

2 Timothy 4:1-8

FINAL DAYS

Wiersbe notes: 'A great person's last words are significant. They are a window which helps us look into the heart'. Concerning Paul, Stott can say: 'He is writing within weeks, or even days of his martyrdom.' Here is his perception of his life and his death.

THE FINAL OUTPOURING v.6

In the OT God prescribed that for certain offerings the Israelite would bring a measure of wine and pour it over the altar. Stott notes 'So imminent is his martyrdom, that he speaks of the sacrifice having already begun.' But Paul's whole life had been a sacrifice. What are you living for?

He now uses another word to point to his death.

THE FINAL HOMECOMING v6

The word 'departure' *analsis* seems to have become the regular word for death, but its metaphorical origin should not be forgotten. It denotes the striking of a tent – THE LONG MARCH AND THE FIGHTING IS OVER; or the loosing of a vessel – GOING HOME TO THE FINAL SHORE the release from shackles – FINAL FREEDOM FROM RESTRICTIONS. What will death mean for you? Should note that death for the Christian is simply a departure to heaven. 1v9-10 'saved ...not by works... he abolished death for his people! So for Paul.

THE FINAL BATTLES

He had fought 'the good fight' – not that he had fought well, but the fight of the Christian is good and worth the battle. Also Timothy (1 Tim. 6v12). Towner sees the whole of life as an intense struggle for which strength is promised (2v1-2).

As a custodian of the truth Paul had kept what had been entrusted to him by God. Paul didn't compromise, desert or defect. Earlier in Antioch he was even willing to withstand Peter for the sake of the truth (Gal. 2v11f).

Some suggest that this statement is about Paul 'keeping faith', (see Marshall's discussion, and the view that it suggests his perseverance). However Mounce explains that when Paul uses the definite article he generally means 'the faith' in the objective creedal sense of the Christian faith.

Paul had run a good race. The course was the course mapped out for him by his Lord. Paul makes no claim to have won the race, but to have completed the course mapped out for him, see Acts 20v24. It is that Paul has completed the course God had mapped out for him – he had done his part in the mission of God; Timothy must carry on. It is easy to start things but it is harder to finish them.

THE FINAL REWARD v.8

'henceforth' - the end of Paul's lifetime of service is being underlined. Paul would be awarded a crown, not a laurel wreath, which would be awarded in the athletic contest(1Cor.9v26), but an incorruptible crown which is the crown of righteousness. The crown is the believer's full realisation of God's righteousness.

The crown was for all who await Christ's coming, here as Judge. (see also v1). The Emperor Nero may declare the apostle guilty and condemn him to death, but there will soon be a magnificent overturning of Nero's verdict, when the Lord, the righteous judge declares him righteous.

The apostle is quick to add that the crown is not a special reservation for himself alone. The same reward awaits 'all who love his appearing', not just those who accept it will happen. The perfect tense suggests that they have loved his appearing in the past and will continue to love it in the future until that moment. The unbeliever dreads it, but the believer does not fear it, being prepared for it. To be ready we need to have entered by

faith into his first coming appropriating it personally to ourselves. The ransom was for you!
Then we can look forward to his second coming. Will we love his appearing?