

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF 2 TIMOTHY 2:11-13

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AB	Anchor Bible
AC	Augsburg Commentary
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
BBC	Beacon Bible Commentary
BDAG	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
BDB	<i>The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
BEC	Baker Exegetical Commentary
EBC	Everyman's Bible Commentary
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Majority Text
NAC	The New American Commentary
NASB	The New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NPNF	<i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>
NT	New Testament
NTC	New Testament Commentary
NTL	The New Testament Library
OT	Old Testament
PE	Pastoral Epistles
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TR	Textus Receptus
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of the thesis will be devoted to giving a brief overview of the issue at hand. It will also defend the importance and relevance of the study, as well as the methodology that will be employed.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Throughout history, many creeds have been drawn up in order that doctrinal truths may be succinctly stated. This is seen in statements such as the Apostles' Creed or the parallel Trinitarian creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople. Although it is debated whether Paul's quotation of an outside source in 2 Timothy 2:11-13 is a creed or a hymn, or perhaps his own thoughts,<sup>1</sup> the issue still remains: a proper understanding of this creed-like statement could set up a doctrine of soteriology that could then be set as a standard for churches today. The passage reads:

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<sup>1</sup>For proponents of the former, see Martin Dibelius, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972) 109; James D. G. Dunn, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus," *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000) 843; George Knight, *The General Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992) 400-1; Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1895) 96; William Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 501; and Jerome Quinn and William Wacker, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy," *Eerdmans's Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 651. For proponents of the latter, including ones who at least raise the possibility, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB; New York, NY: Double Day, 2001) 376; J. J. van Oosterzee, *The Two Epistles of Paul to Timothy* (Lange's Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960) 95; and Philip Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006) 507.

- <sup>11</sup> Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος·  
εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συζήσομεν·  
<sup>12</sup> εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν·  
εἰ ἀρνούμεθα, ἀκεῖνος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς·  
<sup>13</sup> εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει· ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.

Translated, it means:

*Faithful is the saying:  
For if we died with [Him], we will also live with [Him],  
If we endure, we will also reign with [Him],  
If we deny, He also will deny us,  
If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful, He is unable to deny Himself.<sup>2</sup>*

### *Relevance of Study*

It is the contention of this thesis that 2 Tim 2:11-13 holds several keys to understanding not only soteriology, but even eschatology. Some of these doctrines have been lost or unexplored throughout the centuries of church history for a variety of reasons. Some of these doctrines, such as *reign with Him*, have been diluted or largely ignored. If doctrines can be established and defended using not only the immediate context, but the whole of the epistle and perhaps the NT, this may not only shape doctrine, but practice as well.

As will be seen shortly, some schools of thought do not hold that identifying with Jesus's death through belief alone is all that is needed for eternal life. They are content to make baptism or endurance part of a commitment in order to achieve eternal life. Other theologians do not hold that a true believer could ever deny Jesus. Or, if a believer were to deny Jesus, they would end up losing their eternal life. Such ones would deny a

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<sup>2</sup>All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

doctrine of eternal security, perhaps even using the final two clauses to support such a conclusion.

Taken in its immediate context, however, as well as the context of 2 Timothy as a whole, the quotation in 2:11-13 serves as a summary of major soteriological doctrines – with special emphasis on the substitutionary death of Christ, sanctification, rewards, and eternal security. Although this is but one passage in the NT, the Holy Spirit has included it in Scripture, perhaps with some special emphasis due to the way it is introduced. That being the case, understanding these verses in their context may shed light on the doctrines of soteriology and eschatology.

#### *Methodology of Study*

The study will begin with a survey of historical views, beginning with the Church Fathers and ending with modern commentators. The purpose of this is to understand how various people or groups have interpreted this passage throughout church history. Following that, an exegetical study of the verses will be performed. This will serve as the basis of any theological work to come, as well as the foundation for a critique of the historical views. Once the exegesis is complete, there will be a section detailing the doctrines that are found within the passage, seeing if the exegesis stands in light of other Scripture. Finally, it will be shown that the statement in 2 Tim 2 actually serves as a summary of doctrines being taught and addressed in the whole of 2 Timothy, whether through explicit teaching or through the use of case studies.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF 2 TIM 2:11-13

It would be beneficial to know the history of the interpretation of this passage before the passage and its doctrinal ramifications are considered anew in this study. Even if the views being considered are not correct, the exercise may shed some light on past interpretive issues and problems. While not every view that has ever been espoused can be presented here, it is the goal of this paper to handle the main interpretive perspectives of the past two millennia. The Church Fathers will be regarded for their antiquity and proximity to the period of the NT. Two particular systems, Historical Arminianism and Historical Calvinism, will be presented, for they represent fundamental soteriological systems. The Arminian position will be considered for its contributions to the doctrine of conditional security, the Calvinist position for its view on perseverance.

#### *The Church Fathers*

Due to their temporal proximity with the writing of 2 Timothy and the church tradition of the day, the Church Fathers not only add some verification to the Pauline nature of 2 Timothy, but may also give some insight onto the theological ramifications of this passage.

*Polycarp (c. 69-c. 155 AD)*

It is in this Apostolic Father that the verbiage of 2 Timothy is first seen outside of the biblical canon. In a chapter devoted to qualifications of deacons, Polycarp writes:

Knowing, then, that “God is not mocked,” we ought to walk worthy of his commandment and glory. If we please him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as he has promised to us that he will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of him, “we shall also reign together with him,” provided only we believe.<sup>1</sup>

Whether Polycarp was quoting Paul or, as the case may be, Paul’s source, it is here in the early second century that there is a quotation of the material. It is found in a context much like the one in 2 Tim 2, giving reasons and exhortations to persevere in times of persecution.

*Tertullian (c. 160-c. 220 AD)*

The next time this passage appears in an extant writing is in Tertullian of the early third century. In chap. 13, he begins by recounting the radical transformation of Paul from persecutor of the church to persecuted for the church.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, Tertullian gives multiple Pauline references demonstrating the persecution that Paul endured, mainly from Rom 8; 2 Corinthians; and 2 Timothy. Tertullian seems to have martyrdom in mind: “[When Paul speaks of dying with Christ,] you see what he decides the bliss of martyrdom to be, in honour of which he is providing a festival of mutual joy.”<sup>3</sup> Before

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<sup>1</sup>Polycarp, “Philippians” (ANF; reprint ed.; ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979) 1:34.

<sup>2</sup>Tertullian, “Scorpiace” (ANF) 3:646.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 3:647.

he quotes the entirety of 2 Tim 2:11-13 in *Scorpiace*, Tertullian speaks of the admonition that Paul gave Timothy towards endurance.

*Origen (c. 185-c. 254 AD)*

Unlike Tertullian, Origen has a view of 2 Tim 2:11 that sees *died with Him* not as the believer's martyrdom, but as their forensic position.<sup>4</sup> In demonstrating the necessity of not only the cross, but the burial as well, Origen cites Rom 6:10 and Phil 3:10, along with 2 Tim 2:11, to show the positional nature of the believer's death with Christ.

*Cyprian (d. 258 AD)*

While Tertullian was finishing his earthly ministry, Cyprian was beginning his. In a work dedicated to martyrdom, he writes concerning Christ's exhortation not only "with words, but with deeds also," in that "after all wrongs and contumelies, [He] suffered also, and was crucified, that He might teach us to suffer and to die by His example, that there might be no excuse for a man not to suffer for Him, since He suffered for us."<sup>5</sup> Following that, Cyprian quotes Matt 10:28, 32-33; 2 Tim 2:11-12; and 1 John 2:23, showing that the NT authors recorded this same sentiment.

*Ambrose (c. 338-397 AD)*

Ambrose does not exegete the passage for its own worth, but rather cites it for support that the Holy Spirit is equal with God. He posits that if the believer will reign with Christ "through the Spirit, how do we refuse to admit that the Spirit himself is

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<sup>4</sup>Origen, "Against Celsus" (ANF) 4:459.

<sup>5</sup>Cyprian, "On the Exhortation to Martyrdom" (ANF) 5:499.

glorified together with Christ?”<sup>6</sup> And elsewhere: “What is more foolish than for any one to deny that the Holy Spirit reigns together with Christ, when the Apostle says that even we shall reign together with Christ in the kingdom of Christ? But we by adoption, he by power; we by grace, he by nature.”<sup>7</sup> Numerous times in the writings of the Church Fathers, 2 Tim 2:11-13 is referenced for support of a doctrine concerning theology proper, particularly that of God’s attribute of faithfulness and immutability.<sup>8</sup> Here, however, is the only time where pneumatology is considered.

*John Chrysostom (c. 347-407 AD)*

Perhaps the most in-depth look at the thoughts of the early church in 2 Tim 2:11-13 comes from the pen of Chrysostom. He follows much of what came before him in that he believes that *died with Him* refers to not only to “the Laver,” but also to the suffering that leads to martyrdom.<sup>9</sup> Chrysostom, much like most modern commentators, saw a close parallel to the first two lines, virtually equating *died with Him* with *endure*: “It is not enough to die once, but there was a need of much patient endurance.”<sup>10</sup> In other

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<sup>6</sup>Ambrose, “Of the Holy Spirit” (NPNF; reprint ed.; second series; ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; 14 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954) 10:125.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 10:157.

<sup>8</sup>On the unchanging nature of God, see Augustine, “On the Creed” (NPNF; first series) 3:369; Augustine, “On the Gospel of St. John” (NPNF; first series) 7:294; Chrysostom, “Homilies on St. John” (NPNF; first series) 14:135; Theodoret, “Letters” (NPNF; second series) 3:312; and Athanasius, “Four Discourses Against the Arians” (NPNF; second series) 4:353.

<sup>9</sup>Chrysostom, “Homilies on Timothy” (NPNF; first series) 13:492.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

words, endurance is as much a part of eternal life as is dying with Christ. It is impossible for one to have eternal life without enduring.<sup>11</sup>

Concerning the last line, Chrysostom held that God's faithfulness was not only a perfection of His, but also a resistance to being "injured:"

If we believe not that he rose again, he is not injured by it. He is faithful and unshaken, whether we say so or not. If then he is not at all injured by our denying him, it is for nothing else than for our benefit that he desires our confession. For he abideth the same, whether we deny him or not.<sup>12</sup>

This places the benefits of salvation solely on the believer.

### *Conclusion*

The evidence available shows that the Church Fathers do not portray a full picture of what the early church held, let alone a unified front. It will not be until the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras that theologians will begin to develop full-orbed treatments of the passage.

### *The Historical Arminian Position*

The term Historical Arminian is used here with specific reference to their doctrine of conditional security. Conditional security is the term used to describe that doctrine which teaches that a justified person may lose their status by falling away from the faith. Arminius writes: "A true believer can either totally or finally fall away from the faith, and

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<sup>11</sup>See also Chrysostom, "Homilies on Second Corinthians" (NPNF; first series) 12:322: "For as we endure His dying now, and choose whilst living to die for His sake: so also will he choose, when we are dead, to beget us then unto life. For if we from life come into death, he also will from death lead us by the hand into life."

<sup>12</sup>Chrysostom, "Timothy," 13:492.

perish.”<sup>13</sup> While Arminius himself never published an exegesis of this passage, others who teach this doctrine have.

*Richard Charles Henry Lenski*

Lutheran scholar R. C. H. Lenski gives one of the most thorough treatments of the Historical Arminian position that can be found. For that reason, he serves as a prime candidate to give a general overview of the view. He begins by looking at the four clauses generally. He notes that Paul is writing using a “condition – conclusion” formula, stating that “as sure as is the one, so sure is the other. All these are conditions of reality.”<sup>14</sup> They are all statements to which a believer can be held accountable.

After explaining why *died with Him* can not be a reference to physical death, Lenski goes on to write that the death in view is the one “which occurs by baptism by contrition and repentance.”<sup>15</sup> He points to Rom 6:4ff, explaining that while Christ died physically, a believer dies to sin because they have faith in Christ’s work. He concludes: “Because the one death caused the other, because the latter rests on the former, σὺν

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<sup>13</sup>James Arminius, “The Declaration of Sentiments,” *The Writings of Arminius* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1956) 3:254. Elsewhere he writes: “The opinion which denies ‘that true believers and regenerate persons are either capable of falling away or actually do fall away from the faith totally and finally,’ was never, from the very times of the apostles down to the present day, accounted by the church as a catholic doctrine. Neither has that which affirms the contrary ever been reckoned as a heretical opinion; nay, that which affirms it possible for believers to fall away from the faith, has always had more supporters in the church of Christ, than that which denies its possibility or its actually occurring.” James Arminius, “Certain Articles,” *The Writings of Arminius* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1956) 1:502-3.

<sup>14</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946) 793.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

combines them: we died together with Him.”<sup>16</sup> To Lenski, there is no question that Paul and Timothy fall under this category.

Dying with Him is only the first step, however, and living with Him being the final. The next two clauses discuss what happens in the meantime. Although Paul does not use a σύν-compound word with ὑπομένω, Lenski believes that is implied because of all the compound words surrounding it. He adds: “[Christ’s] death and His enduring were expiatory, *for us*, ours are only confessional, *together with Him*.”<sup>17</sup> As the believer aligns themselves with Christ, and by so doing endures, their endurance is with Him, and not on their own accord.

Lenski notes the paradoxical nature of these first two couplets; after all, how can someone die in order to live? How can they be exalted to reign by being humbled in enduring? He notes well:

There we shall reign as royalties with no one above us save Christ, and we are actually associated with Him: sitting with Him in His throne as He sits in His Fathers (Rev 3:21; 20:4, 6). Here belong all those passages that speak of the crown such as 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10. Human imagination fails to visualize the exaltation.<sup>18</sup>

To Lenski, the doctrine of reigning with Christ is something that is biblical and important. He mentions the passages where crowns are mentioned, as well as some other passages that concern ruling with Christ.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 794.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., emphasis original.

<sup>18</sup>He continues: “Say ‘reign’ or ‘crown’ like this, and the chiliast has no trouble in conjuring up his millennium despite all Scripture to the contrary notwithstanding.” Ibid., 794-5.

It is important to note that he believes that someone cannot live with Christ unless they are also reigning with Him. That this is his view becomes obvious in his discussion of the next clause. In it, Lenski posits that the denial which Paul cites is a denial of Christ.<sup>19</sup> This particular denial is a permanent one, and although believers may have temporary lapses of faith, they should be repented of, just as Peter did. Let the believer beware, though: “The condition still visualizes reality and is not changed to potentiality... even though Paul refers to Timothy and to himself. The future tense is in place because both are now nobly confessing.”<sup>20</sup>

To Lenski, there is the distinct possibility that a believer can deny Christ, and that denial will lead to Christ denying them entrance into eternal life: “Only one who has confessed can turn about and deny. He who by denial now cuts himself off from Christ and so faces Him on the last day must not expect that Christ will be equally false and will

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<sup>19</sup>“The English needs the pronoun [after the verb].” Ibid., 795. This is his same argument for the entire passage, whether it is a σύν-compound verb or not.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. It should also be noted that there is a textual variation here. While the future, ἀρνησόμεθα, is evidenced by **ⲛ\*** A C Ψ 048 33 1175 1739, as well as some other manuscripts and the entirety of the Latin translations, the present form ἀρνούμεθα is evidenced by **ⲛ<sup>2</sup>** D 1739 1881 and the MT. This writer goes with the latter, although ultimately, the denial can be present or future and it still has the same result, as will be discussed. Most would not take this reading, of whom Johnson serves as an example: “Nestle-Aland contains the future tense because it is clearly the harder reading. It interrupts the sequence, since the protasis of the other three conditional sentences is in either the aorist or the present tense. Scribes would therefore be tempted to ‘correct’ the future to the present tense for the sake of consistency.” Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB; New York, NY: Double Day, 2001) 376. In addition, Marshall notes: “The use of εἰ with fut. indic. is quite rare.” I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; New York, NY: T. & T. Clark, 1999) 740. Although this is not convincing evidence on its own (the construction also occurs in Matt 26:33; Mark 14:29; Luke 11:8; and 1 Pet 2:20), it does show that it is not a common occurrence. In general, for all textual matters, the author will be primarily following Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad, *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), although reference will also be made to Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27<sup>th</sup> ed.; Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993). While a defense of the Majority Text is beyond the scope of this thesis, see Maurice Robinson and William Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Southborough, MA: Chilton Book Publishing, 2005) 533-586 and Hodges and Farstad pp. ix-xiii for an introduction to MT theory, as well as a bibliography of more resources on the matter.

then confess where He ought to deny.”<sup>21</sup> The ultimate retribution for denying Christ is a loss of eternal life. While a believer may be unfaithful for a time, they must ultimately repent and return from their unfaithfulness, or else they are in jeopardy of losing the eternal life they once had.

Lenski holds that the fourth clause is a general statement, as evidenced by the use of the present tense.<sup>22</sup> That is, generally speaking, no matter what humans may do, or no matter what circumstances may abound, God always remains faithful to Himself and His promises, whether they may be a promise or a threat. While believers may go back and forth between being faithful and unfaithful on a whim, Christ will not do the same. They want Him to “deny all His warning threats, give them and thus Himself the lie, and let these His deniers enter heaven as do His faithful believers.”<sup>23</sup> This, of course, lies at the very heart of the Historical Arminian position. A lack of endurance and faithfulness means a denial of entrance into eternal life.

### *The Historical Calvinist Position*

Just as with the Historical Arminian view, the Historical Calvinist view is found in many forms and doctrines, the most critical and popular of which will be discussed here. The term Historical Calvinist is used here with specific reference to their doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Berkhof defines perseverance of the saints as “they

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<sup>21</sup>Lenski, *Timothy*, 795. Quinn and Wacker also support this view: “Here again Jesus’ repudiation of a personal relationship with or knowledge of a onetime believer who had repudiated him makes it quite clear that it is a reciprocal religious (faith) relationship that is being described and that that relationship is breakable.” Quinn and Wacker, “Timothy,” 652.

<sup>22</sup>Lenski, *Timothy*, 795-6.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 796.

whom God has regenerated and effectually called to a state of grace, can neither totally nor finally fall away from that state, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved.”<sup>24</sup>

*John Calvin*

Perhaps there is no better place to start the discussion on the Historical Calvinist position than with Calvin himself. On the first clause, he writes that “we shall not be partakers of the life and glory of Christ, unless we have previously died and been humbled with Him.”<sup>25</sup> Here, Calvin makes clear that it is through Christ’s death that the believer receives life. He quotes Rom 8:29, where Paul writes about those who were predestined so that they would be conformed to the image of the Son. It is interesting to note that Calvin refers to these people as “all the elect.”<sup>26</sup> To Calvin, when one believes in Christ for eternal life, they are not only identifying with His death on the cross for the satisfaction of their sins, but evidencing the fact that they have been predestined to that position.

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<sup>24</sup>As to what *persevere therein* involves, Berkhof continues: “They who have once been regenerated and effectually called by God to a state of grace, can never completely fall from that state and thus fail to attain to eternal salvation, though they may sometimes be overcome by evil and fall in sin. It is maintained that the life of regeneration and the habits that develop out of it in the way of sanctification can never entirely disappear. It is, strictly speaking, not man but God who perseveres. Perseverance may be defined as *that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion.* It is because God never forsakes His work that believers continue to stand to the very end.” Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941) 545-6, emphasis original.

<sup>25</sup>John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981) 217.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

Since the believer has died vicariously with Christ and will subsequently live with Him, they should be so emboldened so as to “suffer with Him, in order that [they] may be partakers of His glory.”<sup>27</sup> This is as close as Calvin comes to discussing the second clause. He points to 2 Cor 4:10, where Paul is recounting the extreme persecution that he was facing, and concluding that just as the believer identified with Christ in His death, not only will they receive life in the future, but that they should live their life now as Christ lived His, with view to their own deaths.<sup>28</sup>

Calvin explains the third clause by writing that “their base denial of Christ proceeds not only from weakness, but from unbelief; because it is in consequence of being blinded by the allurements of the world, that they do not at all perceive the life which is in the kingdom of God.”<sup>29</sup> Here, Calvin argues that if someone is not enduring or suffering, it is because they never truly believed. It is from passages such as this that Calvinism defends its doctrine of perseverance. Those that hold to this doctrine state that once someone believes, they will never fully and completely fall away from the faith.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 218.

<sup>28</sup>In his commentary on 2 Corinthians, Calvin writes: “For [Paul] employs the expression – *the mortification of Jesus Christ* [while Calvin translated from the Latin *mortificationem Iesu Christi*, the Greek reads τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (the death of the Lord Jesus)] – to denote everything that rendered him contemptible in the eyes of the world, with the view of preparing Him for participating in a blessed resurrection... The end, however, must also be kept in view, that we *suffer with him*, that we may be *glorified together with him*. (Rom. viii. 17.)... [Mortification] often means self-denial, when we renounce the lusts of the flesh, and are renewed unto obedience to God. Here, however, it means the afflictions by which we are stirred up to meditate on the termination of the present life... Both make us conformed to Christ, the one directly, the other indirectly, so to speak.” John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981) 2:204-5. Thus it is seen more fully what Calvin means by *died with Him*.

<sup>29</sup>Calvin, *Timothy*, 218.

On the fourth and final clause, Calvin understands the meaning to be that those who do not believe in Christ do not affect God's perfection of faithfulness, and just as the unbelievers are "in the habit of changing their hue" on a whim, God is not like that.<sup>30</sup> This clause then becomes more of a statement on theology proper, and not soteriology. In other words, despite the unbelieving nature of any man, who changes their mind on a whim, God is not like that. He is faithful to Himself because of who He is.

*John MacArthur*

MacArthur represents another strain of Calvinism with his view of Lordship Salvation. Not only does MacArthur hold to the doctrine of perseverance of the saints, but he believes that it stems from a view of faith that includes commitment and obedience. This is evidenced by his interpretation of 2 Tim 2:11-13. Indeed, with the first clause, while he says that Paul may have Rom 6:4 in mind, it is more likely referring to martyrdom. In explaining his position, he comments: "If someone has sacrificed his life for Christ... that martyrdom gives evidence that he had spiritual life in Him and will live with Him throughout eternity."<sup>31</sup> In a position such as Lordship Salvation, much emphasis is placed upon the testing which guarantees one has true faith, and it is shown in this unique approach to 2 Tim 2:11.

This same interpretive vein continues with the second clause. Those who endure are those who have been persecuted without facing a martyr's death. In so doing, they

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>31</sup>John MacArthur, *2 Timothy* (MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Chicago, IL: Moody, 1995) 63.

are securing their place as co-rulers in the eternal kingdom. Conversely, MacArthur adds: “Those who do *not* endure give equally certain evidence that they do not belong to Christ and will *not* reign with Him.”<sup>32</sup> Although he sees works as a necessary and inevitable indicator of saving faith, MacArthur insists that it is only by faith that one has eternal life.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of this, he places such a striking emphasis on works as a result of faith when he discusses the third clause:

It looks at some confrontation that makes the cost of confessing Christ very high and thereby tests one’s true faith. A person who fails to endure and hold onto his confession of Christ will deny Him, because he never belonged to Christ at all. Those who remain faithful to the truth they profess give evidence of belonging to God.<sup>34</sup>

It is this emphasis that sets MacArthur and Lordship Salvation apart, worthy of special attention. This is not to say that he does not believe a believer can be temporarily unfaithful. Using Peter as an example, MacArthur demonstrates that Peter’s confession and repentance proves that he was “truly justified, though obviously not fully sanctified.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>MacArthur continues: “Only if Christ is Lord of a life, can He present that life before His Father ‘holy and blameless and beyond reproach.’ The only life that can endure is an obedient life. A life that will not serve Him will never reign with Him.” Ibid., 64, emphasis original.

<sup>33</sup>MacArthur remarks: “To endure, or persevere, with Christ does not protect salvation, which is eternally secured when a person trusts in Him as Savior and Lord. We can no more ensure salvation by our own efforts or power than we first gained it by our own efforts or power.” Ibid., 64.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid. MacArthur is silent on the use of the first person plural forms of the verbs in this passage. The first-class conditional statements then move from the realm of possibility, where they convey a possible course of action, to the realm of experiment, where they convey a sense of “If *A* happens, then *B* happens, because *C* never took place.” For instance, “If someone denies Christ, then Christ will deny them, because they were never a recipient of eternal life.”

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 65.

Concerning the final clause, MacArthur believes that *unfaithful* is better rendered *faithless*, and that it means a “lack of saving faith, not merely weak or unreliable faith.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the conclusion is not a word of promise, but of stern warning. Christ is remaining faithful to His promise to condemn unbelievers.

### *Conclusion*

The Historical Calvinist position focuses mainly on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, as the evidence has shown. Calvin and his followers hold to this in a more general way, while MacArthur holds to perseverance because of his position on saving faith.

### *Other Historical Positions*

Before the passage is treated afresh, it would be beneficial to conclude this chapter by taking into account different views presented throughout history.

### *If we died with [Him], we will also live with [Him]*

Three views have been posited as to the meaning of the first half of this clause. First, there are those who hold that *died with Him* refers to a martyr’s death. This was most prevalent in the early church, seen in the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian.<sup>37</sup> Second, there are some who hold that *died with Him* refers to baptism, although for the most part, it is symbolizing a mystical union. Walter Lock, among many others, sees the

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<sup>36</sup>MacArthur continues: “The unsaved ultimately deny Christ, because they never had faith in Him for salvation.” *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>37</sup>See also William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles* (NTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1957) 257; and MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 63.

connection with Rom 6:8 as suggesting “that the primary reference is to baptism.”<sup>38</sup>

Third, there are some who hold that *died with Him* refers to the mystical union that stems from belief. Just as Origen first posited, so also George Knight agrees:

Death with Christ is death to sin (Rom 6:11), even as Christ died to sin once (v. 10)... It is in Christ’s death (v. 5) that Christians have died with him. And because they have been united with Christ (v. 5) they have died with him in his death, which brought... justification from sin. With this death comes the concomitant life.<sup>39</sup>

While baptism does symbolize the act of dying with Christ, the proponents of this view do not believe that *died with Christ* pictures the symbol, but the mystical event itself.

The second half of the clause receives considerably less attention, as most everybody agrees that it refers to eternal life. The question then becomes whether or not eternal life is a present possession or merely an eschatological hope. If anything is said to this end, it is to highlight the present possession of the eternal life. Knight, considering the context of Rom 6, postulates that this is the “whole thrust, which is concerned with the *present* effect of union with Christ in a Christian’s life.”<sup>40</sup> Even Towner, who sees

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<sup>38</sup>Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1895) 96. See also A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982) 132; Arland Hultgren, *2 Timothy* (AC; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1984) 122; Johnson, *Timothy*, 376; Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (NAC; Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992) 209; William Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 516; Philip Towner, “The Letters to Timothy and Titus,” *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006) 509; and Jerome Quinn and William Wacker, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy,” *Eerdmans’ Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 651.

<sup>39</sup>George Knight, *The General Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992) 403. See also Calvin, *Epistles*, 217; James D. G. Dunn, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000) 843; Ralph Earle, “2 Timothy,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (ed. Frank Gaebelin; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978) 401; Gordon Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984) 199; J. Glenn Gould, *2 Timothy*, (BBC; Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill, 1965) 641; and J. J. van Oosterzee, *The Two Epistles of Paul to Timothy* (Lange’s Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960) 95.

<sup>40</sup>Knight, *The General Epistles*, 404, emphasis original.

the eschatological hope as being “probably uppermost in mind,” adds that “this accent need not exclude the implicit understanding that present Christian living is ‘union with Christ’ in his death and resurrection.”<sup>41</sup>

*If we endure, we will also reign with [Him]*

Most authors, such as Arminians and Calvinists, see the second clause as a natural extension of the first. To them, enduring is invariably part of having eternal life, as was seen with the Historical Calvinist position. Towner notes: “Endurance in affliction is to be a normal way of life for the believer, just as it hints that afflictions will also be normal.”<sup>42</sup>

In addition, the notion of reigning with Christ is seen as synonymous of living with Him. And much like *live with Him*, *reign with Him* receives a disproportionately small discussion.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, there are two veins of thought, and they are probably influenced by one’s eschatology. For instance, Quinn and Wacker see an inaugurated aspect to this reigning: “Like the ‘co-living’ of the previous stich, the ‘co-reigning’ of this line is certainly inchoate in this life (above all in the ‘reign’ of virtue), but its

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<sup>41</sup>Towner, “Letters,” 509. Commentators who remark on this passage tend to share this view, see also Lea, *Timothy*, 210.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 510.

<sup>43</sup>For example, Kelly’s thought is summed up in one sentence: “The line crystallizes the primitive Christian hope that, when Christ returns in glory to reign (1 Cor. xv. 24 f.), the saints who have endured will sit on thrones like kings alongside him (Rev. i. 6; iii. 21; v. 10; xx. 4). J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981) 180.

consummation belongs ultimately in another order, where God rules in the fullest sense.”<sup>44</sup>

While some, such as Quinn and Wacker, see the reigning as a current privilege,<sup>45</sup> most others, as Towner notes, see the ruling as an utterly eschatological phenomenon: “The time frame, which is clearly future and eschatological, confirms the future emphasis of the promise of life above.”<sup>46</sup> Of the resources used for this study, only one pointed to the potentiality of this reigning as taking place in a millennial rule.<sup>47</sup>

*If we deny, He will deny us*

With the exception of Lenski, all the writers up to this point believe that the one denying Christ is merely a professing believer, one who never possessed eternal life at all. Lenski posited that the denier was once a believer, but one that loses eternal life due to their denial. Besides Lenski, modern commentator William Mounce also holds that this statement is “directed toward a Christian and not a mixed audience.”<sup>48</sup> It is not known whether or not Mounce holds that a believer can lose their salvation, as he does

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<sup>44</sup>Quinn and Wacker, “Letters,” 651.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Curiously, he also writes: “With this phrase, the teaching deliberately introduces the idea that future eschatological blessing (however that might be conceptualized) is dependent to some degree on the quality of present human response in history... [It is] measured by endurance as a prerequisite to obtaining the promise.” Towner, “Letters,” 511. Although he would ultimately disagree with the soteriological conclusions of this thesis, this notion of a future reigning will be fleshed out in greater detail in the study to come.

<sup>47</sup>It is worthwhile to note, however, that they add in the footnote: “This statement is not intended to advocate a specific millennial viewpoint. The truth of the statement does not depend on the definition of *millennium* accepted by the reader.” Lea, *Timothy*, 210.

<sup>48</sup>Mounce, *Epistles*, 517.

not discuss it in those terms. Nevertheless, he does state that this refers to “apostasy in its fullest sense.”<sup>49</sup> Marshall agrees: “The second pair of statements explores the consequences of unwillingness to die with Christ and to endure hardship with him and for his sake.”<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the views held by Lenski and Mounce, Knight sides with the majority: “The professing Christian will deny the one he claims to have died with and to now live with.”<sup>51</sup> According to these theologians, the denial brought about is one that proves the person never believed. It is complete and final.<sup>52</sup>

Commentators, such as MacArthur, will turn to Matt 10:33 to demonstrate that Jesus taught this very idea: “And whoever will deny me before men, I also will deny him before my Father in Heaven.”<sup>53</sup> Towner views the punishment of such a denial as being eschatological, and he summarizes: “Disowning Christ, whether as desertion caused by

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Marshall, *Epistles*, 740.

<sup>51</sup>Knight, *Epistles*, 405. In another work, he also states: “The denial on Jesus’ part is the denial of an abiding relationship to Him which is the same denial that they have made. It is a repudiation of them who have repudiated him. In the pregnant use of the word ‘know’ in Scripture, Jesus will profess concerning them that he never knew them (see Mt. 7:23). A final complete disavowal of Christ in this life means that Christ will finally and completely disavow those in the life to come.” Yet, he is quick to point out: “The statement in the saying that we are now considering does not mean that Christ is not faithful to his promise to us, nor does it mean that our fall into a denial even as grave as Peter’s is unforgivable or that it from that time henceforth forever and ever seals our doom. The denial in view in the saying which calls forth Christ’s denial is not like that of Peter’s who later sought forgiveness but rather is a situation of hardness and permanence.” Knight, *Sayings*, 126.

<sup>52</sup>Knight continues: “The finality of [Christ’s] denial of those who have denied him will be as permanent and decisive as theirs has been of him, and will thus not be as in Peter’s case, where forgiveness was sought and received. Knight, *Epistles*, 406.

<sup>53</sup>MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 65.

fear of suffering for the faith or as apostasy, carries fearful eternal consequences.”<sup>54</sup>

Elsewhere, he writes: “Rejection by Christ means exclusion from eternal life.”<sup>55</sup> To this end, all the views surveyed thus far would retain that eschatological view, as opposed to a temporal view of punishment.

*If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful,  
for He is unable to deny Himself*

There are two questions that commentators have attempted to answer regarding this final clause: What does it mean to be unfaithful? To what does Christ remain faithful due to His inability to deny Himself? The entirety of the passage culminates with the answers to these questions. Mounce is correct when he posits that “the basic question of this line is whether it is a warning, like line 3, or a promise, like lines 1 and 2.”<sup>56</sup> Those that take it to be a warning see *unfaithful* as parallel with *deny*, which would mean that God is faithful in judging unbelievers. Those that take it to be a promise see *unfaithful* in contrast to *deny*, the latter being a stronger word for utter apostasy, which would mean that God remains faithful in ensuring that true believers have eternal life.<sup>57</sup>

Mounce himself sees it as a promise:

Having described the two extremes of present-day endurance and future apostasy, the saying pulls back to an intermediate position – present-day faithlessness – and describes what happens in this situation... If it does not cover the common

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<sup>54</sup>Towner, “Letters,” 512. For argumentation along similar lines, see also Lea, *Timothy*, 211.

<sup>55</sup>Philip Towner, *1-2 Timothy and Titus* (NTC; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994) 180.

<sup>56</sup>Mounce, *Epistles*, 517.

<sup>57</sup>Mark Bailey, “A Theology of Paul’s Pastoral Epistles,” *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1994) 351.

occurrence of temporary faithlessness, then it has omitted a large part of the Christian experience.<sup>58</sup>

Those that hold to the “promise” view of the final clause see God’s faithfulness to Himself as being part of the doctrine of eternal security. Dibelius holds that it “cannot refer to God’s insistence upon formal recompense; such an interpretation contradicts the usage of the terms. Rather it is the thought of God’s faithfulness to the covenant.”<sup>59</sup> It seems that the crux of this argument rests upon the difference between *deny* and *unfaithful*.

Van Oosterzee, along the same vein of Lenski and Calvin, views the fourth clause as a threat, not a promise. In this view, God is faithful to His promises that the unfaithful and unbelieving will receive their due punishment: “Fancy not, if thou art unfaithful, that the Lord’s punishment will fail. He is just as faithful in His threatenings as in His promises.”<sup>60</sup> He agrees with Lenski that it is the believer who is in danger of losing their

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<sup>58</sup>He lists the following reasons: “(1) If line 4 is a warning, it is awkward language. (2) Discussion of God’s faithfulness to believers usually leads into the benefits enjoyed by believers, not into punishment. (3) The tense shift from the future (line 3) to the present (line 4), especially as it parallels the present-tense ὑπομένομεν, ‘endure’ (line 2), suggest a change in topic from line 3. (4) The simple form μένει, “remains,” ties in with the promise of reigning for those who are enduring (v 12a). (5) The change of verb from ἀρνέσθαι, ‘to deny,’ to ἀπιστεῖν, ‘to be faithless,’ suggests a change in topic. (6) As a warning, line 4 would be highly repetitive of line 3. (7) It appears that the hymn is trying to deal with the different responses to conversion (line 1)... For these reasons, most see line 4 as a promise of assurance to believers who have failed to endure (line 2) but not to the point of apostasy.” These lines of evidence will be evaluated at a future point. Mounce, *Epistles*, 517-8.

<sup>59</sup>Martin Dibelius, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972) 109. See also Knight, *Epistles*, 407; Lock, *Epistles*, 96; and Quinn and Wacker, *Letters*, 652.

<sup>60</sup>Van Oosterzee, *Epistles*, 95.

eternal life. Calvin, however, would merely state that God is faithful to whatever recompense is due a person.<sup>61</sup>

Towner offers a third, less widely held, view. He posits that the fourth clause has less to do with individual soteriology, and more to do with God's faithfulness to a struggling and infiltrated church: "Even if there are false teachers and false believers in the church, God will not fail to preserve his people; that is, whatever happens to the church and its leadership, God will remain faithful to his covenant."<sup>62</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Now that a survey has been taken of both past and present theologians, it would be best to reexamine the text so as to offer fresh exegetical insights. This is done not to invent new doctrines in soteriology, but to refine views already in place with the hope of gaining better understanding into Paul's original intent, especially within the context of 2 Timothy itself.

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<sup>61</sup>This is also the view of Matthew Henry: "He is faithful to his threatenings, faithful to his promises... If we deny him, out of fear, or shame, or for the sake of some temporal advantage, he will deny and disown us, and will not deny himself, but will continue faithful to his word when he threatens as well as when he promises." Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (6 vols.; New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1900) 5:839. See also Raymond Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (The New Testament Library; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 228.

<sup>62</sup>Towner, "Letters," 514.

CHAPTER III  
AN EXEGESIS OF 2 TIMOTHY 2:11-13

In this chapter, the passage will be considered on its own accord, outside the influence of the development of its interpretation. Interaction with secondary sources will be limited to those supporting the view presented here. Comparing and contrasting the following view with the preceding views will be the topic of the next chapter.

*Background to 2 Timothy*

Second Timothy is one of three Pauline epistles collectively known as the Pastoral Epistles. Carson and Moo explain the title by saying that the epistles “are directed to people with pastoral responsibility and with the task of appointing pastors.”<sup>1</sup> To this end, two are written to Timothy, and one is written to Titus. Second Timothy is the second canonical letter that Paul wrote to Timothy, and it is almost universally accepted that it was the last of the Pauline epistles to be composed, with a date around 64 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) 554. For further research, including a defense of Pauline authorship, see pp. 554-70. Gundry writes that the designation is appropriate because the epistles “contain instructions concerning the administrative responsibilities of Timothy and Titus in churches.” Robert Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 409.

<sup>2</sup>Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 578. Paul’s own death occurred around this time. It seems regardless of when people believe 2 Timothy was written, they almost always place it within a year of Paul’s death.

The theme of this epistle can be summarized as *enduring to the end*.<sup>3</sup> Enduring suffering is mentioned throughout the book (1:8, 12; 2:9, 12; 3:11-12), and, as Carson and Moo point out: “[Paul] leaves Timothy no doubt that, while our salvation is a free gift from God, it is also demanding. In living out its implications, the believer is going to run into difficulties and will find that the God who sent his Son to die on the cross is always served at a cost.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, Paul makes clear in this epistle that obtaining eternal life is through belief; however, Paul’s focus here is more on the outworking of that belief in enduring suffering for the sake of the gospel.

#### *Examination of the Context*

Given the background and content of the epistle, it is clear that Paul is writing to his protégé and fellow slave, Timothy, with a view to Paul’s imminent martyrdom. He is looking back upon his faithful service, and encouraging Timothy, a believer, to press on and mature in the faith despite the persecution and suffering he must endure. As such, the reader should expect the commands and exhortations in the epistle to be written to a believer, unless the context clearly communicates otherwise.

In the context, Paul writes to Timothy in order that he may “not be ashamed of the testimony of [their] Lord or of [him] His prisoner, but join with [him] in suffering for the gospel” (1:8). This thesis is supported as it is the climax of Paul’s discussion in the first chapter. Paul recalls Timothy’s “sincere faith,” therefore charging his disciple to “kindle

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<sup>3</sup>Carson and Moo note: “The deep conviction of the writer that he was about to be put to death for holding the Christian faith (4:6-8) is to be kept in mind in all discussions of this letter.” *Ibid.*, 580.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 581. While this statement is true, the present author would take issue with Carson and Moo’s reasoning. Indeed, this thesis is intended, in part, to demonstrate a better reasoning for this statement.

afresh the gift of God” because “God has not given [them] a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (1:5-7). Subsequent to Paul’s purpose statement in v. 8, he expounds on “the gospel” in vv. 9-10, then adding that it is “for this reason [that he] also suffer[s] these things” (1:12). Due to the fascinating unity of the book in regards to the reiteration of this theme, more examples will be given during the discussion of the passage.

The paragraph in which 2:11-13 is couched begins in v. 3 and extends through the end of the chapter in v. 26. There are three important things to note in the context. First, in these statements, Paul is concerned with “suffering hardship” (vv. 3, 9) and “being diligent” (v. 15), something which only a believer can do. An unbeliever should not be expected to suffer hardship or be diligent, as they have no basis for doing so. Second, Paul says that he himself endures all things (v. 10), using the same verb as in v. 12.

Third, the examples given in vv. 3-6 deal with the rewards of faithful stewardship. The soldier, who is already enlisted, is looking to please their commanding officer. The athlete is looking forward to the reward of receiving the prize that comes with diligent training of their body, as well as competing according to the rules. The farmer who works hard in their labors reaps the benefits when it comes time to harvest.<sup>5</sup> The passage in vv. 11-13 is expounding on these three themes, explaining in a different and more formal way what he has been discussing up to this point. If they were automatic and

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<sup>5</sup> Keathley adds: “[Paul] gives Timothy the example of the soldier, who works hard to please his master and the farmer, who works for the reward of the harvest, etc.” Hampton Keathley IV, “If We Deny Him, He Also Will Deny Us,” n.p. [cited 9 Apr 2009]. Online: [http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=2112](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=2112).

inevitable results of faith, Paul's encouragement to endure, and its reciprocal threat, would be devoid of meaning.

### *General Considerations*

There are four general things to note concerning this passage. The first thing to note is the coupling present in the lines. Each of the statement's four lines begins with  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$  with a first person plural verb followed by a consequence or response. It is this structure of the coupling that leads to the second thing of note, which is the conditional nature of these statements. These are all first class conditional statements, as all four couplets employ an  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$  plus indicative verb in the protasis, the first of which is aorist, and the latter three are present.

Wallace lists three semantic possibilities for the meaning of conditional statements.<sup>6</sup> The relationship used here is cause and effect.<sup>7</sup> In this relationship, whatever a person does in the protasis is the cause of what happens in the apodosis. For example, the result of someone dying with Christ is that they will live with Him. The result of someone enduring is that they will reign with Him. Of course, these will be amplified in the pages to come.

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<sup>6</sup>Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996) 682-4. He mentions (1) cause and effect, (2) evidence and inference, and (3) equivalence.

<sup>7</sup>This is the only one that could make sense in these constructions. First, concerning evidence and inference, Wallace indicates that an evidence-inference relationship is "often the opposite" of the cause-effect one. *Ibid.*, 683. For example, while *If we died with Him, we will also live with Him* conveys a cause and effect relationship, an evidence and inference relationship would have to be the converse: *If we live with Him, we [know] we died with Him*. Paul's focus, however, is on the believer's current actions and what will happen as a result, not vice versa. Second, concerning equivalence, the protasis and apodosis would have to be equal in that they are happening simultaneously; however, a believer does not die and live with Christ simultaneously, nor do they suffer and reign simultaneously. These are best seen as cause and effect relationships.

The second matter to consider concerning these conditional statements is the semantic force of the first class condition. Wallace explains the first class condition as “the assumption of truth for the sake of argument.”<sup>8</sup> While the first class condition does not necessarily mean the protasis is true in and of itself, the presence of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος before the statement seems to indicate that these couplets are not merely the assumption of truth, but truth in actuality.

Third, it is not insignificant that Paul uses the first person plural form of these verbs.<sup>9</sup> He is including himself in these statements, allowing himself to be susceptible to every aspect of this creed. Even if one takes into account the first class conditions, which at the very least presents an assumption of truth, it would be improbable that Paul would have employed the first person plural form if he had not meant to include himself.<sup>10</sup>

Fourth, Keathley notes that the statement may be in chiasmic structure.<sup>11</sup> In this case, the first and fourth couplets are referring to the same topic: eternal life. The second and third couplets, then, refer to eternal rewards. To Keathley, this has two major ramifications: (1) “To do as Hiebert does and include [the third and fourth couplets] as

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 690.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Constable, “Notes on 2 Timothy,” 16 [cited 9 Apr 2009]. Online: <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/2timothy.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup>Exegetically, of the 300+ usages of εἰ followed by a verb in a first class conditional statement, εἰ followed by a first person plural verb only occurs nine times (Matt 23:30; Luke 22:49; 2 Cor 5:16; Gal 5:25; 1 Thess 4:14; 2 Tim 2:11-13 (4x)). Taking into account those nine times, seven of those are used by Paul to indicate a truth regarding a believer’s status. It is much more common to see εἴ τις followed by a verb (36x), which would easily set up a general rule if that were the point Paul were trying to make. It could be argued that since Paul is merely quoting an outside source, he does not want to change the form of the statement; however, by employing the words and revealing them as Scripture, they must be interpreted normally.

<sup>11</sup>Keathley, “Deny,” n.p.

being more closely related than [the second and third couplets] is to misunderstand Paul's logic and the logic of the Hebrew mind;" and (2) a chiasmic structure places the most important section in its center.<sup>12</sup> This would fit the context and, as it remains to be seen, the present exegesis of the passage.

*Faithful is the saying*

The phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος occurs five times in the NT, and that only in the PE (1 Tim 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8). The location of the statements in these references, however, differs. Two of these are anaphoric, where the referent of the λόγος is what comes before the phrase (1 Tim 4:9; Titus 3:8). The other three, which includes the present passage in 2 Tim, are kataphoric, where the referent of the λόγος is what comes after the phrase (1 Tim 1:15, 3:1; 2 Tim 2:11).

It seems that when the phrase occurs in 1 Timothy and Titus, it is referring to a statement that Paul has composed himself; however, that may not be the case here in 2 Timothy. First, the inclusion of γὰρ seems to indicate that this is a fragment of an already existing piece of literature, whether it be a hymn, creed, or something yet else, as the γὰρ has nothing to which to point back or explain.<sup>13</sup> If this were merely Paul creating this statement for his purposes in 2 Timothy, there would have been no need for the γὰρ.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Dillow argues that the γὰρ points back to v. 10 where Paul discusses obtaining salvation, and with it eternal glory. Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1993) 427. While the present author would agree with Dillow's interpretation of the passage, it seems as though the γὰρ is already a part of the quote. The γὰρ, therefore, may tie back to the ideas presented in v. 10, but it cannot be assumed that the γὰρ is original with Paul and not the quote.

Second, it is likely that this statement was already in existence due to its couplet form. Kelly notes: “[The] parallel structure and rhythmic character make it likely that they are an extract from a liturgical hymn, probably familiar to Timothy and the community; the last which breaks away from the pattern [ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται], may be a gloss added by Paul himself.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, the poetic and parallel nature of the couplets seems to indicate a formal statement that was already in existence. The other occurrences of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος seem to be pointing simply to a pithy statement Paul wrote.<sup>15</sup>

While the presence of the phrase does not make the referent any truer than other statements of Paul, it places a certain emphasis upon them that highlights the meaning within the context. Dibelius adds: “One would do better, therefore, to understand the

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<sup>14</sup>J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981) 179. Quinn and Wacker add: “It is possible that the *pistos logos* was based on an even more archaic (even Palestinian Aramaic) hymn, perhaps an oracle composed by a member of the prophetic order. This in turn could lie behind not only the Pauline teaching in Rom 6:8, but also a catechetical summary that originated in the Roman Church as it reflected on its own Pauline letter and explained the old Jewish Christian hymn (now translated into Greek).” Jerome Quinn and William Wacker, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy,” *Eerdman’s Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 649.

<sup>15</sup>The contents of the faithful sayings are as follows: “Christ Jesus came into the world in order to deliver sinners” (1 Tim 1:15); “If anyone seeks *to be* an elder, he desires a good work” (1 Tim 3:1); “bodily discipline is of little profit, but godliness is of profit to all things, having the promise of life now and the one about to come” (1 Tim 4:8); “For we ourselves were once foolish... but when the kindness and good will of God our Savior appeared, He saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior), not from the works of righteousness which we ourselves did, but according to His mercy; in order that being justified by His grace, we may be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:3-7).

formula as an affirmation: when the Pastorals speak in coined expressions about salvation, they consistently combine this with an application to the present.”<sup>16</sup>

*For if we died with [Him], we will also live with [Him]*

Regardless of how it is introduced and from where Paul borrowed it, the statement is now a purposeful part of Scripture that is particularly poignant in the context of 2 Timothy. Paul begins the statement by writing that *if we died with [Him], we will also live with [Him]*. The verb for *died with [Him]* is the aorist active indicative first person plural form of συναποθνήσκω, while the verb for *will live with Him* is the future active indicative first person plural form of συζάω. Although there is no explicit pronoun serving as the direct object of these σύν-compound words, it seems warranted to supply one. In that case, the first instance of any pronoun in the passage is in v. 12 with κἀκεῖνος. The closest antecedent for the pronoun, then, is Christ Jesus in v. 10.<sup>17</sup>

The first issue with this couplet, interpretively speaking, is what it means to die with Christ. There are several ways of understanding the meaning of συναποθνήσκω,

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<sup>16</sup>He continues: “In this context a remark is added to edify and to confirm: the word is true and does not deceive. Not all quotations in the Pastorals are marked in this way, by any means. Only a few pointed connections between tradition and present-day application are highlighted in this fashion, with the encouragement of the apostolic word.” Martin Dibelius, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972) 29. For more research on the saying, see Raymond Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (NTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 41-4; George Knight, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1968) 131-7; and I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; New York, NY: T. & T. Clark, 1999) 326-30.

<sup>17</sup>Collins notes: “The prepositions suggest that the primary object of the Pastor’s reference is Christ Jesus: We are united with Christ Jesus in death and in life. Only secondarily is the Pastor writing about the community’s solidarity with one another in death and in future life. An element of Christian solidarity is never absent from the Christian idea of salvation. Christians are together in having died together with Christ in baptism and in awaiting that future life that will be given at the appearance of the Lord and that is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.” Collins, *Timothy*, 227. See also Knight, *Sayings*, 116.

which is only found three times in the NT (Mark 14:31; 2 Cor 7:3; 2 Tim 2:11). First, BDAG simply defines this word as “to die with,” with no indication of the method or meaning behind it.<sup>18</sup>

Second, it is beneficial to garner the meaning of the uncompounded form, ἀποθνήσκω, which receives multiple classifications. Of the 110 usages in the NT, 107 mean “to cease to have vital functions, whether at an earthly or transcendental level.”<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of this study, several options may be left open: (1) earthly death with Christ (Mark 14:31), (2) earthly death through martyrdom, (3) transcendental death through baptism, or (4) transcendental death through belief. One definition of a transcendental death in BDAG is the fourth option, the “mystical death with Christ.”<sup>20</sup>

The third and final piece of information to consider is when the uncompounded ἀποθνήσκω is used in conjunction with σύν (Rom 6:8; Col 2:20). While Col 2:20 also deals with the spiritual dying with Christ that a believer has, Rom 6:8 could serve as the most convincing evidence. While BDAG places the latter passage under option (4) above, it is important to view the context, as much more is said here in Rom 6 than is said in 2 Tim 2.

In Rom 6:1, Paul posits a rhetorical question, asking if a believer should continue in sin so that grace may abound. Continuing in vv. 3-4, Paul discusses the identifying

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<sup>18</sup>W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (BDAG) (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2000) 965. As Knight notes, “neither [of the other references] provides an adequate parallel.” Knight, *Sayings*, 117.

<sup>19</sup>BDAG, 111. The other three usages are classified as “be faced with death or realization of mortality.”

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

nature of being baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and how the believer should then walk in newness of life. In vv. 5-7, he switches to Christ's physical death and resurrection, and it is in that regard that the believer has died with Christ in v. 8.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Paul writes in vv. 9-14 that a believer should not let sin reign in their bodies because they have died with Christ, and that has set them free from sin and death.<sup>22</sup> It seems that Paul's use of ἀποθνήσκω σύν here is in reference to the believer's identifying with Christ's death, which is by faith.<sup>23</sup>

It is this concept in Rom 6:8 that is found in the first couplet of 2 Tim 2:11. What makes the comparison more striking is that both verses also use συζάω to convey the results of dying with Christ. The word is only used three times in the NT and it simply

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<sup>21</sup>Murray notes: "Now in verse 8 the reason why believers have died to sin is given expressly in terms of having died with Christ, and the verses which follow show why dying with Christ entails death to sin. It is not, however, the fact of having died with Christ that bears the emphasis in this instance but living together with him. Dying with Christ is assumed and the inference is drawn that we shall also live with him. Two features of this inference are worthy of note. (1) The certitude of faith in this result is indicated in 'we believe.' It is an article of faith, not conjecture, that the life of Jesus' resurrection belongs to those who have been united with Christ in his death. (2) The future tense, 'we shall live' does not refer exclusively to the future resurrection state but, as found above, points to the certainty of participation in the resurrection life of Christ here and now." John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965) 1:223.

<sup>22</sup>Knight's words in reference to Rom 6 are striking: "Death with Christ is death unto sin (verse 11) even as Christ died unto sin once (verse 10). It is the crucifixion of our old man, the doing away of the body of sin, our removal from the bondage of sin in our crucifixion with Christ (all in verse 6). It is in Christ's death (verse 5) that we died with him. And because we have been united with Christ (verse 5) we have died with him in his death which wrought an inner death for our old man. And that union and death with Christ is described as being baptized into Christ Jesus. To die with Christ means to be so united with him that our inner sinful self is destroyed as a result of his death on the cross." Knight, *Sayings*, 117-8.

<sup>23</sup>Scripture that uses ἀποθνήσκω in this way: Rom 6:8; 2 Cor 5:14; and Col 2:20, 3:3. Wilkin calls this a positional sense: "If we have believed in Christ for eternal life, then we have died with Him in a positional sense. By *positional* I mean that God views us as though we died with Jesus on the cross. While in our *experience* we did not die with Christ, God in His grace credits us with having been crucified with Christ." Robert Wilkin, *The Road to Reward* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2003) 53.

means “to live with.”<sup>24</sup> There are only a few options for the meaning of this word when seen in conjunction with ἀποθνήσκω. If συναποθνήσκω is physical, συζάω must be resurrection life, just as Christ had after his physical death. Even if συναποθνήσκω is transcendent in meaning, which is what is being proposed here, συζάω must be transcendent in kind, which would lead to resurrection, or eternal, life.

Therefore, this couplet conveys that if someone has *died with* Christ in that they identify with His death through faith in the past, they will certainly have eternal life and *will live with* Him for all eternity in the future.<sup>25</sup> Dying with Christ becomes the sole criterion for living with Him. Again, taking into account the first class conditional statement, and the manner in which this statement was introduced, it seems appropriate to consider this as an axiomatic truth. And taking into account the first person form of the verbs, it would seem to indicate that Paul is including himself in the couplet.

*If we endure, we will also reign with [Him]*

The statement then turns to the next step in the process of salvation. If the first couplet discussed a believer’s justification, the initial stage of salvation whereby a

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<sup>24</sup>BDAG, 954.

<sup>25</sup>McCoy rightly notes: “Of course every believer receives eternal life as a present, abiding possession at the moment of faith in Christ (‘He who believes in Me *has* eternal life [John 6:47]). But the actual manifestation of this life in Christ’s literal presence does not start until either physical death or the translation of the church (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-52).” Brad McCoy, “Secure Yet Scrutinized,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 1 (1988) 23.

believing sinner is declared righteous, it can be said that the second couplet discusses their sanctification, the process by which they are set apart to be more like Christ.<sup>26</sup>

While the first class condition is still present in this couplet, the aspect of the first verb changes from the first couplet. Instead of having an aorist verb, which indicates a past action in the indicative mood, *endure* is a present active indicative first person plural form of ὑπομένω. The thrust here is the present choice to endure or not.<sup>27</sup> The word means “to maintain a belief or course of action in the face of opposition,”<sup>28</sup> and it is a strengthened form of the word μένω, which is often found in Johannine literature to convey the same idea (John 15:4ff; 1 John 2-4). And, just like the first couplet, the second couplet is also in first person form, which seems to indicate that Paul is again including himself in this audience.

In his usage of ὑπομένω, Paul is signifying more than just initial faith, and that is seen in the meaning of the word. One cannot “maintain a belief” unless they first have the belief. Maintaining something is impossible unless it is already a current possession. Further, Paul again includes himself in this option, as he is continuing to use the first person plural form of the verb. For Paul, enduring is a possible present course of action.

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<sup>26</sup>McCoy states it differently: “The sinner who has trusted Christ has died with Him, and will also live with Him in the future. Verse 11 thus makes it absolutely clear that the future destination of believers is not in doubt. The issue of a believer’s living a life of enduring fidelity to his Lord, however, is very much in question.” *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>27</sup>Collins remarks: “‘We endure’ is the only verb that does not use the prepositional prefix *syn* in the first stich. The implication may be that endurance is something that each member of the community must do.” Collins, *Timothy*, 227, fn. 32.

<sup>28</sup>BDAG, 1039. Of its seventeen usages, fifteen carry the same meaning presented here (Luke uses it in Luke 2:43 and Acts 17:14 to mean *to stay behind*). Those fifteen uses are found as follows: Matt 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Rom 12:12; 1 Cor 13:7; 2 Tim 2:10, 12; Heb 12:2, 7; 10:32; 12:3; Jas 1:12; 5:11; and 1 Pet 2:20 (2x).

There is a future result to this enduring, namely, reigning with Christ.<sup>29</sup> This verb is a first person future active indicative from συμβασιλεύω, which is another σύν-compound word meaning “to reign jointly.”<sup>30</sup> While chapter five will deal with what all this entails, it is important to note several things at this time. This is different from the first couplet in that while *died with Him* signified an action in the past, *endure* is seen as an action that takes place in the present. If a believer endures, they are then promised to reign with Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Some see this idea as parallel to the first; in other words, dying and enduring are synonymous, as are living and joint rulership.<sup>32</sup> The exegetical and logical problem with this view is that if there is but one prerequisite for living with Him, which is dying with Him, and the view assumes that living and reigning with Him are synonymous, it therefore adds another condition to living with Him, namely, enduring. This interpretation stems from a belief that enduring naturally stems from the work of the Holy Spirit that comes by faith.

A better interpretation of living with Him and reigning with Him, however, would keep the two future ideas distinct, thereby making ruling a privilege and reward of

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<sup>29</sup>Indeed, as Knight notes: “The eschatological perspective of endurance is always in view.” Knight, *Sayings*, 120. He goes on to cite Matt 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; 2 Tim 2:10; Heb 10:32-39; 12:2; and Jas 1:12 as examples of how endurance is always tied into the future promise of blessing.

<sup>30</sup>BDAG, 956. Βασιλεύω and συμβασιλεύω are used twenty-one and two times, respectively. Five times they refer to Christ (Luke 1:33; 1 Cor 15:25; and Rev 11:15, 17; 19:6), and five times to believers (2 Tim 2:12; and Rev 5:20; 20:4, 6; 22:5).

<sup>31</sup>Benware states it simply: “The incredible truth is that the believer can have a place close to the ruling King of kings in the coming kingdom if he faithfully labors for the Lord Jesus and endures in this life (Matt 25:14-22; Luke 19:15-19; 2 Tim 2:5, 11; Heb 3:14).” Paul Benware, *The Believer’s Payday* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002) 140.

<sup>32</sup>R. Bultmann, “ὑπομένω,” TDNT 1 (1964) 587.

patiently enduring the trials of life. Benware summarizes: “The reality is that our reigning with Christ depends on our faithful endurance as believers.”<sup>33</sup> Reigning with Christ is not an automatic result of belief; it comes as a reward of enduring suffering and maturing in the faith. In the same way, faithful endurance has no effect on whether or not someone lives with Christ. That is solely based on whether or not a believer has died with Him.

*If we deny, He will deny us*

Soteriologically speaking, the question is then almost certainly raised: if someone has died with Him, what role does endurance or works play? What are the consequences of not enduring or producing works? What are the consequences of denying Christ? There are three primary schools of thought to this end.<sup>34</sup> One view sets forth that works and endurance are necessary to keep salvation, and that denial brings about a loss of eternal life. A second perspective holds that “true” faith will always have some evidence of its existence in works, and that a denial is an indication that the person was never “genuinely” saved. Are these the only options available? This paper sets forth a third option, one that seems to be much more viable given the flow of this passage, especially if theological frameworks are not imposed upon the text.

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<sup>33</sup>Benware, *Payday*, 31. McCoy summarizes similarly: “The Christian will definitely live with Christ in the future. However, *he may or may not* receive special commendation and reward from the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ.” McCoy, “Secure,” 24, emphasis original. While Benware and McCoy speak of endurance in broad terms, Dillow seems to single out suffering: “In order to become a joint heir with Christ, one of His metachoi, we must faithfully endure our sufferings to the end.” Dillow, *Reign*, 87. While this would fit the context of suffering in 2 Timothy, it seems as though this concept of endurance can be stretched to fit a broader category of enduring and growing in the faith.

<sup>34</sup>See the previous chapter for examples of these views.

At this point, it is best to let context guide the reader through the next couplet.

The key word in this phrase, *deny*, is the Greek word ἀρνέομαι. It first occurs as a present deponent indicative first person plural,<sup>35</sup> and occurs in the second half of the couplet in a future deponent indicative third person singular form. BDAG lists the usages here as meaning “to disclaim association with a person or event.”<sup>36</sup> It is important to note that Paul is still using the first plural form of the verb, he is including himself in this warning.<sup>37</sup> The issue that then remains is of what is this denial?

Taking the line within its context, the closest antecedent of the denial is a denial of enduring, and by proxy, a denial of Christ.<sup>38</sup> The three preceding σύν-compound verbs require an implied object. The only other verb up to this point, ὑπομένω, is an intransitive verb, which does not require a direct object.<sup>39</sup> Since (1) ἀρνέομαι does not require a direct object either,<sup>40</sup> (2) ὑπομένω and ἀρνέομαι are conveying parallel ideas, and (3) Paul is continuing to use the first person plural form of the verbs, it would seem that they are

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<sup>35</sup>See chap. 2, fn. 20 for the textual variant.

<sup>36</sup>BDAG, 132.

<sup>37</sup>Dillow notes: “The Arminians are correct... in saying that it is possible for true Christians to deny Christ. This is further brought out in the next phrase when he asserts that it is possible for true Christians to be ‘faithless.’” Dillow, *Reign*, 429.

<sup>38</sup>Benware writes: “Our ‘denial’ is the opposite of our ‘enduring,’ and reigning is set in contrast with Christ’s denial. In other words, Christ’s ‘denial’ is not banishment of a person to hell but rather the denial of reigning with him in His kingdom.” Benware, *Payday*, 32.

<sup>39</sup>Marshall comments on this phenomenon: “The hypothetical form συυπομένω does not exist. Nevertheless, the idea of sharing in Christ’s endurance may be faintly present in view of the surrounding context of σύν- verbs.” Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 740.

<sup>40</sup>Collins believes that the omission of a direct object is an example of zeugma, where “the omission may have been intended to ensure symmetry of the four stichs of the composition.” Collins, *Timothy*, 228, fn. 36.

referring to two options that the justified believer faces. It can be said to be a denial *of* Christ in as much as it would be a denial of endurance *for* Christ. Either way, the point Paul is bringing across is that this believer is not maturing the way they ought to be.

Denial is not limited to repudiating Christ and outright sin; Benware views it as a “settled, characteristic way of living life.”<sup>41</sup> McCoy notes that it “can involve simple refusal to shoulder one’s biblical responsibilities in any area. This is illustrated in 1 Tim 5:8, which warns that the believer who neglects to provide for his own family has in effect ‘denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.’”<sup>42</sup>

Some, however, see the denial as a permanent decision to deny Christ as Savior. Constable, who would agree with the other portions of this exegesis, writes, “To deny Christ clearly does not mean to deny Him only once or twice but to deny Him permanently since the other three human conditions in the couplets are permanent.”<sup>43</sup> While the first couplet is shown to be a permanent situation by the aorist aspect, it can be argued that the second and third couplets are the ever-present choices in front of the believer, as demonstrated by the present aspect.

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<sup>41</sup>He continues: “When we do not live obediently according to the dictates of Scripture, we are in essence not identifying with Christ, but are in fact denying Him. When the believer’s life is characterized by a lack of love, forgiveness, kindness; where words, attitudes, and behaviors are contrary to the Word of God, then you have an unvarnished denial of Christ. Such a believer is refusing to abide in Christ and is refusing to identify with the kind of life required by the Lord. A lifestyle like that will not merit rulership alongside the King of kings.” Benware, *Payday*, 32. Knight summarizes *denial* thus: “Denial can thus take the form of forsaking or repudiating the Christian faith and its truth, particularly the truth concerning Jesus. In doing so one personally denies Christ (and the Father).” Knight, *Sayings*, 124.

<sup>42</sup>McCoy, “Secure,” 28. Benware poses it as a question: “What if a believer chooses not to ‘endure’ but, like many believers at Corinth, prefers to blend in with the world system and not be clearly identified with Christ?” Benware, *Payday*, 32.

<sup>43</sup>Constable, “Notes,” 15.

When someone identifies with the death of Christ through faith in the resurrection, they will live with Him. If they persist in faithful obedience, He will reward them accordingly. If they deny Christ and their calling to patiently endure, the statement makes clear that Christ will then deny them.<sup>44</sup> In context, that denial is the reward of future co-reigning. McCoy states it in this way:

Paul has... affirmed that those believers who faithfully endure in their Christian experience will receive special rewards and prerogatives in Christ's Kingdom. In context then, the denial spoken of here has to do with the Lord's denying the unfaithful believer the privilege of intimate, high-level interaction with Him in governing the millennial state.<sup>45</sup>

What is at stake with sanctification, then, is not whether or not someone has been justified, but whether or not they grew in their faith, and they will be rewarded accordingly.

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<sup>44</sup>While it has been assumed that the referent of *κακῆλνος* is Christ, Collins is hesitant to be so particular: "Those who deny that one in the present life will be denied by that same one in the life to come. 'He,' 'that one' is mysterious; his identity is not revealed. He is an enigmatic eschatological figure. The Pastor uses the related adjective *ekeinós* in reference to the eschaton (see 1:12, 18; 2:26; 3:9; 4:8), the day of the Lord. The Lord is expected to grant mercy (1:18) and confer a crown of righteousness on that day (4:8). It may be that 2:12 speaks enigmatically of "that one" rather than of the "Lord" because the Lord is Savior, a beneficent figure, whereas "that one" is a vindicator. Verse 13a is ironic. Instead of affirming that "that one" will cast aside his fidelity and sever his relationship with those who have not been loyal, the hymn concludes with a virtual confession of faith." Collins, *Timothy*, 228. Because of Paul's use of *ἐκείνος*, Collins concludes that the final line is one of faithfulness in judgment, not one of faithfulness concerning eternal security of the unfaithful believer.

<sup>45</sup>McCoy, "Secure," 28. Two things are noteworthy with this quote. First, he continues by discussing 1 Cor 3:15, where Paul writes about a believer's work being burned, yet the believer is still saved. In addition, he cites Luke 19:20-27 in a footnote, where he comments: "The unfruitful/unfaithful servant is denied reward that other servants do receive. This servant is differentiated, however, from those who are not allowed to enter the Master's kingdom at all." Ibid. Second, McCoy is assuming a premillennial view of Christ's second coming. The interpretation presented here may be more likely under a premillennial system, as it seems most commentators taking this view are premillennial. See also Benware, *Payday* and Dillow, *Reign*. In addition, while a defense of premillennial theology is not feasible in this project, there are several resources that suffice. See Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2006); Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, IL: Zondervan, 1965); John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983).

*If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful, He is unable to deny Himself*

In the following, and final, couplet, the flow of thought is continued. The first couplet already demonstrates eternal security in that if someone died with Christ, they will live with Him. Again, this is demonstrated by the first class conditional statement. To make sure Paul brings his point across, he includes this fourth couplet, which discusses what happens to a believer who does not endure in the faith. If a believer denies Christ by not enduring, they are being unfaithful. The word *unfaithful* is the present active indicative first person plural of ἀπιστέω, which BDAG defines as “to be unfaithful.”<sup>46</sup> It is being used to characterize the person that warrants the word ἀρνέομαι in the previous couplet.

The choice of ἀπιστέω in contrast to πιστὸς μένω referring to Christ is noteworthy; it demonstrates that the idea is *unfaithful – faithful*, and not *unbelieving – believing* or *unbelieving – faithful*, which would make less sense.<sup>47</sup> To be sure, an unfaithful believer may end up reaching the point where they are more than simply not enduring, but that they apostatize and no longer believe; even so, the contrast of ἀπιστέω and πιστὸς is too strong for the other two options to be viable.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>BDAG, 103. It is striking to note that BDAG classifies this verb under this definition, and not under their first definition, “to disbelieve, refuse to believe,” or their second, “to not believe in someone.”

<sup>47</sup>Dillow prefers using the third pair. Dillow, *Reign*, 429. Ryrie seems to agree: “Apparently a believer may come to the place of not believing, and yet God will not disown him, since He cannot disown Himself.” Charles Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1997) 130.

<sup>48</sup>Marshall agrees: “The verb expresses acts of unfaithfulness, possibly even of apostasy, and is meant to serve as a warning to believers of a temptation to which they are exposed. It is not as strong as ‘deny’ and is more like ‘if we fail to live up to our profession.’” Marshall, *Epistles*, 741.

Despite the believer's actions in being unfaithful, Christ, in contrast, remains faithful to His promise that those who *died with Him will live with Him*. Hodges writes: "For [Christ] to renege on such promises would be nothing less than a denial of His own character and fidelity."<sup>49</sup> Believers are eternally secure even if they deny Him by not patiently suffering through this life. Even if the believer is faithless, Christ remains faithful to His promises, and this because He is unable to deny Himself. Not only did He promise that all who believe in Him will not be cast out (John 6:35-47), but the believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). The latter being the case, for God to deny a believer eternal life would be to deny Christ entrance, as well.

First, notice that Paul is including himself once again by placing ἀπιστέω in the first person plural present active indicative, just as he did every other verb in these first class conditional statements. Second, notice that Christ remains faithful to Himself not in denying others entrance into Heaven, but in being unable to deny Himself.<sup>50</sup> Paul uses ἀρνέομαι here just as he did in the third couplet, serving to tie all these thoughts together. The believer can deny enduring, and Christ will deny the believer co-reigning; however, Christ will bring that believer into eternal life because He cannot deny them that honor any more than He could deny it for Himself.

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<sup>49</sup>Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free* (Dallas, TX: Rendención Viva, 1989) 112.

<sup>50</sup>Some manuscripts place a γὰρ before ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται; however, the manuscript evidence for this reading is not persuasive. For inclusion of the γὰρ, see **Ν\*** A<sup>vid</sup> C D F G L P 048<sup>vid</sup> 6 33 81 104 326 365 1175 1739 1881 *al*. The MT is split on this reading; however, most of the texts do not include the γὰρ, along with **Ν**<sup>2</sup> and Ψ. Either way, the statement is an explanation of why Christ remains faithful.

*Conclusion*

The present exegesis of this passage differs from the vast majority of interpreters throughout all of church history. While some expositors have correctly surmised meanings of individual couplets, few have posited an exegesis in the combination presented here. Since there is not one overwhelmingly popular view as a whole, it would seem fair for yet another view to stake a claim.

In summary, this exegesis suggests the following: Paul is teaching that (1) identification with Christ's death through belief alone is the sole requisite for possessing eternal life; (2) the believer faces a choice in their sanctification whether or not to live faithfully; (3) to endure produces blessing and rewards, to fail to endure produces discipline and loss of rewards; and (4) even if a believer does not endure, Christ remains faithful to Himself to ensure that the believer is brought into the eternal state.

CHAPTER IV  
A CRITIQUE OF THE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Since this passage has had such a rich diversity of interpretations throughout the era of the church, it would seem insufficient to leave the discussion following the exegesis presented in chapter three. This chapter will briefly examine and critique the historical views presented in chapter two in light of the previous discussion of the passage.

*If we died with [Him], we will also live with [Him]*

Historical views concerning the first couplet dealt with (1) martyrdom and baptism, as well as (2) whether or not there is a present extension to eternal life.

*Martyrdom*

There are several arguments against a martyrdom view. First is the tense and person of the verb. Paul's use of the aorist indicative points to a past action.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Paul includes himself in this first person plural verb; even if it was taken from a creedal statement or hymn, those reciting it could not have been dead, by the very requirement of life needed to speak. Second, Knight comments: "Dying with Christ is a strange way of

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<sup>1</sup>Knight agrees: "It seems most unlikely to speak of a martyr's death as a past action rather than as a present or future occurrence. But it is quite in keeping with the N.T. usage and the phenomenon itself to speak of the Christian's spiritual death with Christ as a past action." George Knight, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1968) 117.

referring to martyrdom.”<sup>2</sup> He then references Gal 2:20; Rom 6:3ff; and Col 2:12 as examples of where dying with Christ refers to a believer’s forensic position.

Third, the past action seen in that couplet is followed by present actions in the following two. If it was a statement meant to remind still-living believers of the results of martyrdom, it would be odd to then follow that couplet with options to persevere, endure, and mature, as someone who has already been martyred would not be able to do any of them.<sup>3</sup>

Fourth, martyrdom is not seen in the context. As Knight notes: “The preceding context does not speak of a martyr’s death at all. It does speak of suffering hardship and of bonds (verse 9) and of enduring all things (verse 10), but not death as such. It is a stress on enduring as such, and not on death as such, that is in Paul’s purview.”<sup>4</sup> While Paul may realize by this point in his life that he will be dying as a martyr, it does not seem to fit the context of the passage, nor the book as a whole.

### *Baptism*

The other main view of *died with Him* holds that it refers to baptism, pointing to the close connection in language with Rom 6:1-11. However, as was previously noted,

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<sup>2</sup>George Knight, *The General Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992) 403.

<sup>3</sup>Knight, again: “The chronological progression is shattered by a reference to a martyr’s death. Thus, if a martyr’s death was in view the first two lines should be in a different order. Enduring (or remaining) comes before death, not vice versa.” *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>4</sup>He continues: “And it is this stress on ‘enduring’ that forms both the semantic and ideological bridge to the saying. The saying is quoted because one of its leading and early motifs is ‘if we endure, we shall also reign with him.’ Paul quotes the saying at the natural transition point in its original setting. In so doing he includes the saying in its unity as a compact whole. Therefore the other lines must not be artificially interpreted just to fit the context but must be viewed in their normal interrelationships to one another. The saying is quoted because it commends enduring and warns against its negative opposite, denial.” *Ibid.*, 116.

there is a distinction between Paul's discussion of baptism in vv. 3-4 and his discussion of the believer's identification with Christ's death in vv. 5-7.<sup>5</sup> In other words, vv. 3-4 show that the Romans were practicing the ordinance of baptism because they knew that it was an external symbol of the spiritual reality: the immersion of a person symbolizes Christ's death, and their emergence symbolizes Christ's resurrection.

From there, however, Paul discusses the internal ramifications of that spiritual reality in vv. 5-7. In other words, what is different with the spiritual aspect of the believer because they died with Christ? Therefore, the reference to believer's baptism in vv. 3-4 merely serves to highlight the unity. Likewise, in 2 Tim 2, not only is baptism not mentioned contextually, but to substitute the external symbol for the event which it portrays would seem to be unwarranted.

### *Eternal life*

All the authors cited thus far are unanimous in their understanding of *will live with Him* as referring to eternal life. Although this will be further developed in the next chapter, it is worth noting here that while some place this eternal life entirely in the

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<sup>5</sup>This is a distinction made by several commentators. Murray separates the passage along those lines. See chap. 3, fn. 21 for a quote. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965) 1:211-26. Morris indicates that the reference to baptism in vv. 3-5 is merely an illustration of the spiritual reality that is at the heart of the discussion, and it is not meant to set the tone for the passage. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988) 246. See also the discussions in James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988) 321; Douglas Moo, *Romans 1-8* (WEC; Chicago: IL: Moody, 1991) 395; and Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* (BEC; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998) 319. To be fair, not all make this distinction, wishing to equate *died with Christ* in v. 8 as a reference to baptism. See C. E. B. Cranfield, *Commentary on Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 1:312.

future,<sup>6</sup> eternal life is a present possession as well. To state otherwise would be to miss the close parallel with Rom 6, where the emphasis is on the present effects of believing in Christ, which includes the present possession of eternal life.

*If we endure, we will also reign with [Him]*

It seems that most commentators surveyed in chapter two would like to make this second couplet parallel and synonymous with the first.<sup>7</sup> In other words, *endure* is a natural extension of *died with Him*, and *will reign with Him* is a natural extension of *will live with Him*.

*Enduring Synonymous with Dying*

The exegesis of the passage presented in chap. 2, however, precludes this as a possibility. Some, such as MacArthur, would explain this by saying that enduring is the natural and inevitable result of having a true saving faith: “A person who fails to endure and hold onto his confession of Christ will deny Him, because He never belonged to Christ at all.”<sup>8</sup> This stems from a definition of *faith* that includes commitment, obedience, and/or submission to Christ’s Lordship at the moment of belief. On the

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<sup>6</sup>See C. J. Ellicott, *The Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul* (London, England: Longman, 1864); and J. E. Huther, *Pastoral Epistles* (Meyer’s Commentary on the New Testament; Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1893).

<sup>7</sup>In general, see the discussion in conjunction with chap. 3, fn. 11 for Keathley’s argument for the presence of a chiasmic structure.

<sup>8</sup>John MacArthur, *2 Timothy* (MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Chicago, IL: Moody, 1995) 64. To be sure, MacArthur and others would not then say that salvation is by faith and works, but that a true saving faith will always be followed by works.

contrary, it would seem best to see *faith* as simple belief which enables a believer to endure, but by no means is it made automatic, nor inevitable.

Within this passage, the aspect of the verbs used seems to indicate two distinct topics of the four protases, only the first has an aorist verb (συναπεθάνομεν). It is not merely coincidence that this one is set apart from the rest. While the first couplet discusses the past action that coincides with belief in Christ, the following two couplets deal with the present choice the believer faces with regard to their belief.<sup>9</sup> Yet even the fourth line, which begins with the present aspect ἀπιστοῦμεν, is still dealing with the ramifications of the second and third lines, while the main concern is assurance of eternal life.

Therefore, it seems best to make eternal life based solely on belief, which occurs at the moment of justification. When works become involved, the discussion then turns to a different subject, whether that be sanctification, rewards, or the lack thereof.

#### *Reigning Synonymous with Living*

Those that take *died with Him* to be parallel with *endure* will then equate *will live with Him* as parallel to *will reign with Him*; however, not all who have eternal life will have the privilege of reigning. Only those who endure will have the privilege of reigning, and just as enduring is distinct from dying with Christ, so also is reigning from living with Him. A believer can live with Christ for all eternity and not experience the privilege of reigning with Him, as will be seen in the chapter five.

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<sup>9</sup>Keathley's argument that the first and fourth lines discuss eternal life, while the second and third discuss rewards is true. See chap. 3, fn. 11.

*Reigning as a Current Privilege*

Although it was seen that eternal life has a present component, this is not necessarily the case for the reigning aspect, as well. In other words, reigning is entirely future. First, as it was shown, the first and second couplets are discussing two different aspects of salvation: eternal life and rewards, respectively. As rewards are given at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:10-17; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 John 4:17) which has not yet taken place, reigning is currently unavailable to believers. Second, Christ is not reigning now as the Davidic King as He will be in the future.<sup>10</sup> In order for believers to reign with Christ, He must first be reigning physically on the earth during the Messianic Kingdom (Zech 14:9-21). It is at that time when believers will reign with Him.

Knight cites 1 Cor 4:8 as a third stem of criticism against those who say that reigning is a current privilege. Through sarcasm, Paul is chastising those in Corinth who act as though they are already reigning. Paul, realizing that the time to reign has not yet come, says that he wish it was time to reign “so that we also will reign with you.” Knight comments that “Paul in his irony rules out any reference to a present reign.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>See chap. 3, fn. 45 for sources that support this statement.

<sup>11</sup>He continues: “The call to the Christian now is to serve and remain steadfast, not to reign.” Knight, *Sayings*, 122. He also believes that the verb’s future tense rules out a present reign; however, Knight himself realizes the present aspect to συζήσομεν, so it would seem biased to rule out a present reign on verb tense alone.

*If we deny, He will deny us*

This third couplet is the sole negative one of the group, and most take it to refer to a professing believer's ultimate denial of Christ, and Christ's rightful, subsequent denial to allow that person into eternal life.

*The Denier is an Unbeliever*

Those views, however, were shown to be untenable in the previous chapter. First, Paul is including himself and Timothy, both believers, in the possibility of denying. Second, the denial is not solely of Christ, but of enduring for His sake. Since endurance has been shown to have nothing to do with eternal life, but with rewards and reigning, only a believer can be in view here. The only view that survives those observations is the Historical Arminian view, which holds that a denying believer then loses their eternal life through the act of denial.<sup>12</sup> Although the fourth couplet will ultimately affirm eternal security despite unfaithfulness, other passages in Scripture also affirm this doctrine (John 6:35-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:6-11; 8:28-39). Therefore, the denier must be a believer.

*Christ Denies the Denier Eternal Life*

If the denier is a believer, and believers are eternally secure in their eternal life, this couplet cannot be talking about a denial of eternal life. As was shown to be the case in chapter three, the fourth couplet once again clears up any misconception, proving this to be so. Therefore, in the context of the second and third couplets, the denial is of reigning and rewards.

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<sup>12</sup>See chap. 2, fn. 13 for sources that support this statement.

*If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful, for He is unable to deny Himself*

The final clause, which was shown to be dealing with eternal security, is taken by many to be a negative threat of punishment. In other words, Christ is remaining faithful to His promise to deny eternal life to unbelievers.

*Unfaithful Is Less Severe than Denying*

Mounce believes that Paul is writing about an intermediate option between enduring and denying in the fourth couplet, that of temporary faithlessness.<sup>13</sup> He then goes on to list seven reasons why temporary faithfulness is in view, as well as to support that Christ's faithfulness is a promise of eternal security. While the latter will be used as support for a refutation under the following heading, it is important to note where he is in disagreement with the exegesis presented in chapter three.

He writes: "The tense shift from the future (line 3) to the present (line 4), especially as it parallels the present-tense ὑπομένομεν, 'endure' (line 2), suggest a change in topic from line 3."<sup>14</sup> Here he is attempting to prove that ἀρνησόμεθα and ἀπιστοῦμεν are distinct because they are in different tenses; however, as seen in chap. 2, fn. 20, the majority of extant manuscripts give evidence to the present form ἀρνούμεθα. Even if that were not the case, a mere change in tenses would not warrant a new subject.

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<sup>13</sup>William Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 517-8. Knight also takes this position. Knight, *Sayings*, 126.

<sup>14</sup>Mounce, *Epistles*, 517.

Mounce also concludes: “The change of verb from ἀρνείσθαι, ‘to deny,’ to ἀπιστεῖν, ‘to be faithless,’ suggests a change in topic.”<sup>15</sup> This may be tenable if it were not for the relationship that can exist between these words. If they were completely unrelated, Mounce may be able to make this claim; however, since ἀρνέομαι can serve as a subset of ἀπιστέω, it lessens the force of this argument. In other words, there are multiple ways that a believer can be unfaithful, and denying Christ and enduring for His sake is one way. Therefore, it is best to see *unfaithful* as a description of what it means to deny.

*Ἀπιστέω Means “Unbelieving”*

Dillow posits that ἀπιστέω is best rendered *unbelieving*.<sup>16</sup> As was stated before, however, the comparison between ἀπιστέω and πιστός in the fourth couplet is too striking for Dillow’s conclusion to be the case. In whatever way the one is translated, the other should follow. In other words, if Dillow wishes to translate the former as *unbelieving*, he should continue with *Christ remains believing*. In addition, it is curious Dillow even wishes to make that distinction, as *unbelieving* would be a subset of the larger idea of *unfaithful*, much like was discussed between *denying* and *unfaithful*.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1993) 429.

*Christ's Faithfulness Is a Threat*

Even though there is disagreement with Mounce concerning what it means to be unfaithful, he lists four viable reasons that Christ's faithfulness is a promise to the believer, and not a threat to the unbeliever:

(1) If line 4 is a warning, it is awkward language. (2) Discussion of God's faithfulness to believers usually leads into the benefits enjoyed by believers, not into punishment... (4) The simple form μένει, "remains," ties in with the promise of reigning for those who are enduring (v 12a)... (6) As a warning, line 4 would be highly repetitive of line 3.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, one can take into account the chiasmic structure of the saying, which would infer that this line is referring to eternal life along with the first. Along those same lines, if He cannot deny Himself entrance into eternal life, and believers are a part of Him through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, He would be denying Himself entrance if He were to deny a believer, even if they are unfaithful by denying Him.

*Conclusion*

Throughout chapter three, exegetical attempts were made to demonstrate what Paul meant by including this faithful saying without the theological presuppositions which some interpreters read into the passage. Critiquing the views presented in chapter two was meant to demonstrate not only the viability of the conclusions of chapter three, but the untenable nature of the views presented in chapter two.

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<sup>17</sup>He concludes: "For these reasons, most see line 4 as a promise of assurance to believers who have failed to endure (line 2) but not to the point of apostasy." *Ibid.*, 517-8. Of course, while this thesis would agree that it is a promise of assurance, this promise extends to those who commit apostasy.

## CHAPTER V

### DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS OF 2 TIMOTHY 2:11-13

How then does this passage fit into the systematic studies of soteriology and eschatology? Because of the compact, creedal nature of the statement, it is likely that it is succinctly stating biblical doctrine. For that reason, and on the basis of the prior exegesis and critique of other historical views, discussion on the doctrines present in these couplets seems warranted.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Substitutionary Atonement*

The first doctrine, found in συναπεθάνομεν, deals with Christ's satisfactory death on the cross, appropriated by belief. Theologically, this is referred to as the substitutionary atonement. In his introduction to the topic, Erickson comments and poses a question: "We observed that Christ died for our sake or on our behalf. But is it proper

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<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that because of the amount of evangelical systematic theologies readily available today, the doctrines of the substitutionary atonement, eternal life, eternal security, and the believer's identification with Christ will receive less treatment here than the others. In those cases, references will be made to specific sections in those systematic theologies where the reader can find more information.

to speak of his death as substitutionary, that is, did he actually die in our place?”<sup>2</sup> It seems as though Scripture answers this positively.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, substitutionary atonement can be defined as the work of Christ whereby through His death a believing sinner also dies to sin and spiritual death.<sup>4</sup> This is the base line from which the believer grows in the faith. If salvation is considered a process in as much as it is bound and measured by time, believing in Christ’s work constitutes the first step, namely, justification, whereby a believing sinner is declared righteous.<sup>5</sup> It is at this point, as 2 Tim 2 makes clear, that a believer has eternal life.

### *Eternal Life*

Eternal life, which is seen in 2 Tim 2 through συζήσομεν, is the present possession of the believer whereby they will enjoy never ending physical and spiritual life on the

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<sup>2</sup>Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998) 830.

<sup>3</sup>Paul states in 2 Cor 5:21: God “made the One not knowing sin [to be] sin for [ὑπὲρ] us, in order that we ourselves would be the righteousness of God in Him;” and in Gal 3:13: “Christ, becoming a curse for [ὑπὲρ] us, redeemed us from the curse of the law.” See also Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Heb 9:28; and 1 Pet 2:24.

<sup>4</sup>See also Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941) 373-83; Lewis Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (7 vols.; Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary, 1948) 3:55-76; Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (4 vols.; Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2004) 3:230-5 (where he lists twelve evidences for the substitutionary atonement); and Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 574-81.

<sup>5</sup>For more discussion on justification, see Berkhof, *Theology*, 510-23; Erickson, *Theology*, 968-74; and Geisler, *Theology*, 3:235-7.

new heavens and new earth.<sup>6</sup> The term ζωή αἰώνιος occurs forty times in the NT,<sup>7</sup> most notably in the Gospel of John, where it occurs seventeen times.

Several things can be noted here. First, the sole condition for eternal life is identification with Christ's substitutionary death on the cross; more specifically, without any role played by endurance, maturation, or works on the part of the believer.<sup>8</sup> As was seen in the exegesis and will be seen in the following sections, the issue of endurance is a completely distinct and separate idea than that of dying with Christ and the subsequent eternal life.

Second, eternal life is first and foremost set in the future, as evidenced by the future tense in the indicative. Nevertheless, and third, it is also a present possession that a believer owns. Harris notes: "These two aspects of eternal life, present and future, are closely associated in John 5:21-30... Whoever believes has eternal life in the present and will not face condemnatory judgment, but has already crossed over from death to life (v.

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<sup>6</sup>For a more detailed analysis, see W. Hall Harris, "A Theology of John's Writings," *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1994) 230-4.

<sup>7</sup>Matt 19:16; 19:29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3; Acts 13:46, 48; Rom 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 3:15; 5:11, 20; and Jude 21.

<sup>8</sup>Take a statement such as Erickson's: "Saving faith requires correct belief regarding the nature of God and what he has done. Correct belief is insufficient, however. There must also be active commitment of oneself to God." Erickson, *Theology*, 959. While a statement such as this is popular, especially among Reformed theologians, it seems to add more requirements to gaining eternal life than what Paul is saying here in 2 Timothy. As stated before, it seems best to see *faith* as merely believing, and it is that which affects justification. This thesis is attempting to demonstrate that when active commitment and works become involved, the conversation must turn necessarily to another topic such as sanctification, rewards, or lack thereof.

24).”<sup>9</sup> Fourth, it cannot be lost, an idea that will be expounded upon in the upcoming section on eternal security.

### *Endurance/Denial*

The question that then arises is: Once a believer receives eternal life, what is the result of that salvation in their lives? In the second couplet, ὑπομένομεν is translated *we endure*. Endurance in the context of 2 Timothy is remaining steadfast in the midst of persecution and trials, and Paul’s encouragement to Timothy to do so. To expand this to a broader theological definition, endurance is the act of maturing and growing in the faith which is evidenced outwardly by the willingness to undergo tests.<sup>10</sup> Endurance can also be considered to be an aspect of sanctification, which Geisler defines as the “continual process in the present by which God is *making* us righteous.”<sup>11</sup>

Knight notes that there always seems to be a connection between endurance and eschatology. At the very least, the “eschatological perspective of endurance is always in

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<sup>9</sup>The idea of a present possession is a purely Johannine thought. Harris continues: “In writing of eternal life as a future blessing in the age to come, John is in agreement with the Synoptic Gospels. The emphasis on eternal life as a present reality experienced by the believer differs from the Synoptics and is a unique contribution of John. These two are not disparate and contradictory; rather the future aspects of eternal life are a continuation of that aspect of eternal life experienced in the present.” Harris, “Theology,” 231.

<sup>10</sup>These tests can include a great number of things, including persecution and death for the sake of Christ. It may be most generically stated that a test is “an outward circumstance that presents a believer with difficulties, pain, and unpleasantness.” Paul Benware, *The Believer’s Payday* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002) 121.

<sup>11</sup>Geisler, *Theology*, 3:237, emphasis original. See also Berkhof, *Theology*, 527-44; and Erickson, *Theology*, 980-6.

view,” and “the expectation at the end of endurance is that of the end time situation.”<sup>12</sup> If this is the case, it should make sense that endurance, sanctification, maturation, perseverance, or whatever it is one wish to label it, has an eschatological reward to it. Sanctification, however, is not a necessary and automatic result of justification, as was seen in chaps. 3 and 4.

### *Reigning/Loss of Reigning*

In comparison to the information available on the three aforementioned doctrines, discussions on what it means to reign with Christ (συμβασιλεύσομεν) have been virtually, if not utterly, silent. Indeed, out of the entirety of his systematic theology, Erickson devotes one paragraph to this phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> To be sure, Scripture says less on this topic than it does other areas; however, it is not utterly silent. Therefore, it would behoove the believer to be aware of what the Bible teaches concerning the privilege and extent of reigning with Christ.

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<sup>12</sup>Knight continues: “Jesus endured the cross ‘for the joy that was set before him’ and ‘has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God’ (Heb. 12:2). Those who endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Mt. 10:22, 24:13; Mk. 13:13). Believers endured joyfully the spoiling of their possessions, ‘knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one’ (Heb. 10:32). The Christians of Hebrews are encouraged to patience ‘that, having done the will of God, you may receive the promise’ (Heb. 10:36). And that is seen not only in the ‘saving of the soul’ (Heb. 10:39), but also in the eschatological coming of God (Heb. 10:37). Likewise the man who truly endures temptation ‘shall receive the crown of life’ (James 1:12), for endurance is a proof of love to God and this crown is promised to all them that love the Lord.” George Knight, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1968) 120-1.

<sup>13</sup>Erickson, *Theology*, 967. Also see Geisler, who simply states in one place: “Christ’s disciples will reign with Him, each being rewarded according to his works.” Geisler, *Theology*, 4:562. He also remarks: “Reigning is a part of a believer’s reward, and he has already received eternal life, whether he is rewarded or not.” Geisler, *Theology*, 3:330. Berkhof, *Theology*, does not even mention it.

*The Privilege of Reigning with Christ*<sup>14</sup>

In chapter three, exegesis showed that while eternal life is solely dependant upon identifying with Christ's death, reigning with Him is dependant upon faithfulness and endurance in this life. Not all believers will share in this privilege. Benware mentions two kinds of inheritance: "The Scriptures speak of two future inheritances: one because we are children of God and one because we are *faithful* children of God."<sup>15</sup> This is not solely a NT concept, however. Considering the OT, Dillow notes: "The Israelite became an heir by birth, but due to disobedience he could forfeit the firstborn privilege. It was necessary that he obey if he would obtain what was promised."<sup>16</sup>

The first inheritance, then, is one that comes from believing in Christ's death and resurrection. It is the one spoken about in the first and last couplets in this statement. This is the inheritance written about by Paul when he writes: "And if you are of Christ, then you are the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29). And in the next chapter: "Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, also an heir

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<sup>14</sup>In addition to the following discussion, see also Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2004) 215-35.

<sup>15</sup>Benware continues: "The first inheritance is the future aspect of our salvation and is the guaranteed inheritance of all believers. The second inheritance is based on merit and may or may not be received by the believer. A believer can, therefore, possess the first inheritance but not possess the second one." Benware, *Payday*, 22, emphasis original. This author is deeply indebted to Paul Benware for not only the content of this section, but for introducing him to this concept during his undergraduate studies.

<sup>16</sup>Dillow continues: "We are therefore alerted to the fact that the inheritance is not something which comes automatically to all who are sons but only to those sons who are obedient. The inheritance was something in addition to salvation and was not equated with it. It was obtained by victorious perseverance and obedient faith." Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1993) 58-9. Dillow's entire discussion on *inheritance* can be found on pp. 43-92.

of God through Christ” (Gal 4:7). Passages such as this, which present inheritance as a guarantee, are ones that refer to the first inheritance.<sup>17</sup>

The second inheritance is one that can be lost due to unfaithfulness or sin which results in a lack of rewards. In 1 Cor 6:9-10;<sup>18</sup> Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; and Col 3:22-23, Paul writes about believers caught in sins who will lose their inheritance; and the first three explicitly discuss not inheriting the kingdom of God.<sup>19</sup>

Rom 8:16-17 is a passage where both inheritances are contrasted: “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs – on the one hand, heirs of God; but on the other hand, co-heirs of Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him] in order that we also may be glorified [with Him].”<sup>20</sup> Keeping this idea in mind, Paul’s discussion in 2 Tim 2 may become clearer. The eternal life of the first and fourth lines are certain, the privilege of reigning with Christ is conditional based upon how the believer lives their life here on earth.

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<sup>17</sup>The same thing can be said about the different uses of *salvation* (σωτηρία and σώζω), as well. If a passage speaks of a salvation that cannot be lost, it is probably in a context similar to this first inheritance. On the contrary, if a passage speaks of salvation that can be lost or unsure, it is speaking of the second, conditional, inheritance.

<sup>18</sup>Not all writers who would agree with the basic premise of this thesis would agree that 1 Cor 6 serves as an example of a lost inheritance. See René Lopez, “Does the Vice List in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Describe Believers or Unbelievers?,” [cited 7 Apr 2009]. Online: [http://www.scriptureunlocked.com/pdfs/ViceList1Cor6-9\\_10.pdf](http://www.scriptureunlocked.com/pdfs/ViceList1Cor6-9_10.pdf).

<sup>19</sup>This author believes that the *kingdom of God* in these passages refer to the Messianic Kingdom prophesied in Rev 20 and most of the OT prophets. Consequently, the view presented here fits best within a premillennial, if not solely a dispensational premillennial, view (again, see chap. 3, fn. 45 for resources which support a premillennial kingdom). In an amillennial scheme, this point becomes moot as there is no future kingdom as such in which a believer can reign. For a more thorough defense of this second inheritance, see Benware, *Payday*, 33-40.

<sup>20</sup>See Zane Hodges, *The Gospel under Siege* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Dallas, TX: Redención Viva, 1992) 127-41 for a discussion on this passage, as well as 2 Tim 2:12; Luke 19:11-27; and 1 Cor 6:9-10.

*The Extent of Reigning with Christ*

To what extent will believers from the church age reign? The NT speaks of several groups who will reign in the future. First, as demonstrated, the statement in 2 Tim 2 promises the privilege of reigning with Christ to those believers from the Church who have been faithful. The only indication the NT gives as to the timing of this reign is the kingdom, which is being equated here with the future millennial reign of Christ.

Second, in Rev 20:4-6, the NT notes that believers who died during Daniel's Seventieth Week will also reign.<sup>21</sup> Here, however, John comments that their reign will be for the thousand years (τὰ χίλια ἔτη). While no such temporal information was given for the reign of faithful believers, it seems that both groups are reigning with Christ during that time. In the case of the believers from Daniel's Seventieth Week, they exemplify 2 Tim 2:12 in that they endured to the point of martyrdom.

The third matter to consider is the mention of reigning in Rev 22:5b, which at this point is the eternal state: "And they will reign for ever and ever." Dillow notes: "Will these differences [of rewards] remain [for all eternity]? The answer seems to be yes. However, the biblical picture of the eternal state is of full joy for all who are there."<sup>22</sup> Since there is no indication that all will be ruling at this point, and in light of NT

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<sup>21</sup>Just as was the case with the Messianic Kingdom, defense of the premillennial view of Daniel's Seventieth Week is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further reading, see Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2006) 293-320; and Alva McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks* (Winona Lake, IL: BMH Books, 1969).

<sup>22</sup>Dillow continues, quoting Rev 22:3-5; 21:4, then: "It seems that on the authority of these and similar verses, when combined with the passages which stress differing rewards, we may confidently affirm that in eternity everyone's cup will be full, but the cups will be of different sizes. No one will enter eternity future with regret or mourning or pain... While the faithful Christian will enjoy richer relationship and privilege with His King throughout eternity than the unfaithful, the predominate feeling for all will be joy and gratitude." Dillow, *Reign*, 599.

teaching, including 2 Tim 2 and Rev 20, it seems best to conclude that only those who were given the privilege to reign will be reigning for all eternity. All others will “merely” be citizens of the eternal state.<sup>23</sup>

*Luke 19:11-28*

The parable of the minas in Luke 19 serves as an excellent illustration of this concept. In this parable, Jesus tells the story of a nobleman who travels to a far country in order to receive the official authority to rule. Two groups of characters then emerge. The first group consists of ten of the nobleman’s slaves, to whom he gives ten minas each, with a charge to do business with them. The second group consists of citizens of the country who did not want the nobleman to rule.

After returning, having received the authority to rule, the nobleman called his slaves together. In judging their performance with his minas, he rewards them with rulership of cities in the kingdom in direct proportion to their work with the minas. When the third slave approached, having buried his mina and having no increase in profit, his mina is taken away and given to the one who was put in charge of ten cities. It is striking to note that the third slave is still considered a slave, yet a worthless one, and

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<sup>23</sup>Benware makes an argument from the use of δοῦλος in Rev 22:3. In a section entitled “Are All Christians Bond Slaves?,” he notes: “In one sense, ‘yes,’ all believers are bond slaves. The truth of *redemption* makes it abundantly clear that all believers have been purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ... This is the positional status of all believers... However, a ‘no’ is part of the answer. Not all believers fit the New Testament profile of an authentic bond slave. In the New Testament, a true and genuine bond slave has submitted himself to the will of his master and makes no claim of personal rights... There is an important narrow sense to the word ‘bond slave.’ A true believer may be a good one or an evil one. In the practical sense, a bad bond slave is no bond slave at all. A purchased believer who does not submit his will to the Master is no bond servant at all. And this is the issue that directly intersects with the rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.” Benware, *Payday*, 172-3, emphasis original. See also the entire discussion on pp. 169-75.

he is still contrasted with the citizens of the kingdom who ended up being slain for rejecting their rightful ruler.

In interpreting this parable, it can be said that Jesus is the nobleman who had to ascend to heaven in order to receive the official authority to rule over the earth as the physical descendent of David. While He is there, He has entrusted His work to His slaves, in other words, every believer. When Christ returns, He will reward believers in accordance with what they have done with what He has given them. This is in stark contrast to the citizens, the unbelievers, who will be slain at Christ's second coming. Even the believer who will have nothing to show for his one "mina" will be called a slave and not be killed, being granted entrance into the kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

### *Eternal Security*

With the apodosis of the final couplet (ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει) comes a return to commonplace soteriological issues. Eternal security is that work of God whereby a

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<sup>24</sup>See Benware, *Payday*, 161-68 for a fuller treatment of the doctrine of loss of rewards, as well as Paul Benware, *Luke* (EBC; Chicago, IL: Moody, 1985) 121-3; and Zane Hodges, *Grace in Eclipse* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2007) 63-72 for a treatment of the parable in Luke 19.

believer will not and cannot lose their eternal life.<sup>25</sup> Geisler singles out 2 Tim 2:12 as a “theological basis for eternal security” when he comments: “This is a particularly poignant text in support of eternal security, for it directly addresses the Arminian challenge by declaring that even if our belief falters, the Lord’s faithfulness will not. We can no more lose our salvation than God can cease being God.”<sup>26</sup>

### *The Believer’s Identification with Christ*

Speaking theologically, Paul says that believers are eternally secure because of their identification with Christ. In biblical terms, Christ remains faithful to His promise because He cannot deny Himself (ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται). There are two particular ways that a believer is inextricably linked with Christ.

First, the believer has died with Christ. This is especially striking given that this phrase is in the 2 Tim 2 passage. Because a believer has identified with Christ’s death through belief, Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to that believer. Berkhof notes:

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<sup>25</sup>See Geisler, *Theology*, 3:300-46 for an extensive treatment of this doctrine; however, let the reader beware of his equation of eternal security with perseverance of the saints. Also see Erickson, *Theology*, 996-1000, although again, he uses eternal security and perseverance interchangeably. Berkhof comments with the same mindset, even mentioning the misunderstandings that are present: “The doctrine of perseverance requires careful statement, especially in view of the fact that the term ‘perseverance of the saints’ is liable to misunderstanding. It should be noted first of all that the doctrine [of eternal security/perseverance of the saints] is not merely to the effect that the elect will certainly be saved in the end, though Augustine has given it that form, but teaches very specifically that they who have once been regenerated and effectually called by God to a state of grace, can never completely fall from that state and thus fail to attain to eternal salvation, though they may sometimes be overcome by evil and fall in sin. It is maintained that the life of regeneration and the habits that develop out of it in the way of sanctification can never entirely disappear.” In other words, it is “that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion.” Berkhof, *Theology*, 546. It would seem best, however, to consider this a theological merger, and that there is a biblical distinction between the two. For an in-depth defense of the merging of the two, see Grudem, *Theology*, 788-807.

<sup>26</sup>Geisler, *Theology*, 315. See passages such as John 6:35-47; 10:27-30; Rom 8:31-39; and 1 Pet 1:3-5; as well as Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1999) 381-4; and Charles Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1997) 126-32.

“In His atoning work Christ paid the price to purchase the sinner’s pardon and acceptance. His righteousness constitutes the perfect ground for the justification of the sinner, and it is impossible that one who is justified by the payment of such a perfect and efficacious price should again fall under condemnation.”<sup>27</sup>

Second, the believer has been baptized into the Church, the body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit’s ministry of baptism can be defined as the act of the Holy Spirit that places believers into union with Christ and other believers.<sup>28</sup> It is, as Berkhof states, the mystical union:

They who are united to Christ by faith become partakers of His Spirit, and thus become one body with Him... They share in the life of Christ, and because He lives they live also. It is impossible that they should again be removed from the body... The union is permanent, since it originates in a permanent and unchangeable cause, the free and eternal love of God.<sup>29</sup>

Thus it can be said that when Paul writes of Christ not being able to deny Himself, he is referring to the idea that Christ cannot deny a believer entrance into heaven due to the believer’s close union with Him. To deny a believer would be to deny Himself.

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<sup>27</sup>Berkhof, *Theology*, 547.

<sup>28</sup>Benware notes: “The Holy Spirit places the believer into the universal church, the ‘body of Christ’ by a spiritual baptism. By this means all true Christians are brought into organic union with Christ; a union that is essential for holy living. This ministry of the Holy Spirit automatically takes place at regeneration.” Paul Benware, “The Work of the Holy Spirit Today,” *The Fundamentals for the Twenty-First Century* (Mal Couch, ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999) 316.

<sup>29</sup>Berkhof, *Theology*, 547. For an in-depth look at the doctrine, see Chafer, *Theology*, 6:138-61.

*Conclusion*

This statement does not exist within an interpretive vacuum. To be sure, every Scripture is perspicuous in its own context, and this is no exception; however, this chapter attempted to demonstrate that the doctrines set forth in chaps. 3 and 4 are not particular or out of place when taking the whole of the NT into account. It can be seen that 2 Tim 2:11-13 deals with a wide range of soteriological issues from every step of the salvation process: the atonement, justification, eternal life, sanctification (and lack thereof), rewards (and lack thereof), eternal security, and the believer's position in Christ.

CHAPTER VI  
THE DOCTRINES DEMONSTRATED THROUGHOUT 2 TIM

This thesis has traced the historical development of interpretation of 2 Tim 2:11-13, offered its own exegesis and subsequent critique of those doctrines, and expounded upon the soteriological doctrines contained in the statement. The final issue that remains, then, is if these doctrines hold true in the context of 2 Timothy as a whole. As 2:11-13 acts as a cornerstone to Paul's argument for the book, it should be no surprise if Paul's other illustrations and case studies in the letter are in line with it.

*Substitutionary Atonement*

Since this epistle is an encouragement to Timothy to endure suffering and hardship, any mention of Christ's substitutionary atonement or how it is applied occurs in passing. Paul writes in 1:10 that "our Savior Jesus Christ on the one hand abolished death, but on the other hand brought life and immortality to light through the gospel [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον]," which is seen in the preceding verses as "[God,] who saved and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before eternity" (v. 9). In v. 12, God is the object of belief: "For I know in Whom I have believed..." Later in the epistle, Paul

regards salvation as “through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (3:15), the One who is “risen from the dead... according to my gospel [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον]” (2:8).<sup>1</sup>

### *Eternal Life*

Paul writes in 1:9 that a believer’s salvation and calling is not contingent upon anything they can do: “[God,] who saved and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.” And, as was seen above, v. 10 discusses the “life” and “immortality” (ἡ ἀφθαρσία) brought through the gospel.<sup>2</sup> Later in that paragraph, Paul states that he not only knows in Whom he has believed, but that he is confident that God will make good on His promise of eternal life: “For I know in Whom I have believed and I have been convinced that He is able to keep my deposit [ἡ παραθήκη] until that day” (1:12).<sup>3</sup>

In 2 Tim 2, Paul places the results of belief in eternity: “For this reason I endure all things on account of the called, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (v. 10). Finally, in the conclusion of the epistle, Paul recounts the hardships that he has had to endure for Christ’s sake, adding: “And the Lord

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<sup>1</sup>Elsewhere Paul writes about “belief,” indicating that it is what sets someone apart unto eternal life (1:5; 2:18; 4:7).

<sup>2</sup>Αφθαρσία occurs eight times in the NT, all Pauline (Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 15:42, 50, 53, 54; Eph 6:24; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 2:7). It means “the state of not being subject to decay/dissolution/interruption.” W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (BDAG) (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 155. The passages in Romans and 1 Corinthians talk about the eternal resurrection body that the believer will possess, and it would seem as though it is used in that sense here in 2 Timothy, as well.

<sup>3</sup>Παραθήκη is only used three times in the NT, all of which are in the PE (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12, 14). BDAG defines it as “property entrusted to another.” Ibid., 764. In 1 Tim 6:20 and 2 Tim 2:14, Paul is instructing Timothy to “guard the thing entrusted” to him. In 1 Tim 2:12, however, it is Paul that has given God *his* “thing to be entrusted,” as indicated with the possessive pronoun μου. As that makes for awkward English, it is translated in the thesis as *deposit*.

will deliver me from every evil work, and He will deliver [me] into His heavenly kingdom” (4:18).

### *Endurance*

The exegesis presented in chapter three demonstrated that a better interpretation of *will live with* and *will reign with* keeps the two future ideas distinct, thereby making reigning a privilege and reward of patiently enduring the trials of life. This also seems to be supported by Paul’s argument of the book. Indeed, Paul gives Timothy no less than thirty commands in this short letter.<sup>4</sup> It seems to follow, then, that part of enduring is carrying out these commands, and that they are not an inevitable outworking of faith.

### *Three examples of enduring*

In 2 Tim 2, in the immediate context of vv. 11-13, Paul gives three examples of the rewarding of faithfulness. The first is of a soldier who, while in active service, does not “entangle himself in the affairs of life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (v. 4). What is also interesting is that, as a “good soldier of Christ Jesus,” Paul mentions that the believer did not enlist himself, but was enlisted by Christ Jesus, which seems to indicate that the initial introduction into service was a passive idea, not requiring much on the part of the soldier (v. 3).

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<sup>4</sup>“Remember again” (1:6); “Do not be ashamed” (1:8); “Join with me” (1:8); Retain the standard of sound words” (1:13); “Keep the thing entrusted” (1:14); “Be strong” (2:1); “Entrust these things” (2:2); “Suffer hardship” (2:3); “Consider” (2:7); “Remember Jesus Christ” (2:8); “Remind them” (2:14); “Solemnly charge them” (2:14); “Be diligent” (2:15); “Avoid worldly, empty chatter” (2:16); “Flee youthful lusts” (2:22); “Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace” (2:22); “Refuse speculations” (2:23); “Realize this” (3:1); “Avoid such men” (3:5); “Continue” (3:14); “Become convinced” (3:14); “Preach the Word” (4:2); “Be ready” (4:2); “Reprove” (4:2); “Rebuke” (4:2); “Exhort” (4:2); “Be sober” (5:5); “Endure hardship” (5:5); “Do the work of an evangelist” (5:5); and “Fulfill your ministry” (5:5)

The second illustration is that of an athlete who “does not receive the prize unless he competes in accordance with the rules” (v. 5). Cheating does not make them less of an athlete, it simply disqualifies them from winning the prize, which, in athletics, is not guaranteed of all athletes, anyway. Third, Paul states that the “diligent farmer ought to receive the first fruits” of his harvest (v. 6). The crops are the benefit of the hard work that was invested in them. In contrast, a lazy farmer is still considered farmer. He just does not receive all that can, and should, be entitled to him. Likewise, the believer who works hard becomes the first to be rewarded for his good work.

#### *Paul endures*

Paul himself is currently going through the process of enduring. He writes: “I suffer hardship... I endure [ὑπομένω] all things” (2:9-10). Paul uses ὑπομένω, which he will use again in v. 12, to describe his current state. Paul also expresses his personal hope in 2 Tim 4: “I have fought the good fight, I have completed the course, I have kept the faith. In the future, the crown of righteousness is in store for me” (vv. 7-8). Paul, having patiently endured in his life, had a reward coming to him. It is not the reward of eternal life, but the reward that comes with being faithful in that gospel. Everyone who is looking for Christ’s appearing will be receiving the crown, as well. If crowns were given to all believers, then only those who are looking for Christ’s appearing could be granted assurance of their salvation.

*Paul charges Timothy to endure*

A verse that captures the theme of 2 Tim, as well as the context of 2:11-13, is 2:15: “Be diligent [the aorist imperative σπούδασον] to present yourself approved to God [as] an unashamed worker.” Here is the crux of the matter. Paul not only believes that Timothy has eternal life, he is sure of it (1:5).<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Timothy must now endure and persevere, not to prove to himself and others that he is indeed a believer, but so that he may stand before God approved by Him and unashamed as to how he lived his life. As was noted in the exegesis in chapter three of this thesis, the issue of endurance and works has nothing to do with the matter of eternal life. The result of *being diligent*, then, is being able to stand before Christ at the Judgment Seat unashamed, and consequently being given the opportunity to rule with Christ.

Continuing on, Paul writes of honorable and dishonorable vessels in 2:20-21: “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from these things, He will be a vessel for [εἰς] honor, sanctified and useful to the Master.” On the other hand, when a believer does not cleanse themselves from the dishonorable, they are not being sanctified, and they are not useful to the Master. In Paul’s mind, there is a choice for the believer whether or not to endure, be diligent, and to cleanse oneself.

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<sup>5</sup>Paul uses the same word to describe his certainty of Timothy’s belief as he does to describe the certainty of God keeping his deposit safe (1:12): πέπεισμαι. Not only does this speak to the certainty of Timothy’s belief in light of commands to endure, but it also seems to indicate that assurance (both introspective and what is noticeable to other believers) is not merely subjective.

In 4:5, Paul calls on Timothy to “endure hardship” (κακοπαθέω). It is the same word Paul uses in 2:9 to describe his current status.<sup>6</sup> While it is a different word than ὑπομένω, which is used elsewhere in the letter, the thrust behind it is the same: maturing in, and working out, one’s faith so that would be a useful vessel of the Master. Paul states unequivocally that this involves persecution (3:12).

### *Personal case studies*

In this deeply personal letter from Paul to his protégé Timothy, the former discusses several specific examples of people who are enduring, as well as some that are not. The first two examples of a mature faith are Timothy’s own mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois (1:5). The third mentioned is Onesiphorus, who not only helped the church in Ephesus, but encouraged Paul during his Roman imprisonment (1:16-18). In his conclusion in 2 Tim 4, Paul mentions several people by name, some in a positive light, and others in a negative one. Those who Paul mentions favorably with regard to enduring for the sake of the ministry are Crescens (v. 10), Titus (v. 10), Luke, Mark (v. 11), and Tychicus (v. 11).

### *Reigning*

Other than the crown of righteousness mentioned in 4:8, Paul does not discuss reigning and rewards. Crowns are one of the rewards that come with being a faithful

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<sup>6</sup>The only other mention in the NT is in Jas 5:13.

believer.<sup>7</sup> Benware notes: “It should be emphasized that the ‘crown’ is not looking at the positional standing of the believer in Christ but rather focuses on what comes to a believer because of meritorious work.”<sup>8</sup> There are four different crowns spoken of by the NT authors (1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4), and all are gained by doing something beyond believing in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

### *Denial*

Denial takes on several forms in 2 Timothy, yet the word ἀρνέομαι only occurs in one other verse (3:5), and not in reference to a believer. Nevertheless, Paul mentions several individuals by name that fit the description of denial and unfaithfulness as presented in 2:11-13.

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<sup>7</sup>There are two words for *crown* in the NT: διάδημα and στέφανος. The former is used three times (Rev 12:3; 13:1; 19:12), and it is used specifically with an emphasis on inherent royalty. BDAG defines the latter: “a wreath made of foliage or designed to resemble foliage and worn by one of high status or held in high regard.” BDAG, 943. It is this latter crown that is given as a reward in competitions, and it is this word that is used to describe the crowns given to the faithful believer.

<sup>8</sup>Paul Benware, *The Believer’s Payday* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002) 120. See pp. 117-30 for a fuller discussion, as well as Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1993) 574-83.

<sup>9</sup>In order listed, winning souls to Christ earns the crown of exultation, loving the Lord’s appearing earns the crown of righteousness, persevering through tests earns the crown of life, and successfully shepherding the flock earns the crown of glory.

*The denials of Phygelus and Hermogenes*

In 1:15, Paul writes: “You know this, that everyone in Asia turned away from [ἀποστρέφω] me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”<sup>10</sup> Paul does not say what exactly these men did; however, several things are known. First, at this point in his ministry, Paul is under intense persecution, and being found in relation to Paul would result in the same. Second, he sometimes enters cities where no believer will come to his defense (cf. 4:16), and this may be what happened in Asia, as well. Third, Paul contrasts these men with Onesiphorus, who comforted Paul and came to his aid (vv. 16-18). Therefore, the most that can be said is that Phygelus and Hermogenes, along with those in Asia, deserted Paul. It seems difficult to believe that Paul would be disappointed if unbelievers did not come to his aid; rather, it seems more appropriate that he is recounting that fellow believers did not come to his defense.

*The denials of Hymenaeus and Philetus*

In 2 Tim 2, Paul mentions the actions of Hymenaeus and Philetus: “Of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus, such ones departing [ἀστοχέω] from the truth, saying the

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<sup>10</sup>Although ἀποστρέφω is used nine times in the NT, only three other passages shed light on what this word means in a context such as this: 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14; and Heb 12:25. In 2 Tim 4:4, Paul writes: “And... they will turn away [ἀποστρέφω] [their] ears from the truth.” In the context, Paul is telling Timothy about people whom he is to shepherd, reprove, rebuke, and exhort. It seems as though Timothy would only be discipling these people if they were believers. Therefore, believers are turning away from sound doctrine in order to pursue their own desires. Next, in Titus 1:13-14, Paul writes: “This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them severely, so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who are turning away from [ἀποστρέφω] the truth.” Paul is encouraging Titus to confront believers because they are drifting away from sound doctrine. Finally, Heb 12:25: “For if those who refuse the one who warned them upon the earth did not escape, must less we who are turning away from [ἀποστρέφω] the One from heaven.” This passage, also, is referring to believers who turn away from Christ. Taking into account these usages, especially considering that two of them are found in the PE, it would seem that Paul can use this verb in referring to believers.

resurrection has already come, and they upset the faith of some” (vv. 17-18).<sup>11</sup> Paul follows this with a quote from Num 16:5: “The Lord knows [ἐγνώ] those who are His.” This quotation is from the narrative of Korah’s rebellion, where Moses and Aaron are confronted with displeased Israelites in the wilderness.

Korah said to Moses and Aaron: “You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD” (Num 16:3, NASB). Moses, falling on his face, replied: “Tomorrow morning the LORD will show [עֲדַי] who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself” (v. 5, NASB).<sup>12</sup> Dillow notes: “[Paul] is not saying that the Lord

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<sup>11</sup>As with ἀποστρέφω, ἀστοχέω is not used much in the NT. In fact, it is only used three times, all in the PE (1 Tim 1:6; 6:21; 2 Tim 2:18). BDAG defines it as “to go astray by departing from moral or spiritual standards.” BDAG, 146. In 1 Tim 1:6, it refers to men who have turned aside from the goals of instruction Paul mentions in v. 5 in order to be teachers of the Law. In 1 Tim 6:21, Paul is warning Timothy to stay away from Gnosticism, which drew some away from the faith. Once again, it seems as though Paul uses this term to describe a believer’s jettison from the faith.

<sup>12</sup>Although the Hebrew עֲדַי means *to know* in the Qal, it seems to take on a different meaning here in the Hiphil. BDB defines the word in the Hiphil as *to make known, declare*. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (BDB) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006) 395. HALOT agrees, offering the following definitions of the Hiphil: *to let someone know something, to make known, to inform, to inform someone, to teach to*. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT) (New York, NY: E. J. Brill, 1995) 392. All the major translations render the word *show*; however, the translators of the LXX, knowing the definition of the word in the Qal, translated it literally as γινώσκω, and this is what Paul is quoting from. There is no way to reflect a Hiphil use in Greek without using a different verb altogether.

knows those who are truly regenerate in contrast to those who are not, implying that Hymenaeus was not regenerate... The incident is instructive.”<sup>13</sup>

In other words, Moses is recounting in Numbers a challenge to his leadership, and that God would make known who His chosen leaders were. Paul quotes this with the intent of showing an OT passage where God clearly shows who His teachers are. Just as Moses was remarking how God will demonstrate who is doing His work and are the leaders, so is Paul. Hymenaeus and Philetus, then, are members of the believing community, but they are not the leaders or teachers of God’s church that they claim to be, as demonstrated by their gross errors in doctrine.

#### *The denial of Demas*

In his closing remarks, Paul mentions two other specific people who have turned away. He writes in 4:10: “Demas deserted [ἐγκαταλείπω] me, loving the present age.” Paul also uses this word in v. 16 to describe how “everyone deserted [ἐγκαταλείπω]” him at his first defense. In this second passage, Paul is expressing his disappointment in the believers who could have come to his side in defense. It seems to make sense, as why would Paul expect unbelievers to come to his aid? Likewise, why would Paul keep counsel such as Demas, if he were an unbeliever? These, then, become examples of

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<sup>13</sup>Dillow continues to write, demonstrating the regenerate nature of Korah and his followers: “So Korah gathered many of the leaders of Israel against Moses. These leaders who joined him in the rebellion are called ‘leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown’ (16:2). They are defined in Num. 1:16 as the distinguished or illustrious. They were renowned for the wisdom of the age and therefore called upon for consultation in matters of importance pertaining to the tribes. They seem to consist of a national council, or diet, of a representative character. They led the nation in the offering of sacrifices (Num. 7), were set apart for the work of the tabernacle (Num. 8), and observed the Passover (Num. 9). These men are evidently the regenerate leaders of the nation!” Dillow, *Reign*, 335-6.

believers who are not enduring suffering and hardship for Christ, but are being unfaithful in their calling.<sup>14</sup>

### *Loss of Reigning*

Other than the consequences of denial mentioned in the immediately preceding section, Paul does not discuss the loss of reigning and rewards.

### *Eternal Security*

Paul does not explicit speak of eternal security in the letter; however, it is strongly implied through what Paul says in 1:12: “For I know in Whom I have believed and I have been convinced that He is able to keep my deposit until that day.” Paul realized that when he believed in Christ while traveling on the Damascus Road, the apostle had effectively “entrusted” his life to Christ. Paul is convinced that God will keep that deposit safe through that day of resurrection unto eternal life.

### *The Believer’s Identification with Christ*

Finally, there is one place, other than 2:11-13, that speaks of the believer’s identification with Christ. In 1:14, Paul writes: “Guard the treasure which has been entrusted through the Holy Spirit who dwells [ἐνοικέω] in us.” This is similar language to what Paul uses in 1 Cor 3:16: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and

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<sup>14</sup>See *ibid.*, 338-9 for more examples of denial from the PE; however, it should be noted that this author disagrees with Dillow’s treatment of the “knowledge of truth.” While he mentions Titus 1:1 as supporting his view, he does not mention that the phrase ἐπίγνωσις ἀλήθεια only occurs four times, all in the PE: 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1. Paul states in 1 Tim 2:4: “[God,] who desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of truth.” Both σωθῆναι and ἐλθεῖν are infinitives referring back to θέλει, which links them together as one idea.

the Spirit of God dwells [οἰκέω] in you?” Because the Spirit permanently indwells the believer, and baptizes them into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13), God is unable to deny a believer entrance into heaven, despite any level of unfaithfulness.

### *Conclusion*

In this letter to Timothy, Paul is giving final instructions to one of his sons of the faith. Throughout it, he is giving Timothy specific instructions and encouragement to endure hardship and suffering while maturing in the faith and shepherding others in their sanctification process. The quotation in 2:11-13 does not exist in a contextual vacuum. On the contrary, Paul reiterates these ideas constantly throughout the letter, giving specific examples and case studies demonstrating the ideas and doctrines set forth in those three verses.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to take a passage with heavy soteriological overtones, apply exegesis, and end up with the biblical theology of salvation that was presented in that passage.

#### *Summary*

It seems that every biblical passage has been interpreted and reinterpreted countless times since the days of its composition. The resources available to the student today are virtually inexhaustible: commentaries, articles, books, encyclopedias, and other various translated works of authors from the past two thousand years of church history. More often than not, these works build on what came before them, reiterating in newer language what has been assumed true all along.

Occasionally, however, authors will allow systematic theology to govern their exegesis instead of developing a biblical theology that comes from an exegetical study of that passage in its context. 2 Tim 2:11-13 is one such passage, and it is for this reason that this thesis employed the methodology that it did.

Historical views that have developed ever since the Church Fathers were researched and presented so as to ascertain how this passage has been interpreted throughout church history. In light of all that has been written, it seems as though this

passage never received ample treatment, except for the work of George Knight. Most authors did not expound at all upon the difference between *died with* and *endure*, or *will live with* and *will reign with*, let alone present an introductory theology of reigning.

For this reason, this thesis set forth a new exegesis of the passage in chapter three that attempted to show contextually, and in light of the Greek, what doctrines 2:11-13 sets forth. That exegesis was then used to critique and evaluate the historical views, supplementing them where they were correct, demonstrating how they were wrong if they were.

The final two chapters of the thesis dealt with the soteriological and eschatological doctrines presented in the passage. Chapter five summarized the doctrines of the substitutionary atonement, eternal life, endurance/denial, eternal security, and the believer's identification with Christ, as well as offered a beginning study into the biblical theology of reigning with Christ. In chapter six, 2 Tim as a whole was examined to see if those doctrines were reiterated within the letter. And as endurance and denial was a major theme of Paul's writing, encouragement to faithfulness, as well as examples of unfaithfulness abounded.

### *Final Considerations*

It can be concluded, then, that 2 Tim 2:11-13 does indeed form a compact doctrine of soteriology. Regardless of its origins, it was clearly meant to be a pithy statement that summarizes and teaches soteriological and eschatological principles.

The first couplet demonstrates that when someone believes in Christ's atoning sacrifice on the Christ, they are imparted with eternal life and then will spend all of

eternity with Him. According to this passage, the issue then becomes a decision of faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out the calling which God has given them. After his conversion on the Damascus Road, Paul proved himself to be faithful to that calling, and now he is writing to Timothy, his son of the faith, to be just as faithful. This faithfulness, or endurance as the passage puts it, results in the reward and privilege of reigning with Christ in the future. These rewards are given at the Judgment Seat of Christ and are in effect starting in the Messianic Kingdom throughout all of eternity.

Not all believers will be faithful to their calling. Some may drift away for a time only to return. Others fall away so hard that they never return to faithfulness. All the while, both groups are labeled believers in the NT. Their punishment and chastisement is not in the loss of eternal life, but a loss of fellowship and blessing in this life, and rewards and rulership in the one to come.

It can be said with certainty that those unfaithful believers will continue to have eternal life because of what the fourth couplet sets forth. When Paul writes concerning a believer being faithless, he is using a broad term that can have various subsets, including denial to endure for Christ's sake. When a believer is faithless, whichever category they fall into, Christ remains faithful to His promise of eternal life, because He remains faithful to Himself, and the believer will always be identified with Christ in that way.

Endurance and the subsequent rewards are not necessary to indicate a true saving faith, nor are they an inevitable part of the believer's experience. It requires diligent effort, and Paul demonstrates in 2 Tim that some believers succeed while others do not. Eternal life is solely based upon Christ's work on the cross; that is where that judgment

was, and that is where it stays. Blessing and rewards, however, are a result of how the believer responds to that free gift of grace God has given him.

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