

FOR THE TIME WILL COME – An Updated Study of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (Part One of Four)

Introduction

I am always amazed by how relevant the Word of God is for every circumstance and situation, throughout every generation; both in its doctrinal importance and its practical significance. And when it comes to our current situation within American Evangelical Christianity, I cannot think of a portion of Scripture that is more relevant than 2 Timothy 4:1-5. This passage consists of three sections: The Charge (vv1-2), The Change (vv3-4) and The Challenge (v5).

The Charge (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

In v1, Paul addresses Timothy in the language of a military command. He desires Timothy's attention because what he is about to share is a very serious matter, for which Timothy will one day be accountable. And that accountability for Timothy, and all of us, rests with Jesus Christ, who possesses complete authority over us, as our Savior and Lord. Jesus tells us in John 5:22 that the Father has given all judgment over to Him. He begins the Great Commission mandate in Matthew 28:18 by telling His disciples that all authority has been given to Him, in heaven and on earth. And based on that premise, He tells them to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."

So, Jesus is our friend and our big brother, but let's not forget that He is also our Boss; to whom we must one day answer, for how we lived for and served Him, when He returns.

I know there are different viewpoints regarding His return. My perspective is that there are two phases to His Second Coming. Phase 1 involves the rapture of the Church. Seven years later, Phase 2 will take place with His literal, physical return to earth, for the purpose of rescuing and restoring the nation of Israel. The foundational proof text that supports this position is found in Daniel 9:24-27. I would encourage all of you to study that passage as thoroughly as possible. No accurate interpretation of Bible prophecy is possible without a proper understanding of Daniel 9:24-27.

But Paul's charge to Timothy extends into v2, where the apostle tells his disciple that the key factor in our accountability before the Lord is the Word of God. Not only learning it, but living it. Not only for our own benefit, but for the spiritual benefit of those around us. It is a responsibility that rests with all of us who are followers of our Savior, not just those who are in fulltime service.

So, why is Paul admonishing Timothy in this manner? Did he need to be reminded of the importance of the Word of God in his own life and ministry? Apparently so. Paul does start this letter to Timothy with the following exhortation in chapter one, verse six: "For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." But now, at the very end of the epistle, he issues much more than a friendly reminder to his disciple, and by application, to all of us. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 consists, in part, of a serious **warning**, about a change that would take place within the Christian faith, in a time yet future; a change that would not be for the better, but for the worse. That will be our focus of attention, next.