

2 Timothy 4:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Analysis

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Paul begins his final, solemn charge to Timothy. "I charge thee" (diamartyromai, διαμαρτύρομαι) means solemnly testify, adjure, command with utmost seriousness. "Therefore" (oun, οὖν) connects to chapter 3—because Scripture is God-breathed and sufficient, Timothy must faithfully proclaim it. The charge occurs "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (enōpion tou theou kai Christou Iēsou, ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). Enōpion (ἐνώπιον) means in the presence of, before the face of—Timothy answers to divine authority, not human opinion.

Christ is further identified as "who shall judge the quick and the dead" (tou mellontos krinein zōntas kai nekrous, τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς). Mellontos (μέλλοντος) indicates certainty of future action—He will judge. Krinō (κρίνω) means judge, evaluate, pronounce verdict. "Quick" (zōntas, ζῶντας) means living—those alive at Christ's return. "Dead" (nekrous, νεκρούς) means those who died before His return. All humanity will face Christ's judgment (Acts 10:42, 17:31, Romans 14:9).

This judgment occurs "at his appearing and his kingdom" (kata tēn epiphaneian autou kai tēn basileian autou, κατὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ). Epiphaneia (ἐπιφάνεια) means appearing, manifestation—Christ's second coming. Basileia (βασιλεία) means kingdom, reign—the consummated kingdom

Christ establishes at His return. The weight of eschatological judgment undergirds Paul's charge. Timothy serves under the One who will judge all, rendering eternal verdicts. This reality demands utmost faithfulness.

Historical Context

Paul writes facing imminent execution. This is his final letter, his pastoral last will and testament. The solemnity reflects the moment's gravity—a dying apostle charging his successor before divine Judge. Early Christians lived with urgent eschatological expectation. Christ's return wasn't distant speculation but imminent reality shaping daily decisions. Paul's appeal to final judgment motivated faithfulness: Timothy would answer to Christ, not merely Paul or churches. This eschatological orientation characterized apostolic Christianity and should inform contemporary ministry.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Do you live and serve with conscious awareness that Christ will judge you, evaluating your faithfulness to His calling?
2. How does believing in Christ's imminent return and righteous judgment affect your ministry priorities and lifestyle choices?
3. What would change in your life if you truly grasped that you will stand before Christ's judgment seat to give account?

Interlinear Text

Διαμαρτύρομαι οὖν ἐγὼ ἐνώπιον τὴν θεοῦ καὶ

charge thee therefore I before who God and
G1263 G3767 G1473 G1799 G3588 G2316 G2532

τὴν κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν μέλλοντος κρίνειν

who the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge
G3588 G2962 G2424 G5547 G3588 G3195 G2919

ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς κατὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ

the quick and the dead at who appearing
G2198 G2532 G3498 G2596 G3588 G2015 G846 G2532

τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ·

who kingdom
G3588 G932

Additional Cross-References

Acts 10:42 (Judgment): And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

2 Timothy 4:8 (Judgment): Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

1 Timothy 5:21 (References Jesus): I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

2 Timothy 2:14 (References Lord): Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Matthew 16:27 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Titus 2:13 (Kingdom): Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

1 Peter 5:4 (Parallel theme): And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1 John 2:28 (Parallel theme): And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

1 Peter 1:7 (References Jesus): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 2:8 (References Lord): And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org