

**THEME:**  
**THE LORD IS FAITHFUL**  
**TOPIC:**  
**CELEBRATING GOD'S**  
**FAITHFULNESS**  
**2 TIMOTHY 4:16-18**  
**ADEOYE, EMMANUEL (EVANG.)**

■ **2TIMOTHY 4:16-18 NKJV**

*At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!*

***At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!***

**Defense** appears only here in the Pastoral Letters. This term can be used in an informal sense, referring to answers given to private accusations (**1 Peter 3:15; in 2 Cor 7:11**); in the present context, however, it is used in a formal sense, referring to arguments to refute accusations presented before a court of law (**Acts 19:33; 22:1; 26:1-2,24**) The event being alluded to here is Paul's **first** trial before the Emperor in Rome. Other translation models for **At my first defense** are "When I was first tried" or "When I first defended myself in the law court."

**Took my part:** this verb in various contexts can mean "come, arrive," "appear (in public)," or "stand by, come to the aid of (someone)." What Paul seems to be saying in this context is that no one among the Christians in Rome went with him to the trial in order to lend him support. On the contrary, they all forsook him. The clause **no one took my part** may also be expressed as "no one witnessed on my behalf," or even "no one helped me".

For **deserted** see comments on **2 Tim. 4:10**.

**Charged** translates a verb that literally means "to put into one's accounts" or "to charge one's account." In the present context the verb is used figuratively to denote

not keeping a record of this wrongdoing, with the result that the people involved are exempt from the consequences.

This sense is captured in a variety of ways by various translations; for example, "May God not count it against them, "may they not be held accountable." Some translations completely drop the figure in order to get at the meaning; for example, "God forgive them," "I pray that it may not be held against them."

***But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.***

**But** here stresses the contrast between the action of the Christians and that of **the Lord**, who remained faithful to Paul. **Lord** here probably refers to Christ.

His faithfulness to Paul is described in two ways: (1) he **stood by** him and gave him **strength to proclaim the message fully**; and (2) he was **rescued from the lion's mouth**.

**Stood by** translates a verb means "to be at hand" ("stayed with me") with the intention of helping; hence "come to the aid of," "help."

**Gave me strength** translates a verb that means "to empower," "enable." **1 Tim 1:12** and on "be strong" in **2 Tim 2:1**). As a result of this empowerment, Paul was able to continue proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles. **Proclaim the message fully** translates two words that together can be rendered "to fully accomplish the proclamation of the message."

For "to fully accomplish" "so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed"; in the Greek "through me" is in the emphatic position. Another way to express this clause is "so that I was able to preach all of the Lord's message (or, words)."

A further consequence of this is that **all the Gentiles** are given the possibility of hearing the full message. For **Gentiles 1 Tim 2:7**. The reference here may be to those present at the Roman court during Paul's trial. This would mean that Paul took advantage of the trial to explain fully the reasons for his arrest.

This is not unlikely, since as the book of Acts notes, Paul did use those occasions when he was in trouble with the authorities to give a personal witness of his faith. **Acts 24:1-20; 26**). But another possibility suggested is that Paul was freed from prison and was able to resume his ministry to non-Jews in various places.

In either case, **all the Gentiles** is an exaggeration that in many languages serves as a common way of saying "many Gentiles" or "most of the Gentiles." The exaggeration may be retained but qualified somewhat; for example, "all the Gentiles (or, non-Jews) here," meaning "in Rome." In certain languages it will not be necessary to say that **the Gentiles might hear it** (the message),

as the act of Paul's preaching obviously means that the Gentiles "heard."

A second result is that Paul was **rescued from the lion's mouth**. For **rescued 2 Tim 3:11**. The word can mean "deliver," "save," "preserve someone from someone or something," "set free."

There is very little doubt that **the lion's mouth** is used here not in a physical sense but metaphorically; the whole expression is in fact used in the Old Testament to denote being saved from severe danger. **Ps. 22:21**). There is, however, no certainty as to what the metaphor refers to in the present context. Some have suggested that this refers to Satan, who is sometimes referred to as a lion **1 Peter 5:8**).

The argument against this is that the metaphor is **the lion's mouth** and not the lion alone. An attractive proposal is to take the clue from **Ps 22**, which seems to have influenced verses 9-18.

Paul experienced being deserted in much the same way that the psalmist felt abandoned. And, not unlike the psalmist, Paul has been rescued and will be rescued from the lion's mouth.

If this is the case, then what Paul means by being rescued from **the lion's mouth** which is being rescued from death. So instead of "being sentenced to death" Paul was given an extension of his life that enabled him to continue his ministry. *But the Lord stayed right beside me. He gave me strength so that I was able to preach all the Lord's message (or, words) to all the Gentiles. And he saved me from death. Or And he saved me from death just like rescuing me from hungry Lion.*

***The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*** The mention of being "rescued from the lion's mouth" in the previous verse leads to this general statement of assurance that the Lord's rescuing activity is true not only in the past but is also true for the future: he will rescue Paul from **every evil**.

On the other hand it may be taken objectively to mean that no evil force has the power to destroy Paul. Taken in this manner the meaning is similar to that of the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "*Deliver us from evil*" (or "*from the power of the Evil One*").

A subsequent future event, and perhaps a consequence of being rescued from the power of evil, is Paul's being "saved" for Christ's heavenly kingdom. **1 Tim 1:15**. In the present context save has eschatological overtones and includes the elements of being kept safe from eternal judgment and death, and preserved for eternal life. It may also be expressed as "*take me safely*" or "*bring me safely*".

The word for heavenly can literally be translated "above the sky," hence "heavenly," "celestial." Heavenly kingdom is another way of speaking about heaven but focusing on the fact that it is Christ the Lord who has full power and authority

there. **2 Tim 4:1**. Another translation model for his heavenly kingdom is "into heaven, where he rules *as king*."

### LESSONS TO TAKE HOME

- **SOMETIMES WE FEEL FORSAKEN BY MAN VS 16**
- **GOD ALWAYS STAND BY US VS17 - ROM. 8:31**
- **DON'T FORGET TO PROCLAIM HIS MESSAGE VS 17B**
- **GOD IS OUR DELIVERER VS17B**
- **MAKE A REQUEST FOR A PLACE IN HEAVEN VS 18**

### CONCLUSION

Such a hope and expectation of a future experience of complete deliverance leads to exalted praise, hence the doxology **To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord (or, Christ) will not let any evil thing hurt me, and he will bring me safely into heaven, where he rules (or, where he is king). May people praise him forever. So be it. May people unceasingly say to him, "You are wonderful." Amen!