

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship

J. The Sufficiency Of Scripture For Today's Ministries

(2 Timothy 3:14-4:2)

I. Introduction

- A. In 1996, fourteen conservative evangelical leaders and scholars contributed to the book, The Coming Evangelical Crisis that claimed as its "central thesis . . . that . . . (b)oth the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:14-17) and the authoritative finality of Christ's gospel as the 'power of God for salvation' (Rom. 1:16) are being undermined" in evangelical circles today. (Ibid., p. 18).
- B. We thus need to know how sufficient Scripture is for **our time**, and 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2 provides that insight:

II. The Sufficiency Of Scripture For Today's Ministries, 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2.

- A. Paul taught Timothy that Scripture was sufficient to equip the man of God for ministry, 2 Tim. 3:14-17:
1. Paul taught that the New Testament writings were sufficient to equip the man of God for ministry, v. 14:
 - a. Timothy was to continue in what he had learned from Paul and the other apostles, 2 Timothy 3:14a:
 - i. Paul wrote that those from "whom" Timothy had learned the Christian truth were multiple people, the pronoun "whom" (*tinon*, v. 14b) being plural. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 736; ESV footnote)
 - ii. One such teacher was Paul, seen in 1 Timothy 1:2 where he called Timothy his son in the faith.
 - iii. Actually, Scripture reveals that all of the apostles were God's authoritative messengers as they were the foundation of the Church with Christ being the chief Cornerstone, Eph. 2:20 with Jn. 17:20-21.
 - b. Timothy was thus to continue in the apostolic teaching, what now comprises the New Testament canon.
 - c. Timothy was to stay with what **God** let him be **convinced** was true -- apostolic teaching, 2 Tim. 3:14b.
 2. Paul taught that the Old Testament was sufficient to equip the man of God for ministry, 2 Tim. 3:15-17:
 - a. The Apostle Paul called Timothy to rely on the Old Testament Scriptures he had known from childhood that were able to make him wise unto salvation that is by faith in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 3:15.
 - b. Indeed, all Scripture is "given by inspiration of God" (KJV), and that phrase translates the Greek work "*theopneustos*," a verbal adjective with a *-tos* ending that carries the meaning of the perfect passive participle, 2 Tim. 3:16a; Bruce M. Metzger, Lex. Aids for Students of N. T. Grk., 1969, p. 44. **Thus, ALL Scripture is permanently, divinely inspired, permanently bearing God's authority and power!**
 - c. All Scripture is then profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness, v. 16b.
 - d. If the man of God then uses the Word in his ministry, he will be "proficient" (*artios*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 110), i. e., **permanently** equipped (*exertismenos*, a perf. pass. part. of *exartizo*, "equip, furnish," Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 147, 144) unto **every** good work, 2 Tim. 3:17.
- B. Paul then taught Timothy that this Old Testament and New Testament canon of Scripture is sufficient to equip the man of God for ministry until the Lord judges every human being, both the living and the dead, 2 Tim. 4:1:
1. Since there are no chapter breaks in the autograph manuscripts, Paul's charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1 builds upon the statements he had written about Old and New Testament Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:14-17.
 2. Thus, when Paul solemnly charged (*diamarturomai*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 185) Timothy "in the sight, presence of" (*enopion*, Ibid., p. 270) God and Christ Jesus Who "was about to" (*mello*, Ibid., p. 501-502; Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom to preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:1-2a), he revealed that Scripture's sufficiency in equipping the man of God for ministry lasts until God judges the living and the dead, with the implication that this judgment by God will be based upon how people have heeded Scripture! (cf. Romans 2:16)
- C. The Bible in its canonical books is then sufficient far beyond even Church History, so God holds His messengers in the Church era accountable to minister the content of Scripture and to obey it themselves!
- D. Accordingly, throughout Church History until the rapture of the Church, God's messengers are to "proclaim, preach" the Word [of God in Scripture], to be ready to do so at all times, and to do so by reproof, rebuking and exhorting with complete patience and teaching, 2 Timothy 4:2. This ministry of Scripture must be at the forefront of the heart and mind of every messenger of God. (cf. 1 Timothy 4:13-16)

Lesson: Canonical Scripture is permanently sufficient for a permanently proficient ministry by God's messenger throughout Church History, so God holds His messenger accountable to minister that Word with all due diligence.

Application: May we messengers of God be completely, permanently devoted to ministering canonical Scripture.