

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 TIMOTHY 3 (PART 2)

2 TIMOTHY 3 IS PAUL'S WARNING AND DIRECTIVE TO TIMOTHY ABOUT THE DIFFICULT TIMES THAT ARE COMING IN WHAT HE CALLS THE "LAST DAYS." BY THIS HE MEANS THE DAYS BEFORE AND UNTIL JESUS CHRIST RETURNS TO THE EARTH. HE HAS HIGHLIGHTED THAT EVIL WILL ABOUND IN EGREGIOUS AND SUBTLE WAYS AND THAT PEOPLE WILL OPPOSE GOD'S TRUTH AND GOD'S WAY. IN THE SECOND HALF OF THIS CHAPTER, PAUL IS GOING TO ELEVATE SOMETHING THAT TIMOTHY WILL NEED TO TURN TO IN ORDER TO BE EQUIPPED FOR THESE DIFFICULT DAYS. THE WORLD IS GOING TO DO WHAT THE WORLD IS GOING TO DO, PAUL'S AIM TO HAVE TIMOTHY (AND US) BE DIFFERENT.

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-12 - YOU KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME, AND HOW I RESPONDED

PAUL IS NOT JUST RECALLING THE TROUBLE HE EXPERIENCED IN THESE PLACES, BUT ALSO HIS "TEACHING, CONDUCT, PURPOSE, FAITH, PATIENCE, LOVE, PERSEVERANCE,..." HE'S TELLING TIMOTHY TO REMEMBER THE EXAMPLE THAT HE HAS SET IN THESE MOMENTS AND FOLLOW IT. HE'S AN OLDER FATHER COMING TO HIS SON TO REMIND HIM HOW TO LIVE, NOW THAT HE WILL BE ON HIS OWN.

PAUL REMINDS TIMOTHY OF HIS TIME IN THREE CITIES, **ANTIOCH**, **ICONIUM**, AND **LYSTRA** WHICH WERE CITIES HE HAD VISITED ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY, WHICH OCCURRED BEFORE TIMOTHY JOINED PAUL (ACTS 16:1-2). TIMOTHY WAS FROM LYSTRA AND MAY HAVE BEEN AWARE OF PAUL'S FIRST EXPERIENCE THERE. PAUL'S TIME IN THESE THREE CITIES WAS MARKED BY GOSPEL PREACHING, BIBLICAL EXPOSITION, POSITIVE INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES, INTERESTING TWISTS AND PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING.

ANTIOCH - ACTS 13:13-52

V. 13-16: ARRIVAL & INVITATION, (V. 17-37 TELLING BIBLICAL STORY),
V. 38-49: REACTION & RESPONSE, V. 50-52: TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS

ICONIUM - ACTS 14:1-7

V. 1: PREACHING IN SYNAGOGUE, V. 2-4: REACTION AND RESPONSE,
V. 5-7: TRIALS AND NEXT STEPS

LYSTRA - ACTS 14:8-20

V. 8-10: CONTINUED PREACHING (SEE V. 7) AND MIRACLE,
V. 11-18: REACTION AND RESPONSE, V. 19-20: TRIALS AND NEXT STEPS.

SUMMARY OF ACTS AFTER PAUL'S TIME IN THESE THREE CITIES:

ACTS 14:21-23 - AFTER THEY HAD PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO THAT CITY AND HAD MADE MANY DISCIPLES, THEY RETURNED TO LYSTRA AND TO ICONIUM AND TO ANTIOCH, 22 STRENGTHENING THE SOULS OF THE DISCIPLES, ENCOURAGING THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, AND SAYING, "THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS WE MUST ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD." 23 WHEN THEY HAD APPOINTED ELDERS FOR THEM IN EVERY CHURCH, HAVING PRAYED WITH FASTING, THEY COMMENDED THEM TO THE LORD IN WHOM THEY HAD BELIEVED.

Q - WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT TIMOTHY WOULD DO WELL TO REMEMBER ABOUT PAUL'S EXAMPLE IN THESE CITIES?

V. 12 - ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS WILL BE PERSECUTED.

LET'S DISCUSS WHAT THIS MEANS, AND WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN. THERE ARE SOME TROUBLES THAT EVERY HUMAN FACES. THERE ARE OBSTACLES AND DIFFICULTIES THAT EVERY HUMAN FACES. MANY OF THESE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN AND DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY. FOR EXAMPLE: SICKNESS, WEAKNESS, FAMILY CONFLICT, DEATH, FINANCIAL TROUBLES, NATURAL DISASTERS, THE GENERAL EFFECTS OF EVIL THINGS AND EVIL PEOPLE. WE ARE LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD THAT IS INFLUENCED BY THE DEVIL AND HIS LIES. EVERY PERSON IS EXPERIENCING THE RESULTS OF SIN AND REBELLION AGAINST GOD. THOSE THINGS CHALLENGE US AND ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD FOR SURE, BUT THEY AREN'T NECESSARILY PERSECUTION.

SO WHAT IS CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION? BIBLICALLY SPEAKING, IT IS SPECIFIC RESISTANCE, PRESSURE AND TROUBLE *BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS* WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO SILENCE AND SQUELCH THE MOVEMENT OF THE GOSPEL AND THE GLORY OF GOD. CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IS DESIGNED TO SEPARATE US FROM EACH OTHER AND THE WORLD, SO THE GOSPEL CAN'T BE HEARD. IT'S DESIGNED TO DISTRACT US SO THAT WE GET ENTANGLED AND CAUSE OUR WITNESS TO BE INVALID. IT IS DESIGNED TO SCARE US SO THAT OUR FEARS OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW AND OBEY JESUS BECOME MORE INFLUENCING THAN HIM.

PAUL IS PREPARING US FOR THE PROMISED PERSECUTION THAT WILL ACCOMPANY THOSE WHO FOLLOW JESUS AND ALSO IS RECOUNTING IN HIS OWN LIFE, WHICH WAS FILLED WITH PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING, THAT THUS FAR, "OUT OF ALL OF THEM THE LORD RESCUED ME (V. 11)". THAT'S A PROMISE TOO - WHETHER IN THIS AGE OR THE AGE TO COME.

2 TIMOTHY 3:13-17 - CLEAR CONTRAST. CLEAR DIRECTION

EVIL MEN AND IMPOSTERS WILL PROCEED FROM BAD TO WORSE - THEY WILL DECEIVE PEOPLE AND BE DECEIVED THEMSELVES. WHAT IS THE REMEDY FOR THAT, AND THE GENERAL DIRECTION THAT IS GIVEN IN LIGHT OF THIS ENTIRE CHAPTER!? (REMEMBER, THE CONTEXT OF THIS ENTIRE SECTION IS THE DIFFICULT TIMES OF THE "LAST DAYS", V. 1). DIFFICULTY AND DECEPTION ABOUND - AND PAUL DIRECTS TIMOTHY TO AN IMPORTANT SOURCE AND RESOURCE, THE SCRIPTURES.

V. 14 - "CONTINUE"

THINGS ARE GETTING WORSE → TRUST YOUR TRAINING. CONTINUE TO DO WHAT YOU DID TO GET YOU WHERE YOU ARE - IN THIS CASE FOLLOWING PAUL'S LIVING EXAMPLE AND FOLLOWING THE WORDS OF THE "SACRED WRITINGS" AND "SCRIPTURES" - SYNONYMOUS TERMS FOR WHAT WE CALL "THE BIBLE" TODAY.

THE BIBLE IS A COLLECTION OF 66 BOOKS WHICH CONTAIN THE STORY, STATUES AND WORDS OF AND FROM GOD. DURING TIMOTHY'S TIME IT WOULD HAVE MOSTLY BEEN THE HEBREW PORTION OF THOSE SCRIPTURES (WHAT WE CALL THE OLD TESTAMENT) AND WOULD EVENTUALLY INCLUDE THE BIOGRAPHIES OF JESUS (AKA THE GOSPELS) AND AMAZINGLY EVEN PAUL'S OWN WRITINGS (WHICH ALONG WITH REVELATION AND OTHER LETTERS MAKE UP WHAT WE CALL THE NEW TESTAMENT). PAUL PROCLAIMS THAT THESE SACRED WRITINGS CONTAIN THE WISDOM THAT LEADS TO SALVATION WHICH IS IN JESUS CHRIST (V. 15)! (THAT'S AN AMAZING TRUTH TO PONDER CONSIDERING HE'S THINKING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT)

IN ADDITION, HE OUTLINES A FEW OTHER POINTS ON THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF THE SCRIPTURES:

1 - THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED BY GOD - (Θεόπνευστος *THEOPNEUSTOS*) "GOD-BREATHED" - THE SOURCE OF THE BIBLE IS GOD HIMSELF. HE WORKED IN THE PEOPLE WHO WROTE TO WRITE HIS WORDS AND THOUGHTS. BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S WORD IT IS POWERFUL AND TRUE.

2 - THE BIBLE IS PROFITABLE - HELPFUL, USEFUL, PRODUCING GOOD RESULTS, THERE IS GAIN IN IT. "YIELDING ADVANTAGEOUS RETURNS OR RESULTS (MERRIAM-WEBSTER)"

PROFITABLE FOR TEACHING - *DIDASKALIA* - DOCTRINE, INSTRUCTION. WE GET OUR DOCTRINE AND TEACHING FROM BIBLE, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

PROFITABLE FOR REPROOF - RESHOWING YOU WHERE YOU ARE WRONG. CONVICTING YOU WHEN OFF. THIS WORD COMES FROM THE ROOT WORD WHICH MEANS TO BE CONVICTED, EXPOSED OR SHOWN.

PROFITABLE FOR CORRECTION - SHOWING YOU HOW TO GET BACK ON TRACK. IT COMES FROM A ROOT WORD WHICH MEANS TO STAND UPRIGHT OR TO BE SET STRAIGHT AGAIN.

PROFITABLE FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS - THE WORD "TRAINING" IS (παιδεία *PAIDEIA*) WHICH LITERALLY MEANS REARING A CHILD. WE GET A PICTURE OF ALL SCRIPTURE BEING PROFITABLE FOR US MATURING AND GROWING SPIRITUALLY. IT IS A CRITICAL AID TO OUR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME AND NOT A ONE TIME THING.

3 - THE BIBLE ENABLES US TO BE ADEQUATE - ADEQUATE (ἄρτιος, *ARTIOS*) MEANS ABLE TO MEET ALL THE DEMANDS. IT'S TRANSLATED COMPLETE (ESV), THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED (NIV) AND CAPABLE (NET). THE WORD MEANS TO COMPLETE OR FINISH.

4 - THE BIBLE ENABLES US TO BE EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK - EQUIPPED (ἐξαρτίζω *EXARTIZA*) IS RELATED TO *ARTIOS* IN THAT SENSE THAT ALSO MEANS COMPLETE, READY & PREPARED. WHATEVER COMES, THE BIBLE IS GOING TO HELP US KNOW WHAT TO DO & BE READY!

THE BIBLE IS GOING TO GIVE US WHAT WE NEED - AND *ALL* OF IT, AS PAUL REMINDS AT THE START OF VERSE 16. IF WE CONTINUE IN THE SCRIPTURES, WE WILL MATURE AND BE READY FOR EVERYTHING.

OF ALL THE THINGS PAUL COULD HAVE ELEVATED IN THIS CONVERSATION, HE EXALTS THE SCRIPTURES. MOST OF US PROBABLY HAVE A HEALTHY OPINION OF THE BIBLE AND AGREE THAT IT IS INSPIRED AND CONTAINS GOD'S WORD. BUT I WONDER IF WE WERE PRESSED INTO GIVING ANSWERS AND GUIDANCE FOR HOW SOMEONE MIGHT REMAIN STRONG IN DIFFICULT TIMES IN GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY THE DIFFICULT TIMES OF THE LAST DAYS OF THIS AGE, IF WE WOULD ENCOURAGE SOMEONE TO CONTINUE IN THE SCRIPTURES - AND YET THIS IS WHAT PAUL TELLS TIMOTHY TO DO.

WE MUST NOT ONLY GUARD AGAINST FALSEHOOD, LIES AND DECEPTION - BUT WE MUST ALSO WATCH THAT OUR OPINION, APPRECIATION AND AWE OF THE SCRIPTURES IS NOT SUBTLY CHIPPED AWAY AT BY THE EVIL AROUND US. WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO NOT GRAVITATE TOWARDS SHORTCUTS TO GOD'S WORD OR BITE SIZE MORSELS OF HIS TRUTH WHEN A FEAST AWAITS US EACH MORNING AS WE OPEN UP HIS BOOK. WE MUST NOT SUBSTITUTE *CLOSE TO THE SOURCE* OPTIONS WHEN WE ARE INVITED TO GO RIGHT TO THE SOURCE - GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS WORD AND HAS WORKED THROUGHOUT HISTORY TO ENSURE THAT THE WORLD HAS ACCESS TO HIS WORD BECAUSE IF WE CAN HEAR AND KNOW AND TRUST AND EXPERIENCE HIS WORD, WE CAN HEAR AND KNOW AND TRUST AND EXPERIENCE HIM.

MAY WE FIGHT ANY TEMPTATION THAT THE BIBLE IS BORING, OUTDATED, IRRELEVANT, PAST ITS PRIME, INCOMPREHENSIBLE, TOO HARD, TOO COMPLICATED, SCARY, OR ANYTHING ELSE OTHER THAN THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD THAT IS PROFITABLE AND EQUIPPING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY. I WONDER IF THE DEVIL'S TACTIC AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE ISN'T TO MAKE US THINK THE BIBLE ISN'T TRUE, BUT THAT IT ISN'T GLORIOUS AND ENOUGH.

LET'S CONCLUDE BY REMEMBERING LUKE'S SUMMARY STATEMENT OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY WHICH HE ASKED FOR TIMOTHY TO CALL TO MIND IN THIS MOMENT:

ACTS 14:21-23 (NIV, CSB) - THEY PREACHED THE GOSPEL IN THAT CITY AND WON A LARGE NUMBER OF DISCIPLES. THEN THEY RETURNED TO LYSTRA, ICONIUM AND ANTIOCH, 22 STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLES AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO REMAIN TRUE TO THE FAITH. "WE MUST PASS THROUGH MANY HARDSHIPS TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD," THEY SAID. 23 PAUL AND BARNABAS APPOINTED ELDERS FOR THEM IN EACH CHURCH AND, WITH PRAYER AND FASTING, COMMITTED THEM TO THE LORD, IN WHOM THEY HAD PUT THEIR TRUST.

THAT'S THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. BEING A DISCIPLE, BEING STRENGTHENED AND ENCOURAGED BY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST TO REMAIN TRUE TO THE FAITH - KNOWING THAT IT'S NECESSARY TO PASS THROUGH MANY TROUBLES ON OUR WAY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. AND SO WE CLING TIGHT TO EACH OTHER, AND PRAY AND FAST AND COMMIT OURSELVES TO THE LORD, AND HIS WORD - FOR IT IS IN HIM THAT WE HAVE PUT OUR TRUST, AND THE ONE WHO WILL DELIVER US OUT OF IT ALL.