

What About Now?

As Paul was clear on **the price to be paid** to be involved in the work of the gospel:

2 Timothy 2:3 Suffer **hardship** with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be **persecuted**.

So he was clear on **the eternal rewards of doing so**:

2 Timothy 4:8 In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

But one question remains: **What About Now?** [→ His immediate past prepared him for his immediate future]

2 Timothy 4:17,18 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

FOUR GREAT ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION (2 Timothy 4:17,18): **What About Now?**

I. **HIS PRESENCE** (vs.17) But the Lord stood with me...

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for **You are with me**; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Matthew 28:18-20 All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always**, even to the end of the age.

MEANING? 1) He actually exists, and is causing us to know that He does (Heb 11:6)

2) He is paying particular attention to us and He is causing us to know that He is

2 Timothy 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

So people say "Good-bye" and we say "*The Lord be with you*" and then "*The Lord be with us all!*"

II. **HIS STRENGTH** (vs.17) ... and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear...

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Him who **strengthens me**.

Psalms 18:1 "I love You, O LORD, **my strength**."

NOTICE: The strength was given SO THAT the gospel might get out! This is what this strength is for!

So which "Gentiles" is God thinking of as He strengthens you?

Your neighbor? Your colleague? Your friend? A relative? Some of the above? All of the above?

And what IS this strength? Courage: "moral strength" Strength to do the right thing: to obey God.

The gift of faith! (Trusting enough to obey.)

III. **HIS RESCUE** (vss.17,18) ...and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. **The Lord will rescue me** from every evil deed...

Psalms 56:3-4, 11-13 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? ... In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. For **You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling,** So that I may walk before God In the light of the living.

Psalms 59:1-2 **Deliver me** from my enemies, O my God; Set me securely on high away from those who rise up against me. **Deliver me** from those who do iniquity And save me from men of bloodshed.

Psalms 91:14-15 Because he has loved Me, therefore **I will deliver him**; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; **I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him** and honor him.

Matthew 6:13 And do not lead us into temptation, but **deliver us from evil.**

NOTE: "Antioch, Iconium and Lystra..." The rescue takes different forms: and so will God's way of rescuing us.

From injury / sickness / financial trouble / business trouble / marriage problems / child-raising challenges

From every other evil!

And speaking of being delivered ... he did have his mind on death and what would happen after that.

... **Samuel Johnson:** "Depend upon it, sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

IV. **AND A RIDE TO HEAVEN** (vs.18) ...and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 5:10-12 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great**; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for **I go to prepare a place for you.** If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that **where I am, there you may be also.**

THEREFORE: And **every thing that is happening, and will happen, to us as "gospel people" and to us as a "gospel church" is a planned part of the ride!**

The way things turn out is the route He has chosen for us.

Philippians 1:19 for I know that this will turn out for **my deliverance** through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

Job 13:15-16 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. **This also will be my salvation"**

And with this knowledge comes the courage: the moral strength, to face whatever [suffering] is involved in paying the price,

with peace and even with joy in our faith, because it is faith in our great and glorious Lord Jesus Christ!