

## **"I Charge Thee ..."**

*"... in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word. Be urgent in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:1ff).*

Nine times in Paul's letters this word "*charge*" appears, although from six different Greek words. The word in this text is *diamarturo* found also in 1 Timothy 5:21, as well as in 2:14. It is a solemn charge, for Paul calls God and Christ who shall judge the living and the dead, as well as by His appearing and kingdom, to urge Timothy gravity in preaching the word. Judge. Appearing. Kingdom.

The charge to Timothy to preach the word is in view of the certainty that God sees all; that Jesus will judge the world; that He will appear again. This word "*appearing*" is a reference to His second coming, with one exception, and is found five times in Paul's letters to young preachers and once in his second letter to Thessalonians. The single exception in which "*appearing*" is not a reference to Christ's second coming, rather a reference to His first coming, is 2 Timothy 1:10 when Christ offered Himself for man's sins, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.

"*Kingdom*" in the text likely is a reference to heaven. Although Paul relates that when all the dead are raised, Jesus will return the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15:24), he also spoke of that future kingdom as the Lord's heavenly kingdom, which Peter calls the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior (2 Tim. 4:18; 2 Pet. 1:11). In view of these grave things Timothy was to "*preach the word.*" How important it was that he do so; how important it is that we do the same! The word, simply put, is the same as the message, the gospel, the truth, the faith. The word must be preached so that man might believe for "*faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom. 10:17). God chose Peter that "*by my mouth, Gentiles might hear the word of the gospel and believe*" (Acts 15:7). Since without faith it is impossible to please God; that man is justified by faith, the faith must be proclaimed so that faith might come (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 5:1).

And, we must preach the word in order to free ourselves from the blood of men. Paul told the Ephesian elders he was free from the blood of all men because he had not shunned to proclaim the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27). Nothing that is profitable is to be held back and while the world preached may sometimes sting; that is profitable because it may move us to obedience as it did the people at Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38). Timothy was to be "*urgent in season, out of season.*" There are times when men will hear.

There are also times when they will not. But whether men hear or not, the same message must be proclaimed because only the gospel is God's power to salvation (Rom. 1:16f). So often when men stop their ears from hearing, predicted by Isaiah, illustrated in those who stoned Stephen to death (Isa. 6:9f; Acts 7:57f), there is the inclination on the part of many to resort to other means to "obtain results." This we must not do. If the gospel will not move men to obedience, nothing else will either. It is the gospel only, which as the implanted word, is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

God does not demand results of us. He will provide that. His word will not return to Him void but will accomplish that which He pleases (Isa. 55:11). God does not require of us results; He does require diligence in preaching the gospel. So *"lift up thy voice like a trumpet"* (Isa. 58:1)! May every preacher duplicate the spirit of Jeremiah: *"And if I say I will not make mention of him, nor speak anymore in his name, then it is as a great burning fire shut up in my bones and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain"* (Jer. 20:9).

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