

1) He saw an opportunity. The amazing thing is this: Paul used the defense as an opportunity to preach the Gospel. So the Gospel was "fulfilled" through him in the courts of Caesar. None stood up for him, so he stood himself and preached Christ! Hallelujah. It gave him a chance to preach. He took it.

2) He secured a respite. So the Word says: "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." This means that for the present Satan was robbed of his prey (1 Peter 5:8). This does not mean release or acquittal, but it means a temporary rescue from impending danger.

3) He experienced a defense. Ah, here is the very essence of victory. The Lord was Paul's unfailing Presence and Power (Heb. 13:5). One with God is a majority. How glorious is the God Whom we adore!

Conclusion The final days for Paul on earth were not easy. He asked his friends to bring comfort. We believe they did. The time would come when he would be taken to glory (v. 18). This, like everything else in his life, would result in the glory of God. Amen.

THE BOOK OF SECOND TIMOTHY

"Released from Death"
2 Timothy 4:13-18

Introduction

1. Paul was imprisoned and then released. He was probably free for about three or four years. He carried on a peripatetic ministry. Then he was rearrested. It may have been at Troas (v. 13). 2 Timothy comes from this second experience in prison.

2. Paul was ready to depart to be with the Lord (v. 8). He unexpectedly, apparently, received a deferment for his death and was taken back to prison. He gained some sort of breather. It is at this time he writes. He wants to have Timothy come to him (v. 9). He tells of other events close to his heart (this text). Here they are:

1. DIFFICULTIES IN HIS CELL v. 13.

Things are different here than in Acts 28:30, 31. Now he is in the Mamertine Prison. It is underground and damp, cold, dark, dirty. Apparently, Paul had suddenly been apprehended at Troas. He wanted some things he had not had time to collect. William Tyndale had a similar experience in his prison at Vilvorden in 1535 when he asked for warm clothes and above all, his Hebrew Bible, grammar, and dictionary. So, Paul asked for:

a. Warmth for his body--"the cloke."

It was cold, so he asked for this to fit over his needy body. Probably made of goat's hair. Perhaps Paul had made it himself. Certainly it had nothing to do with some eucharistic investment as some think. It does speak, however, of how the Holy Spirit had room in the Scriptures for this small detail of human life! Praise God, for the Lord is concerned about the small things (Matt. 6:25-34).

b. Occupation for his mind--"the books."

These would be papyrus rolls. No statement here as to contents. They may have been Paul's own memoranda which he would ultimately bequeath to Luke (v. 11). We know how Luke used such materials (Luke 1:1-4). It is always good

to benefit from what the Lord has taught others from His precious Word.

c. Food for his soul--"the parchments."

These are probably the Scriptures. That is why the adverb "especially" is added. How could Paul have left his Bible in Troas?!? Only one answer seems plausible: he was hurried off from that city and placed in jail for the second time. Paul's keen word here shows his urgent concern for the Word of God. May this be ours, too!

2. PERSON AS HIS ADVERSARY vv. 14, 15.

His name is given: "Alexander the coppersmith." Actually, he was a "smith" and the kind is not stated. Paul did not fear to state the name of the man who caused friction and difficulty for him. Some back off from this and forget principle in favor of emotions. The latter sort of approach often shields true facts and blinds men from the truth.

a. His position

The phrase "did me much evil" is really a statement of the fact that Alexander was responsible for initiating Paul's arrest and trial. This ended in his martyrdom. It was Alexander who laid the information against Paul which condemned him! How sad! Would to God he had rather been used to bring blessing to Paul and the household of faith. How are you used in the assembly of the saints? What kind of contribution do you make toward the preacher, the work, the believers?!

b. His peril

It may well be that this Alexander is the same as mentioned earlier (1 Tim. 1:20). Now he is in trouble again. He uses it as an opportunity to "get" the apostle Paul. He lays information before the authorities to discredit Paul. If he is the same as in 1 Timothy, then he would know the inner circle of believers. Hence, Paul warns that he could entrap others, even as he had done with Paul. He therefore warns them (v. 15). None is so fierce an enemy as an erstwhile friend! Such was Alexander! He was numbered among the believers, but he was a dangerous man because he was not really "with them." Every local

assembly ought to get hold of this and keep their ranks clean and of single mind.

c. His punishment

Does this sound vindictive? Are you surprised that Paul should write like this under inspiration? Paul was deeply concerned because the work of the Lord was being infected! Damage rather than blessing came to the cause of Christ. The R.V., therefore, gives the indicative statement: "the Lord will render unto him." This is not a prayer but a statement of fact. God has his way of dealing with Alexanders. Beloved, may God spare us from having such in our assemblies. Their rebuke is clear. Their judgment is certain. God will see to it all!

3. STRENGTH OF HIS DEFENSE vv. 16-18.

In speaking of his "first answer," Paul is thinking of his defense relating to the charges leveled against him. His "second defense" will come up when the hearing of his case is resumed. Notice these facts:

a. None spoke for Paul

1) Professionally. The verb used here is a technical one. It speaks of "defending counsel." Think of it--no one of the profession would take Paul's case and defend him! They feared to defend against the trumped up charges lest they be laid to them also (Acts 17:7). So the fraudulent charges kept the attorneys out.

2) Supportively. The phrase "all men forsook me" indicates there should have been some to stand up and testify in Paul's defense. All defected! Their witness might have been of enormous assistance. They failed to provide it. Many a good cause is lost because none will stand to defend it.

NOTE: It is to Paul's credit that he turned the entire matter over to the Lord. God would see to the judgment of these deserters. He had learned well from the Lord (Luke 23:34) who had been a lesson to Stephen. BUT let it be noted: it is never wrong to stand up for the right! Paul did (Acts 15; Gal. 2). Be a blessing. Stand for the truth!

b. Paul spoke for himself