotheos. His phrasing binds the two together, so that if Timotheos can observe Paulus doing particular things in faith, then he should envision himself doing those things as well. Paulus does not believe that his friend is "ashamed" of Jesus or Paulus; instead, he realizes that Timotheos appears to be afraid to use his gifts out of fear of persecution. So, Timotheos ought to use his gifts with the power that was given him by God; he shouldn't withhold their use in cowardice.

Paulus acknowledges that Timotheos will suffer as a result, but instead of dwelling on the suffering itself, he considers that suffering to be another way in which Timotheos and Paulus will be alike in the faith -- another way in which Timotheos is his "child."

"...the one who saved us and called us with a holy calling" -- Paul shifts the focus from himself to God. After all, it had not been Paulus but God himself who had granted such gifts to Timotheos and who had called him to become Paulus' assistant and coworker. So Paulus reminds his compatriot that such a calling had not been given to either of them because of their worth, but it was an expression of God's generosity.

The freedom from sin and guilt had been expressed in God's wondrous plan, which culminated in the sending of an Anointed One -- Jesus. This plan had begun even before God designated the ages -- before he created the universe. Jesus "robbed death of energy" not so much through his resurrection but through the message of freedom from guilt that he brought. Thus, "he has illuminated life...through the good message."

Here we see that Paulus' comprehension of the content of the message was similar to what the other envoys taught. Jesus had summarized and internalized the Torah, thereby eliminating the focus on wrong deeds (Rm 7-8) that the attitude of code keeping had brought the Jews. In Romans, Paul writes that the power of death is the Torah; here, he contrasts the two ways of thinking as "death" and "life," and the Messiah had brought the teaching of life. He had freed his people from legalism.

Through God's great generosity, Paulus had been made three things: "a herald and an envoy and a teacher." The herald served as an official spokesman or announcer of a high official. But Paulus was also an empowered emissary -- an envoy (apostle). Furthermore, he was able to discuss and elucidate the good message -- he was a teacher. All of these things Paulus was on account of God's generosity, which came on account of the Messiah. And so, Paulus returns to the introduction. He is "an envoy ... according to God's wishes."

For this reason also I am suffering these things. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one whom I have trusted, and I am persuaded that he is powerful enough to guard what I have entrusted him with until that day.

Paulus uses the expression "that day" three times in this letter, each time referring to the day of one's death (and reward). Paulus has entrusted himself fully to God, and he expresses that he is certain that God will guard his life until the appropriate time. Therefore, he finds himself not cowardly or ashamed but powerful, because God is in control even of the time of his death. The suffering, then, is not so important, for the suffering comes because of the calling that God gave him.

You hold a prototype of sound sayings, which you heard from me in that trust and love which is in Anointed Jesus. Guard the good trust by means of that holy breath which dwells in us.

Paulus reminds Timotheos that the young man had heard "a prototype" of the message from Paulus. He is to retain this message (and to teach it), using the miraculous ability that he and Paulus both share.

It is important that Paulus mentions the scope of his message being the "trust and love" that comes from following the Messiah, for it is precisely these two elements which summarize the Torah. We see this in Jesus' teachings as early as the beatitudes, four of which are trust related, and four of which are concerned with love.

You know this: that all those in Asia have turned me away, among whom are Fugelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord give mercy to Onesiforos' household, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain. On the contrary, though he was in Rome, he sought me diligently and found me. (May the Lord give him to find mercy from the Lord in that day.) And you know very well what things of service he did in Ephesus.

Paulus reminds his compatriot briefly (here) of some who deserted him, but more verbosely of Onesiforos, an Ephesian man who appears to have protected Paulus -- returning from a trip to Rome in order to do so.

Paulus again refers to "that day" -- the day of someone's death and subsequent judgment. Here, the judgment will be Onesiforos', but Paulus is subtly establishing a foundation for comments that he will later make about the afterlife.

2:1 *Therefore my child, be strong in the generosity that is in Anointed Jesus, and the things that you heard from me through many witnesses, entrust these things to trustworthy people who will also be competent to teach others.*

"The generosity" refers to the freedom from legalism that comes from living a life of trust and love, which Paulus has just said came through Jesus. Paulus wants Timotheos to live such a life but also so make sure that he teaches this internal way of thinking to other trustworthy people. Paulus has encountered many UNtrustworthy people -- even close associates -- who returned to Judaism or otherwise left the faith. Therefore, he urges Timotheos to make sure that he finds trustworthy people who will be able to do what he is doing: living a life of love and teaching this to other people. Paulus recognizes the dangers of losing the message that the Messiah brought.

Therefore, suffer bad things with me as a good soldier of Anointed Jesus. No one who is serving as a soldier involves himself with life's practicalities, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

Paulus urges his friend to join him in being a "soldier" of Anointed Jesus -- someone who struggles to promote the message of the internalized Torah. He then uses "soldier" as the first of three analogies to indicate that both he and Timotheos should devote themselves fully to the work that God empowered them to do.

Just as a soldier concerns himself only with pleasing his general, Timotheos needs to concern himself with pleasing God. The passage can also be read so that "the one who enlisted him" refers to Paulus himself.

Now also, if someone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he has competed lawfully.

This was certainly true for the athletic games, and Paulus applies it to his friend, whose attitude will need to focus on doing his work according to what God has designed for him.

*It is necessary for the gardener who labors to partake first of the fruits.
Think about what I'm saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.*

Just as a gardener tastes the food to be sure that it is good before offering it to others, Timotheos will need to live a life of trust and love, so that he will be proclaiming what he practices.

Remember Anointed Jesus who was raised from among the dead, who was from the seed of David according to my good message, in which I am suffering bad things, even to bondage, as though I were someone who does bad things. But God's message is not bound.

Now Paulus reminds Timotheos that Jesus proved that there was an afterlife by raising from the dead. This Jesus was the genuine Anointed One, the "seed of David" whom the Jewish people were expecting, and when Paulus speaks of the Anointed One he does so accurately.

It is because of the good message (of trust and love) that Paulus has been suffering, and Timotheos is certainly aware that this is the reason why he is writing from bondage in Filippi.

Yet though Paulus is bound, the message has not been bound. The message of freedom is still free.

For this reason, I am undergoing all things: on account of the chosen ones, so that they also might obtain the salvation that is in Anointed Jesus, along with eternal glory.

Paulus wants his friend to realize that the sufferings are his choice, and he presents himself by analogy. He endures what he is enduring because he is not looking at the suffering but at the fate of other people. These "chosen ones" will receive salvation through the good message of freedom, but they will also receive "eternal glory," which is the afterlife.

This statement is reliable: For, "if we have died together, we will also live together." If we endure, we will also be royalty together. If we deny him, he will also deny us. If we are untrusting, he remains trustworthy, for he is unable to deny himself.

The "reliable statement" is intended to support the existence of the afterlife. Paulus assures Timotheos that "if we have died together" (if they endure in this life), then "we will also live together" (in the afterlife). Although he has not mentioned Jesus' suffering here, living and dying together surely refers not only to themselves (Paulus and Timotheos) but to Jesus as well.

Paulus elaborates that those who endure will "be royalty" as part of the royal family of God, but denying Jesus will cause Jesus (metaphorically) to deny them before God; they would lose everything. Therefore, Timotheos needs to endure in a trusting manner, but even if they are untrusting, Jesus must remain faithful to himself. He cannot deny that he is the Anointed One, and so he will have to deny those who deny him.

14 *Remind them of these things, solemnly testifying in God's presence that they should not fight verbally (with no useful result) to the ruin of those who hear. Be diligent to present yourself to God as approved, an unashamed worker, cutting the message of truth properly. But avoid profane empty sounds, for they will continue to the point of more impiety, and their message will have as pasture a festering sore. Among them are Humeneus and Filetos, who have missed the mark concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. And they have overturned some people's trust.*

Timotheos should remind his opponents that they must accept the full teachings of the Anointed One in order to be free. Not only should they -- the opponents -- not engage in verbal quarrels, but this is directed at Timotheos also. There is no point in such arguing, and those who hear it are "ruined."

Instead, both Timotheos and his opponents need to avoid getting into shouting matches with one another, and Timotheos needs to focus himself on speaking properly -- using his spiritual gifts (i.e., not being ashamed) to further the message. He refers to the arguments that Timotheos and others are participating in as "profane" -- they are opposed to God, as "empty" -- for they serve no purpose except to encourage impiety, and as resulting in festering sores.

Most commentators say that Humeneus and Filetos were promoting a belief that equated the afterlife with something already part of the Christian experience. Thus, they were teaching that believers had nothing to look forward to in death, for the "resurrection" promised by Jesus was not connected with life after death. Paulus indicates that this belief was causing some to abandon their trust in God entirely. We do not know, but perhaps this belief originated with Zadokite ("Sadducee") Jews who converted to Christianity.

The firm foundation of God is standing, however, which has this seal: "Yahweh knew those who were his," and, "Let every one who names the name of Yahweh depart from wrong."

The first quote, placed into the past tense, is taken from Num 16:5, where it appears in the future tense. In that passage, two hundred and fifty of the most respected people in Israel spoke up against Moses and Aaron, claiming that the prophets should not have taught that the Levites were to assist the priests (Aaron's lineage). Moses' opposition claimed that every one of them was equally holy to God, but Moses replied that God would prove who among the people were his own. He did this on the following day by causing an earthquake to destroy Moses' opponents. God had proven who really belonged to him, and God would again prove that Paulus and Timotheos were his -- although in the context the opponents' destruction would be the permanent destruction of their souls (whereas Paulus and Timotheos would have eternal life).

The second citation comes from Isa 26:13. The passage there indicates that those who oppose God will be truly dead, but those who follow him -- his people, his nation -- will live, even if they die. But these will be people who have chosen to "depart from wrong."

20 *Now in a great house, there are not only golden and silver vessels, but also wooden and earthen ones; some also indeed are for honor, but some are for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone should cleanse himself away from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, made holy, being of good advantage to the master, prepared for every good deed.*

The analogy here is to the use of wares in the Jewish household. Some vessels were ritually purified, considered "holy" -- dedicated to God, but other vessels were used for ordinary or "common" purposes and could not be used in religious devotion to God.

Paulus indicates here that a person too must be "cleansed." The one who is "cleansed" will be kept as an advantage to God, but (as he has just said) the one who is unclean will be destroyed.

22 *Now, flee the strong youthful desires, but pursue what is right: trust, love, peace--with those who call on the Lord out of a clean heart.*

The "youthful desires" here indicate Timotheos' propensity to engage in quarrels. Instead of fighting, he should pursue trust and love (as Jesus taught) -- and of course peace. This is appropriate behavior for someone (such as himself) whose heart has been cleansed. The implication is that Timotheos has been set aside for holy purposes.

But avoid the foolish and uninformative questions, knowing that they engender fights. But it is necessary for God's slave not to fight, but to be gentle toward all people, fit to teach, enduring

bad things, instructing those who oppose you with meekness. Perhaps God may give them a change of mind into knowledge of the truth, and they may be retrieved from the accuser's snare. (They were captured by him for his wishes.)

Here, Paulus' warning to his friend is its strongest. He should avoid following his emotions and engaging in verbal battles, instead being "gentle toward all people." If he is gentle, then he is truly fit to teach; if he endures the treatment he receives, then he can instruct others in meekness -- submission toward God. Paulus doesn't promise that this behavior will result in the salvation of Timotheos' opposition, but at least there is that possibility.

While it is possible that "the accuser" refers to any human opponent of Christianity (and especially those Jewish people who adamantly opposed Jesus), it does seem that the accuser here is the Enemy, "Satan." Still, being "captured" by the accuser may only signify that they have fallen prey to certain anti-Messianic teachings.

3:1 *Now you know this: that in later days harsh seasons will be standing. For the people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, feeling superior, those who say evil things, unpersuaded by their parents, unthankful, irreverent, without familial love, impossible to satisfy, accusers, out of control, vicious, without love for good people, betrayers, reckless, arrogant, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of piety but denying its power.*

Paulus reminds Timotheos again about the persecution that he will face if he decides to take a stand for the Messiah. Why will these things happen? Paul insists here that the reason for the persecution is lodged solely in the personalities of those who accuse and oppose him, and he probably intends to include the people who are currently teaching against Timotheos. These people are:

"lovers of self, lovers of money" -- Paulus asserts that often his enemies are more interested in self-aggrandizement than in seriously following God.

"boasters, feeling superior" -- Their attitude is that their opinion somehow makes them better than people who hold different views. Perhaps in this case they were trying to make Timotheos feel inferior.

"those who say evil things, unpersuaded by their parents" -- Their denial of the afterlife is tantamount to denying God, since Jesus (who was God's prophet) clearly taught the afterlife. Paulus clearly believes (and has said in this letter) that the traditions of his ancestors clearly instructed of matters such as the Messiah and the afterlife. In rejecting certain teachings of Jesus, the opposition has failed to pay attention to their parents.

"unthankful" -- since God granted them a gift of eternal life, but they were denying it

"irreverent" -- since they were deliberately twisting the teachings of the Messiah

"without familial love" -- The items from here on portray the people as brutal men who have given themselves over to the Enemy. This list is intended to show Timotheos how disgusting they are to God and to make his (later) point that they cannot be debated with.

"having a form of piety but denying its power" -- for although these people claim to follow Jesus, they are not living lives of trust and love (which is the power of the good message).

Turn away from these also. For among these people are those who enter into houses and take captive easy women who are burdened with sins. These people are led away by various strong desires, always learning and never able to come into recognition of the truth. Now in the way that Yannes and Yambres opposed Moses, so also these ones are opposed to truth. They are people whose minds are decayed; they are disapproved regarding the faith.

Paulus then concludes that these argumentative Zadokites are no better than those who slip into adulterous relationships with sinful women. Instead of following God, they are similarly seeking their own desires. Although they are probably Jews who study the Torah and the teachings of Jesus, they are never truly understanding the good message if they deny both the internal Torah and the afterlife.

Rabbinic tradition names the men who opposed Moses in Pharaoh's court (Ex 7:8ff.). It is there and not in the Torah itself that those men are called Yannes and Yambres. They claimed to be able to work miracles, equal to or greater than anything that Moses or Aaron could provide, even succeeding in turning their rods into snakes.

Paulus allies Timotheos' opponents with these two men who claimed to have some sort of divine power since they were claiming to have better knowledge. But Paulus asserts that they are "opposed to truth" because they were standing against both the internal Torah and the teaching of eternal life.

The comment about decay may refer to their lack of eternal life.

But they won't proceed to more of this, for their mindlessness will be obvious to all, as it happened also with those two.

Yannes and Yambres had their snakes devoured by Aaron's rod, which also became a snake. Just so, the truth that Timotheos' enemies are opposing will devour them, since eventually the truth would become known.

But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, trust, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings (what happened to me in Antiochus, in Ikonium, in Lustra--what persecutions I endured and that the Lord rescued me from them all).

As for Timotheos, he would not be devoured -- he would not be destroyed -- for he was following the teaching that Jesus had given to Paulus. Even stronger than the words were Paulus' actions and way of life, which Timotheos could plainly see. Thus, the fact that he was truly following God and the truth (and the opposition was not) was indeed plain to see. He considered it undeniable that God had rescued him, and so he presents it as support for his case that the truth becomes clear.

Now indeed all those who want to live piously in Anointed Jesus will be persecuted. But evil people and charlatans will proceed to what is worse, tricking and being tricked.

The persecutions that existed in Paulus' day were there because of opposition within the Jewish community. Families were divided over the Messiah and his teachings, and so, if Timotheos continued to embrace Jesus and his explanation of the Torah, he too would face the kind of persecution that Paulus had seen so far. In fact, anyone who did as Paulus did would suffer.

Continuing to predict, Paulus explains the future of Timotheos' unworthy opponents. Rather than seek to discuss truth, they would deceive others and themselves. Paulus will predict more in a moment.

But you continue in the things that you learned and found trustworthy, knowing from whom you have learned and that from the time when you were a baby you have known the sacred writings--those which are able to make you wise to the point of salvation (through that trust in Anointed Jesus). Each divinely inspired writing is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for that training in what is right--so that God's person may be competent, fitted thoroughly for every good deed.

The author wishes to remind his "child" in the faith that although he learned about Jesus from Paulus, Timotheos had always been able to perceive truth where it was -- even in his gentile-dominated household -- because God was the one who was teaching him.

Paulus uses a word for "sacred" which was normally not used by Jews (who favored ἅγιος instead). While most commentators assume that Paulus is writing about the Torah, it is more likely from the language that Paulus means to indicate various pagan writings that Timotheos' father had taught him, as it was quite normal for fathers to decide how their sons should be schooled.

Paulus then defines and limits the term "sacred writings" -- not every gentile writing, but "those which are able to make you wise," and he qualifies this further by adding that this salvation is subject to the teachings that came through Jesus.

"Each ... writing." Most commentators wish to make γραφή (writing) into a collective here. If this were the case, the usual construction in Greek would supply the article, "all the writing." Instead, we see "each writing," referring to the writings individually. Paulus is pointing out to his friend that he can still use those sacred writings to his benefit, provided of course that they are subject to the teachings of Jesus. Wherever they are true, then, he can use them -- just as Paulus himself occasionally cited non-Jewish sources. Naturally, "every divinely inspired writing" is broad enough so that it includes the Torah and Prophets as well. Inspiration extends beyond learning enough to be saved; it branches out into usefulness for teaching as well.

4:1 *I solemnly testify in the presence of God and Anointed Jesus, the one who is about to judge the living and the dead, 'according to his appearing and his kingdom.*

Since he has made such an unusual point, Paulus testifies to it with as strong a testimony as he is able to make. He takes an oath in the presence of both God and the Messiah, in full knowledge that the Messiah was about to judge Israel, just as he came ("his appearing") and established his spiritual kingdom.

Herald the message. Stand on it in season or out of season. Refute, reprove, advise in all longsuffering and instruction.

Using whatever tools are available to him, by all means Timotheos must continue to serve as a herald of the message -- of the internal Torah. He must make his stand with the message whether people are eager to hear it, or whether they persecute him for it. He is to use the message as a basis for all forms of advisement (friendly and strong), instructing with it and suffering for it.

For there will be a season when when they will not endure the wholesome teaching, but according to their own strong desires they will accumulate teachers who tickle their ears, and indeed they will turn away from hearing the truth; but they will be turned aside to fables.

Now Paulus returns to predicting what Timotheos' opponents will do. Rather than listening to the message, they will persecute him for it. Why? Because they would rather find themselves teachers who tell them what they want to hear. In the end, they will ignore what Timotheos tells them and will believe any story that supports their own prejudiced ideas.

Now you be clear-headed in all things. Suffer bad things. Do the work of a good messenger. Fulfill your service. For I am already being poured out, and the season of my being set free has approached. I have competed in the good contest: I have finished the race; I have defended the faith. The crown of Right remains set aside for me, which the Lord will give me on that day. He is the just judge, not only toward me but also toward all who have loved his appearing.

In concluding his friendly but stern advice, Paulus sums up the matter by urging his sometime companion to think first before acting (rather than running off emotionally). Yes, this will cause him to suffer, but Paulus has already explained that he will suffer if he does what God wants him to do -- if he "fulfills the service" that Jesus gave him and tells the true message.

As if anticipating that Timotheos would still wonder why suffering must follow, Paulus adds the fact that he anticipates his being "set free" to come soon. While this could refer to his captivity, with what follows it appears more likely that he is expecting his death, and the metaphor that he uses (of freedom) implies the afterlife. Thus, in Paulus' sufferings, he expects to someday die and receive a "crown" -- a reward for his good service -- eternal life.

In Paulus' description, it is Jesus who will give him that reward -- because he will have followed Jesus to the end. The same reward of eternal life is there, he says, for all those who rejoiced at the coming of the Messiah. And when Paul writes this, he means Timotheos specifically.

9 *Try hard to come to me soon. For Demas has forsaken me, since he loved the present age. And he has gone to Thessalonike; Kreskens went to Galatia; Titus went to Dalmatia. Lukas alone is with me.*

Paulus now takes up personal matters. He hopes that Timotheos will soon be able to join him, because so many people have deserted him. Demas had been with Paulus for about two years (at least since he wrote to the Kolossaeans), but in order to avoid persecution he abandoned Paulus and left for Thessalonike. Both Kreskens and Titus have also left the faith by this time,

each of them going to different places. This left Paulus essentially alone, although Lukas was still travelling with him.

Take up Markus; bring him with you. For he is advantageous to me for service. Now I sent Tuchikos to Ephesus. As you come, bring the cloak that I left in Troas with Karpos and the scrolls (especially the parchments).

Tradition identifies this "Markus" with Yohanan Markus, about whom Bar-Nabas and Paulus had a conflict and separated (Acts 15:39). We have no way of knowing whether or not this is so. Perhaps this is Peter's son, or another Markus. At any rate, Markus and Tuchikos are still serving God.

Expecting a harsh winter, Paulus hopes that Timotheos will bring along the scrolls and cloak that he had left in Troas (Acts 20:5-6). While "the scrolls" appears to be a general term for anything Paul may have been studying, "the parchments" is a more specific term signifying expensive animal skins, and it is quite possible that Paulus had had to leave his Torah scrolls behind.

Alexandros the coppersmith openly did many bad things to me. May the Lord give to him according to his deeds. You guard against him too, for he has greatly opposed our words.

Acts 19:33 and 1T 1:20 both mention Alexandros. Apparently he had intended to support Paulus publically but wound up openly opposing him due to public pressures. Since he was in the area where Timotheos was staying, Paulus warns his friend that Alexandros might join the opposition.

In my first defense, no one was together with me, but everyone abandoned me. (May it not be recorded to them.) But the Lord was around, and empowered me so that through me the heralding might be fulfilled, and that all the nations might hear. And I was rescued out of the mouth of a lion. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and he will save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. A-mein.

This "first defense" may refer to the confrontation where Alexandros abandoned him (Acts 19), although most commentators believe it refers to the **formal** defense in Acts 21-22. It may also refer to a somewhat formal defense that is not recorded in the Actions. At any rate, Paulus expresses thanks that he was able to speak despite being alone.

His being "rescued out of the mouth of a lion" appears to point not to literal lions but to the crowd in Acts 19, and Paulus courageously asserts the knowledge that God will rescue him in this life and preserve him into the next life. Again we have a subtle reminder of the afterlife.

19 *Greet Prisca and Akila and the household of Onesiforos. Erastus remained in Korinth, but I left Trofimius in Miletus since he was ill. Try hard to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as do Pudens, Linos, Klaudia, and all the brothers. May the Lord be with your spirit. May generosity be with you all.*

The usual set of personalized greetings closes the letter, as well as the author's further explanations as to certain people's whereabouts. Hoping that Timotheos will reach him soon,

Paulus returns various greetings and blesses any faithful person with Timotheos who might read the letter.

© 2000 Frank Daniels