



Bible Student's NotebookTM

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 112

Brief Thoughts on II Timothy

Part I (continued)

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The Lost BSN

This issue of the Bible Student's Notebook actually contains material from a lost BSN from back in 2001. It was to have been published between issues #55 and #56.

Issue #55 was II Timothy "Part I" and issue #56 was "Part II." There was to be an issue between these two that should have been a continuation of "Part I." Inadvertently, the

remainder of "Part I" was left out, with BSN #56 moving on to "Part II."

Our readers are encouraged first to read the article "Part I" from BSN #55 and then the material from this current issue of the BSN. Follow this up by reading "Part II" from BSN #56.

(Readers who do not have issues #55 and #56 can order both of them for \$4.00 postage paid.)

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

Sir Robert Anderson:

The same apostle who had exalted in the fact that, "*all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus*" (Acts 19:10), lived to pen the sad lament, "*This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me*" (II Timothy 1:15). And then, taking a still wider view of the condition of the church, he indicted the solemn forecast, "*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*" (II Timothy 3:13).¹

C.I. Scofield:

Second Timothy has to do with the personal walk and testimony of a true servant of Christ in a day of apostasy and declension. The key phrases are, "*All they which are in Asia be turned away from me*" (1:15); and, "*A good soldier of Jesus Christ* (2:3).²

George Williams:

[II Timothy] views the Church in ruins, and instructs the man of God as to his personal conduct in the midst of the ruin"³

Charles Welch:

Instead of a church governed by bishops we have insistence upon individual witness. Consequently while we value the earlier epistles of the mystery for the revelation that they bring, we value II Timothy rather for a message which fits the sad, apostate, days in which our lot is cast.⁴

F.B. Hole:

We have no certain knowledge of how many years elapsed between the writing of the 1st and 2nd epistles to Timothy but evidently there had been sufficient time for the development of a big

(continued on page 1203)

1. Sir Robert Anderson, *The Buddha of Christendom*, page 37.

2. C.I. Scofield, *the Scofield Reference Bible*.

3. George Williams, *the Student's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*.

4. Charles Welch, *The Berean Expositor*, XXXI.

Dear Precious Saints,

THE WEEKLY **BSN**

Greetings again in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in our Father's special love and care.

We rejoice that we have come upon another **BSN** milestone. Beginning with this issue we will now be publishing the **BSN** on a weekly schedule (52 times a year). This has been on our hearts since we published our very first issue 18 years ago.

Publishing every week will allow us to have a greater opportunity to come your way with material that we trust will prove to be edifying to you and your family.

Interestingly we begin our first weekly **BSN** on the one-year anniversary of the biweekly **BSN**.

I look forward to coming your way again, next week!

Your fellow,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

LETTERS

I love and appreciate you more than words can ever express. Your stand for the truth of Scripture wherever it takes you is something every member of the Body could learn from. – **NY**

Please cancel my subscription effective immediately. – **NE**

I thank God for you and the ministry that you have provided to me in gleanings that have had a tremendous impact on me and my walk in faith. I thank God for these gleanings and that you will be able to continue these. – **VA**

I am stunned to believe that you think the “all” of “in Adam” and “in Christ” are the same. – **PA**

Great News! The fires of Hell (Gehenna) have gone out! 2000 years ago! – **ME**

Bible Student's Notebook

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “church,” “denomination,” “movement,” “organization” or “mission.”

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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down-grade movement in the church of God. The diverse characters stamped upon the two epistles make this quite plain. In the first epistle Timothy is instructed as to good order in the church and exhorted to maintain it in the presence of disorder that threatened it. In the second we find serious defection has developed ... consequently that which is official is not mentioned and the appeal is to individual faithfulness.⁵

J.N. Darby:

The first of Timothy gives directions for the order of the assembly; the second, for the path of the servant of God when it is in disorder and failure ... The Second Epistle to Timothy has a very peculiar character ... Paul sees for himself the ruin of that which he had built and watched over so faithfully ... The principle therefore of individual faithfulness, of individual responsibility to God, is established, and set above all other considerations.⁶

D.L. McCroskey:

When Paul was about to board his ship in Acts 20:37, his beloved Ephesian brethren "*wept sore*" and kissed him, sorrowing that "*they should see his face no more.*" But in the Epistle before us, we see him some six years later writing that the time of his departure from this life is at hand. And this time, there are no brethren to weep and embrace him, and comfort him. "*Only Luke is with me,*" he wrote.

How tragic that the great world apostasy was already beginning, even before Paul's death ... They turned away from Paul and his message ... and Judaism and Christianity become more and more mixed together. Ever since, preachers in Christendom have shied away from Paul – even to this day! ...

Practically all error in Christendom today stems from ignorance or denial of Paul's gospel of grace and his revelation of the mystery. In Romans 16:25 he wrote "*Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world*

began." How, then, can believers be established in truth when they deny Paul's special gospel (Galatians 1:11-12), and the revelation of the mystery as revealed through him?⁷

PROMISE OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

Amazing that a man sentenced to die would start off talking about LIFE! Yet Paul knew his source of life: "*the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*" (II Timothy 1:1). The person of the Lord Jesus Christ was his hope! He was the promise of life! Christ was Paul's Life and is ours as well. "*Christ, Who is our life ...*" (Colossians 3:4).

DON'T BE AFRAID; DON'T BE ASHAMED

Two of the greatest tools of the enemy, used against Timothy, were fear (1:7) and shame (1:8). This was brought to the forefront in Timothy's life because of the situation in which Paul found himself – in prison.

Stuart Allen has written, "The Apostle was now living for the most part in loneliness and rejection. Imprisonment for the truth evidently carried with it a social stigma and the danger of giving a public witness to the religion that was now illicit, made the possibility of shame a real one."⁸

The enemy still uses these weapons of fear and shame, among his greatest resources. How many believers have been silenced and their lives of non-effect by these oppressions? These are mental war-games from the hand of the adversary (c.f. II Corinthians 10:4-5). So Paul reminds Timothy that he has been given divine power and love, and a sound mind.

Timothy may have been on the verge of a "nervous breakdown," of "losing his mind," so intense was the pressure upon him; but he did not need a psychologist to get through this sorrow, timidity, depression, and despair. God had already given him all the provision he needed – a sound mind (1:7).

7. D.L. McCroskey, *II Timothy – The Divine Outline of World Apostasy*, The Last Day Messenger, November-December, 1975.

8. Stuart Allen, *Letters From Prison*.

5. F.B. Hole, *Paul's Epistles*

6. J.N. Darby, *The Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*.

NOT ASHAMED

- Timothy was exhorted not to be ashamed (1:8).
- Paul was not ashamed (1:12).
- The house of Onesiphorus was not ashamed (1:16).

NOT ASHAMED OF PAUL

To be ashamed of Paul is to be ashamed of the Lord! Paul is God's divinely appointed representative and spokesman for the body of Christ in the dispensation of grace, just as Moses had been for Israel under the law. Paul is *the* apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed of him, even though he was in prison as an evil doer (1:8; 2:9).

PAUL'S CONFIDENCE

In spite of all the things that had, and were transpiring, Paul had a firm confidence.

"... Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (1:12).

Paul's confidence was not in *what* he believed, but in *Whom*! Paul's confidence was in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ!

HOLD ON TO PAUL'S WORDS

Paul encourages Timothy to "*hold fast the form of sound words, which thou has heard of me*" (1:13). Paul presents his epistles as the divine pattern. Timothy was exhorted not to abandon the actual words of Paul for some new, improved "politically correct" ones. The actual recorded words of Paul are the divine standard of our dispensation. "Standard" is the definition of this word "*form*."⁹ It is translated "*pattern*" in I Timothy 1:16.

Paul's epistles are the divine standard of truth for our age. Everything must be measured by it, whether it be teaching or practice!

D.L. McCroskey wrote, "Timothy is urged to hold fast the great truths of the One Body which Paul has taught him. ... Again it was the special revelation of the '*mystery*,' the *sacred secret* for this age, which Paul had committed to Timothy."¹⁰

ALL HEARD; ALL TURNED AWAY

Paul had spent a two year teaching ministry in the capital city of the Roman province of Asia, the result of which was that, "***all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus***" (Acts 19:10).

Yet now he states that, "***all they which are in Asia be turned away from me***" (1:15). Now *the church* in Asia was in wholesale apostasy.

TURNED AWAY FROM PAUL

The Asian saints had turned away from Paul. This apostasy was from Paul, and his revelation and authority. This was what was at issue. It was what had been forsaken. They had not abandoned "Christendom" (in fact they had established it!) but they had abandoned Paul.

BE STRONG IN GRACE

Because of this condition of apostasy in the body of Christ ("*therefore*" 2:1), Paul admonished Timothy to "*be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*." The answer to standing would be found in grace. This is where Timothy needed to be strong. That needed to be his focus and emphasis. Grace is also where Timothy needed to find his strength. Paul could tell this to Timothy, not as just a theory, but as a life. Paul had firsthand experience with the power of grace (read II Corinthians 12:8-10)!

TEACH FAITHFUL MEN

Paul's instruction to Timothy is of a very personal and individual nature throughout this epistle. The believers in Asia were now outside of the teachings and practices of Paul. They had turned away from him. They were now embracing the

10. D.L. McCroskey, *II Timothy – The Divine Outline of World Apostasy* (The Last Day Messenger, November-December, 1975).

9. Arndt and Gingrich's *Greek-English Lexicon*.

religious system – a “Christian” religious system – “Christendom.” Without Paul’s message, that is all one has – RELIGION.

Timothy therefore, now finds himself on the outside of the activities of the believers. Interestingly enough, Paul never instructs Timothy anywhere in this epistle to “go in” among them and see if he could “turn the tide.” Instead of ministering to “a congregation,” “a church,” “an assembly,” or “his parishioners,” Paul tells Timothy to find “*faithful men*.” Timothy was to seek out men, “*faithful men*,” to whom he could commit Paul’s message.

Paul had no thought of Asia ever being “revived.” Instead, because of the apostasy, his instruction to Timothy concerning the ministry of the word, had now become extremely narrow, intensely individual – “*faithful men!*”

The importance of faithfulness can be clearly seen in I Corinthians 4:2 – “*Moreover it is **required** in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*” Paul did not want Timothy to spend his time and energy on “groups” and “congregations” of men who were not faithful to the Lord and His message. Timothy was not instructed to teach the “masses.”

What a shame to look around at all the so-called “churches” filled with unfaithful men, and see all the energy and programs trying to allure them into becoming “regular” attendees. Does this not show us how far **we** have *turned away from* Paul?

What was Timothy instructed to commit to these “*faithful men*?”

- Ordination?
- Creeds?
- Articles of Faith?
- Statements of Faith?
- Business Meetings?
- Church Polity?
- Sunday School Administration?
- Preparation and Delivery of Sermons?

NO!

He was to commit to these “*faithful men*” the

very things that he had heard from Paul! Once again Paul’s distinct message is being brought to its paramount place. Paul says “***the same*** commit thou to *faithful men*” (2:2). He does not say “similar.”

EXAMPLES FOR TIMOTHY

Paul had encouraged Timothy to “*be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*” (2:1). Timothy would need this because he was going to have to “*endure hardness.*” Things were not going to get any easier for him. It was going to be very *hard*.

Paul uses three examples to illustrate the endurance, faithfulness, and patience that was needed for the days of ruin:

<u>Example</u>	<u>Difficulty</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Soldier	Hardness	Endurance	Please Him
Athlete	Strive	Faithfulness	Crown
Farmer	Labor	Patience	First Partaker

AS AN EVIL DOER

It was Paul’s distinct “*my gospel*” (:8) that landed him in his Roman troubles. At the time of this writing, Paul was imprisoned under the great persecution of Nero. Only “approved” religions were accepted and allowed to legally practice under Roman authority. Christianity was at first allowed under the assumed auspices of Judaism, but as the two were made distinct and separate by Paul, his message and ministry became illegal. Now, Paul, even with his privileged Roman citizenship, was in bonds, suffering, and awaiting death as “*an evil doer*” (:9). Therefore, suffering and endurance are seen as the characteristics of those who follow Paul’s “*my gospel*” – even to this day.

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF

Once again we are reminded of the personal and individual nature of this epistle. “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God ...*” Timothy was to study for himself! He was to teach the faithful men to study for themselves! The result would be that he would not be “*ashamed.*” This is the “how” to

Paul's instruction to him in chapter one (*"Be not thou therefore ashamed ..."* *"... I am not ashamed ..."*). The method of his Bible study would be *"rightly dividing the word of truth."* Once again the importance of Paul's distinct written revelation to the body of Christ is stressed.

THE SURE FOUNDATION

This is a wonderful section. In spite of the wholesale apostasy in Asia, Paul encourages Timothy:

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2:19a).

Things were so bad in the religious system that had been developed in the abandonment of Paul's message, that all that was left of the *"house of God"* (from I Timothy 3:15) was the foundation. All else had been destroyed. The *"evil day"* for which Paul had warned them to prepare had come (Ephesians 6:13).

Paul had told the Corinthian saints, *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (I Corinthians 3:11). So the foundation that remained in Asia was Christ! He was all that was left! Still, that was encouragement, because ultimately He was all that Timothy needed. *"And ye are complete in Him ..."* (Colossians 2:10a).

Paul is the one who laid the foundation of Christ, *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation ..."* Yet Paul gives the Corinthians a warning with this truth, *"... and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon"* (I Corinthians 3:10).

Paul had laid the foundation in Asia, which was Christ, and He remained – but that is all that remained. *"The day"* had arrived in Asia, and *"every man's work"* was *"made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"* (I Corinthians 3:13). The building in Asia had been destroyed, but Christ the foundation remained, and He still remains SURE and UNMOVABLE!

Things were so bad in the abandonment of Paul's message, that it was also hard to tell who was a saint and who was not. They had joined themselves to Rome's respected religious system. They were now a part of a mixed multitude, but Paul reminds Timothy that the Lord knows all about it, and that He knows who belongs to Him.

In days of apostasy only the Lord can sort out the mess. The system isn't His! Yet, praise the Lord, we find rest in this wonderful truth, *"the Lord knoweth them that are His."*

DEPART FROM RELIGIOUS INIQUITY

Now comes a sobering instruction from Paul:

"... And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2:19).

What is the iniquity that Paul is talking about? Is it just iniquity in general? Or, does the context lead us to a certain type of iniquity?

We will see that the next verse will provide for us the context from which to answer this important question. Paul's answer is that we who name the name of Christ should depart from *religious* iniquity!

It is hard to believe that Paul did not have the parallel passage of Numbers 16:5, 26, when he wrote of the believer's *departing* from iniquity! Take a little time to read it.

THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE GREAT HOUSE

Now, we get to the heart of the situation in Asia. In the first epistle to Timothy, Paul talks about *"the house of God,"* he identified it as *"the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (I Timothy 3:15). That is simple enough! The *"house of God"* is *"the church of the living God,"* *"which is His body"* (Ephesians 1:22-23). The *"house of God"* is the saints! It is *not* a building, not an organization, it is *NOT* the so-called *"local church."*¹¹

¹¹ This so-called *"local church"* is not to be confused with *the church* in a locality!

When we get to this second epistle to Timothy, Paul now talks about a contrasting “great house” (II Timothy 2:20). When “*the house of God*” turned from Paul, it turned into “a great house!” This “great house” was NOT “*the house of God*.” It was “Christendom” – the natural enemy of the church.

Note that :20 starts with “But” – “But in a great house ...” Therefore, this “great house” stands in contrast with “*the foundation*” of :19 – which is Christ. This “great house” has nothing to do with Him, but stands in contrast and contradiction to Him. It’s built upon another foundation, other than Christ.

The word “great” here in :20 is not the word for “wonderful,” as when we might say, “that was a great dinner!” Instead it is the word meaning “big,” and also translated as “large” (*Strong’s Greek Lexicon #3173*). We are not dealing with sort here, but with size. “Sort” (I Corinthians 3:13) is what is at issue in the building of God’s house, the temple. So, here is man’s house, his substitute for the *real* church – the emphasis being on man’s issue of size, not on God’s issue of sort.

So, we might call this “great house” the “big house.” Interestingly enough, “big house” is what we call a PRISON! That is exactly what this house is. It is religious bondage!

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY vs. THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

This “great house” was a part of the “mystery of iniquity” (II Thessalonians 2:7) that Satan has used to stand in contrast with, and opposition to the one true church which is “*the mystery of godliness*” (I Timothy 3:16).

THE MIXED MULTITUDE

This “great house” has a mixture of vessels in it: some to honour, some to dishonour. This is the Babylonian religious system. It is the habitation of devils, every foul spirit, and every unclean and hateful bird!

“... *Babylon ... the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities ... How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously ...*” (Revelation 18:2-5, 7).

A couple of things should be noted from this passage in Revelation:

This Babylonian system is referred to as “her” and “she.” Interestingly enough, the “church” of this same religious system (Christendom) is also referred to as “her” and “she.” Listen as they say, “the church,” “she is ...” etc.

Furthermore, there is a clear relationship between the Babylonian religious system and the nations of the world. They are in bed together (“fornication”) for mutual financial advantage, along with the merchants of the world! In contrast, the church of this dispensation is the “one new man” (Ephesians 2:15).

Are you a part of a religious entity that has a relationship (fornication) with human government?

Lastly, we note that there is the divine call to “*Come out of her, my people.*”

Why are God’s people in her? Advantage, prestige, honor, recognition, reputation, and respectability. Yet God calls out His people!

Listen to Paul, our apostle, as he gave the same warning to the Corinthians:

“*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath*

righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore **come out from among them**, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and **touch not** the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves** from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirt, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

“Out” of what is Paul calling believers?

What is the “unclean thing” that believers are not to “touch?”

What is the “filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit” from which believers are to “cleanse” themselves?

It is the Gentile Babylonian religious system!

Is “your church” or “your ministry” a part of this system? Why not leave it and come out?

SELF PURGING FROM THE GREAT HOUSE

Now, what was Timothy’s attitude to be toward this “great house?” Was he to go in and try to turn things around? After all, there were some vessels “to honor” inside. Was he to try to “revive” it? Was he to try to get it on the right track? Was he to go in (infiltration) and try to minister to individuals?

No!

What was Paul’s instruction?

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (II Timothy 2:21).

We who name the name of Christ are to depart from religious iniquity. We are not only to purge ourselves from the vessels of dishonour, but to purge ourselves from all religious participation in the “great house.”

PURGE OUT AND PURGE THYSELF

The word translated “purge”¹² is only found here and in I Corinthians 5:7. What an interesting contrast these two verses provide us! In I Corinthians, Paul instructs the saints to “Purge out therefore ...” a purging of one from among them. While here Timothy is told to purge himself from the “great house.” ■

12. Strong’s Greek #1571.

