

2 Timothy 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

Analysis

The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Paul makes practical requests revealing his humanity. "The cloke" (ton phailonēn, τὸν φαίλονην) refers to a heavy outer garment for cold weather—think winter coat. He left it at Troas with Carpus (otherwise unknown believer) probably during hasty departure after arrest. Roman prisons were cold, dark dungeons, especially in winter (v. 21). This detail shows Paul's physical vulnerability—he felt cold like anyone else and needed practical provision.

"The books, but especially the parchments" (ta biblia, malista tas membranas, τὰ βιβλία, μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας). Biblion (βιβλίον) means book, scroll—possibly Old Testament Scriptures or other writings. Membrana (μεμβράνα) means parchment—expensive animal skin used for important documents, possibly Paul's personal notes, copies of his letters, or Scripture portions. The emphasis "especially" reveals Paul's priorities: even facing death, he wants Scripture and study materials.

This touching request reveals several truths:

1. Spiritual maturity doesn't eliminate physical needs—Paul needed warmth.
2. Faithful ministers study until the end—Paul wanted books even in prison facing execution.
3. Scripture remains central—the parchments (likely Scripture) mattered most.
4. Details matter to God—this "trivial" request is preserved in Scripture.

Paul's example of studying Scripture to the end inspires believers facing terminal illness or old age to remain engaged with God's Word until final breath.

Historical Context

Roman prisons offered no amenities. Prisoners depended on friends for food, clothing, and necessities. Winter cold in unheated stone dungeons was severe. Paul's request for a cloak and books shows dependence on friends' provision. The detail about parchments suggests Paul valued written documents—possibly the only copies of his letters or precious Scripture scrolls. Ancient books were expensive, laboriously hand-copied. That Paul wanted them in prison shows their value. Some suggest the parchments were blank pages for continued writing, but "especially" suggests existing precious texts, likely Scripture.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Do you remain diligent in studying Scripture and growing in knowledge even when facing trials, suffering, or approaching life's end?
2. How can you support those in prison or suffering by providing practical necessities they need?
3. What does Paul's prioritizing of Scripture and books teach about lifelong learning and the centrality of God's Word?

Interlinear Text

τὸν	φαιλόνην	ὃν	ἀπέλιπον	ἐν	Τρωάδι	παρὰ	Κάρπῳ
G3588	The cloke	that	I left	at	Troas	with	Carpus
	G5341	G3739	G620	G1722	G5174	G3844	G2591
ἐρχόμενος	φέρει	καὶ	τὰ	βιβλία	μάλιστα	τὰς	
when thou comest	bring	with thee and	G3588	the books	but especially	G3588	
G2064	G5342	G2532		G975	G3122		
μεμβράνας							
the parchments							
G3200							

Additional Cross-References

Acts 16:11 (Parallel theme): Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

Acts 16:8 (Parallel theme): And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

1 Corinthians 4:11 (Parallel theme): Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;