

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

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LESSON SIXTEEN

II TIMOTHY

When Paul addressed his earlier letter to Timothy, the latter was resident in Ephesus, and there are reasons suggested by the contents of the present one to believe that he was still there. And yet the point is one forbidding positive affirmation, nor is it particularly essential for our present purpose.

Paul was now a prisoner in Rome for a second time, awaiting a hearing before the Emperor, and there is reason to believe he was not being treated with the consideration shown him on the earlier occasion (Acts 28), but like a common prisoner. The immediate occasion for the sending of this letter grew out of this circumstance, for he is anxious to have Timothy and Mark as his companions (1:4; 4:9, etc).. He is conscious, however, that his death by martyrdom could not long be delayed, for these were the days of wicked Nero, and not knowing whether he should see Timothy, his "**own child in the faith**" again, or not, he was desirous of adding still further to the instructions and exhortations he had already given him.

There is, moreover, reason to believe that Timothy required these encouragements in a marked degree. His character, as far as it can be gathered from the few limited allusions to it, was not of the stuff that Paul's was made of. He suggests the timidity and diffidence of Jeremiah in the days of the Old Testament, without some of the redeeming qualities which he possessed. For references to the lack of courage and perseverance on the part of Timothy, see such passages as 1:5, 7; 3:10.

Outline of the Epistle

1. Salutation, 1:1, 2.

2. Thanksgiving (vv. 3-5). It is interesting that in this thanksgiving on Timothy's behalf, there is a reference to his spiritual history which seems to have come down in his mother's line.

3. Exhortation (vv. 6-14). The exhortation which now follows, and which has grown out of the remembrance of Timothy's past life and the piety of his ancestors, contains three or four natural divisions of thought:-

(a) An exhortation to firmness in the faith (vv. 6-8). This firmness can be cultivated, stirred up. It is inherent in the spiritual gift he received from GOD at the time he was set apart formally to the ministry, and is not consonant with the spirit of fearfulness, the moral cowardice to which he seems to have been addicted, but is evinced rather in the exercise of suitable discipline in the spirit of love, and in boldness of testimony even to the point of suffering and affliction.

(b) This exhortation to firmness is then enforced by a consideration of the character of the Gospel and the mercy of GOD (vv. 9-11). Compare this declaration of the Gospel with that previously considered in the Epistle to Titus.

(c) Finally, the apostle cites his own example (vv. 12-14). He suffers for his testimony, and is not ashamed of it; that is, he is willing to suffer, he counts it worthwhile, in the light of his faith. Let Timothy profit in word and deed by what he sees and knows to be in him.

4. Description of false brethren (vv. 15-18). This exhortation to Timothy gathers force from the circumstance that some who have professed fealty to CHRIST have been guilty of defection, if one may judge by their desertion of CHRIST's faithful servant in his hour of trial (v. 15). Their action, however, serves to bring out all the stronger the love of another brother for whom he devotedly prays (vv. 16-18).

5. Instruction (2:1-4:8). I feel hardly justified in making any particular distinction between the general character of the contents of the Epistle which follows and those already considered, and yet perhaps there is a shade more of instruction in these chapters than in the first. And yet with the instruction is mingled exhortation throughout. Indeed the exhortation overtops the instruction, the explanation and reason for which was considered in the general introduction to these pastoral Epistles.

The instruction which follows may be divided into three or four parts:

(a) He is instructed concerning his duty as a teacher of teachers (2:2), but immediately in that connection he himself is again exhorted to firmness, or rather to strength and "hardness," which are practically the same (vv. 1,3).

- what figure of speech does Paul use at this point to illuminate his theme?
- what particular lesson would be drawn from it (v. 4)?

- what second figure does he use at verse 5? Here there is a reference to contending for prizes in the Olympian games.
- how must a man have contended in order to win the crown?
- what third figure is used at verse 6?
- what reward does the faithful husbandman receive?

It is easy to see from these illustrations the direction in which this young minister or Christian worker required encouragement and warning in the execution of his office. He must separate himself from the world, strive faithfully and obediently, and work diligently in order to receive the blessing. In this connection, and for the inspiration it afforded, what particular fact was he ever to keep in mind (v. 8)? Note here how Paul once more digresses to the consideration of his own example. He was not laying upon Timothy any burden he did not himself bear. Indeed, on behalf of the Gospel just spoken of, he suffered "hardship," (for so the word "trouble" should be translated in v. 9), and he also endured (v. 10).

- for whose sake was it done? And why?
- speaking of the "**eternal glory**" the elect were going to obtain, was it an assured experience for them (vv. 11-13)?

(b) Again, in this instruction to Timothy as a teacher of teachers, he is particularly directed to caution them about idle and foolish words (v. 14). But no sooner is this dictum laid down than he himself is once more exhorted, as in the other case, to be the kind of teacher he would have others be.

- to what is he exhorted in verse 15?
- what do you suppose that expression means, "**Rightly dividing the word of truth?**" In reply to this question, note the three classes of peoples into which Paul divides mankind in I Corinthians 10:32.
- do you not think that "**rightly dividing the word of truth**" must mean at least, giving to each of these his "**portion of meat in due season?**"
- but how can this be done where one is ignorant of the dispensational teaching of the Bible, which we are here trying to emphasize somewhat?
- what is especially to be avoided in this kind of teaching (v. 16)?
- to what physical disease is that kind of foolish teaching likened in the next verse?
- how careful we need to be not to allow our study of dispensational truth to become fanatical gangrene!

How much we need the wisdom that cometh down from above, the balance of mind and heart which the HOLY SPIRIT alone can supply!

But we need not pursue our inquiries into this chapter further.

The same kind of mingled exhortation, instruction and warning continue throughout, and can be brought out by the careful student through a process of questioning and patient waiting for the answer to suggest itself as above.

(c) Proceeding to chapter 3, Timothy receives instruction concerning the character of the last

times, i. e., the times at the end of the present age.

- what kind of times does the Spirit of GOD, through Paul, say they will be (v. 1)?
- The word "perilous" means "*grievous*." What shall constitute this character (vv. 2-5)?
- what class of persons are particularly designated as influenced by these things, and why (vv. 6, 7)?
- how does the apostle seek to strengthen Timothy against these things by his own example (vv. 10-13)?
- and what exhortation does he now receive (vv. 14-16)?
- what tribute to the Holy Scriptures is contained in verse 15?
- and how is their authority and infallibility affirmed in the following verse?
- to what "charge" to Timothy does this allusion to the Holy Scriptures lead (4:1, 2)?
- what consideration adds great solemnity to that charge (v. 1)?
- what consideration makes that charge to be necessary (vv. 3, 4)?
- what office is Timothy to exercise in addition to that of an overseer and teacher in order to "**make full proof**" or fulfil his ministry (v. 5)?
- what consideration personal to Paul, adds solemnity to this exhortation (vv. 6-8)?

6. We have now passed beyond the portion of the Epistle devoted to instruction, and reached that in which the writer deals with personal matters altogether (4:9-22).

An aged prisoner in Rome, awaiting trial, and almost certain execution, he is, alas, forsaken by many who should have stood by him. Demas has left him, Crescens, and even Titus. He wishes Timothy to hasten to his side, and to bring Mark with him. It has all been made up with Mark since the sad affair in Acts 13. He needs his cloak too, and parchments. He can not at this moment forget that man Alexander. Is he the Alexander named in Acts 19? Doubtless. Timothy is warned against him, for he is still in Ephesus. Paul has had one hearing before Caesar and another is coming.

At the hearing, however, he was sadly deserted by his friends. O, the grief of defection! Nevertheless the Lord stood by him, and. He will continue to do so. Friends are saluted at Ephesus. Hasten Timothy, I want you.

~ end of Lesson 16 ~
