



After the Apostles: God-breathed Scriptures, Godly Leaders

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Great Fire of Rome July 19, 64 A.D.





Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. (Tacitus)



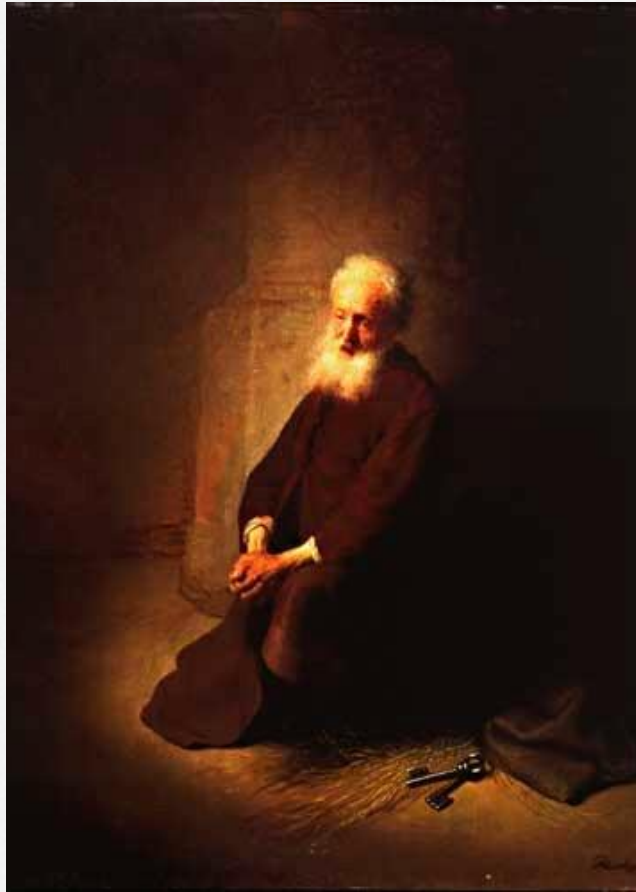
“Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards, as he himself had desired to suffer.”
(Origen)

“When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will ... carry you where you do not want to go.”
(John 21:18)

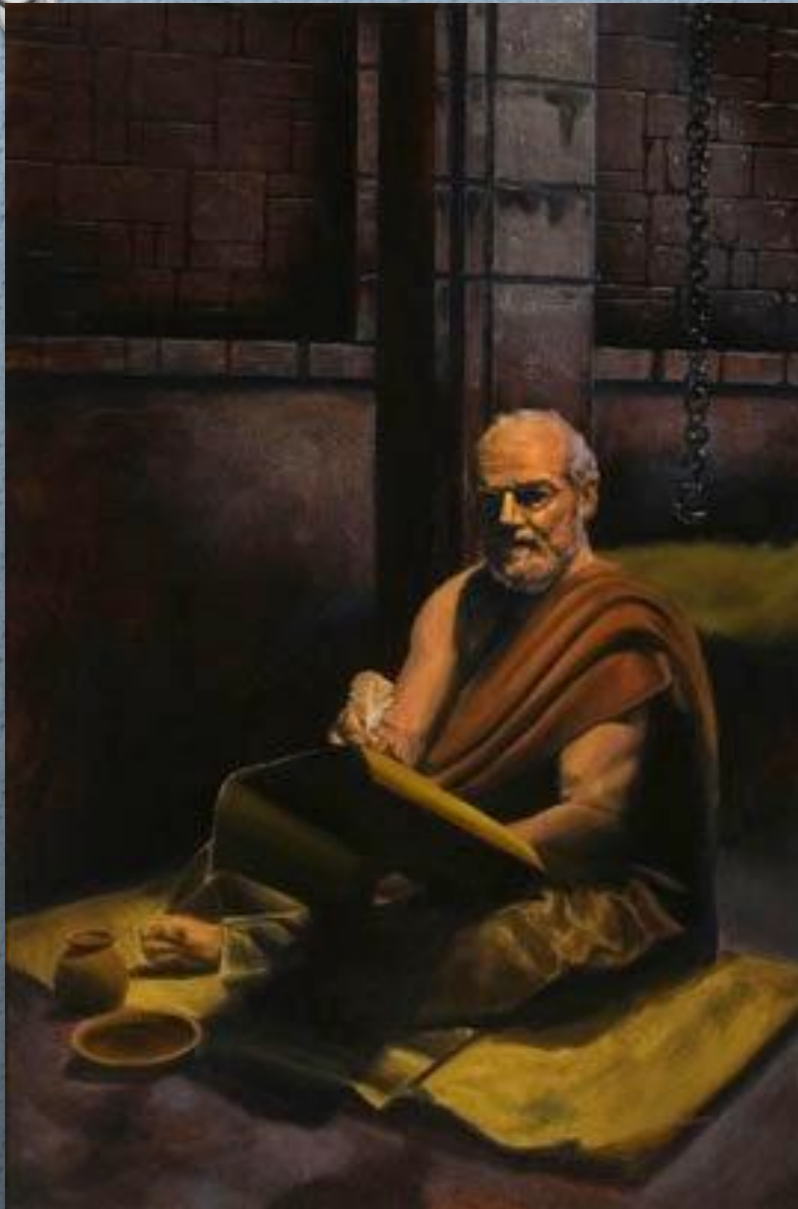


Paul was beheaded in Rome, according to to church historian Eusebius. As a Roman citizen, he could not be crucified.

Departure time



I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.
(2 Peter 1:14-15)



Departure time

I am already being
poured out as a drink
offering, and the time
of my departure has
come. I have fought
the good fight, I have
finished the race, I
have kept the faith.
(2 Timothy 4:6-7)

False teachers

- ... having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power... always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth... these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. (2 Timothy 3:7-8)
- There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter 2:1)

Would Christianity vanish?

- You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me. (2 Tim 1:15)
- Ferocious persecution, leaders in prison and scheduled for execution, followers in disarray and distancing themselves from apostles, false teachers trying to turn Jesus into another pagan myth or Jewish sect.
- “To every eye but that of faith it must have appeared just then as if the gospel were on the eve of extinction.” (C.F.D. Moule)

After the apostles

How would the church survive and continue as “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15)?

- **God-breathed Scriptures** would witness to Jesus and provide the standard of truth for all generations to come.
- **Godly leaders** in each generation would guard this treasure, preach the Word, and pass the faith to a new generation.

Spirit-authored Scripture

And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

God-breathed and profitable

¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:14-17)



Guard the treasure

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. (1 Tim 6:20)

Godly leaders

- Follow godly leaders.
- Be a godly leader.
- Equip godly leaders for new groups and each new generation.

Follow godly leaders

- **Family leaders:** I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. (2 Timothy 1:5)
- **Church leaders:** You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

Be a godly leader

- Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)
- Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2)

Don't fit in. Stand out!

- Then you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. (1 Timothy 4:6)
- Times will be evil and people will be evil, but you must be different.
- Paul repeated describes how the world will behave in the last days and then says, “But you!”

But you!

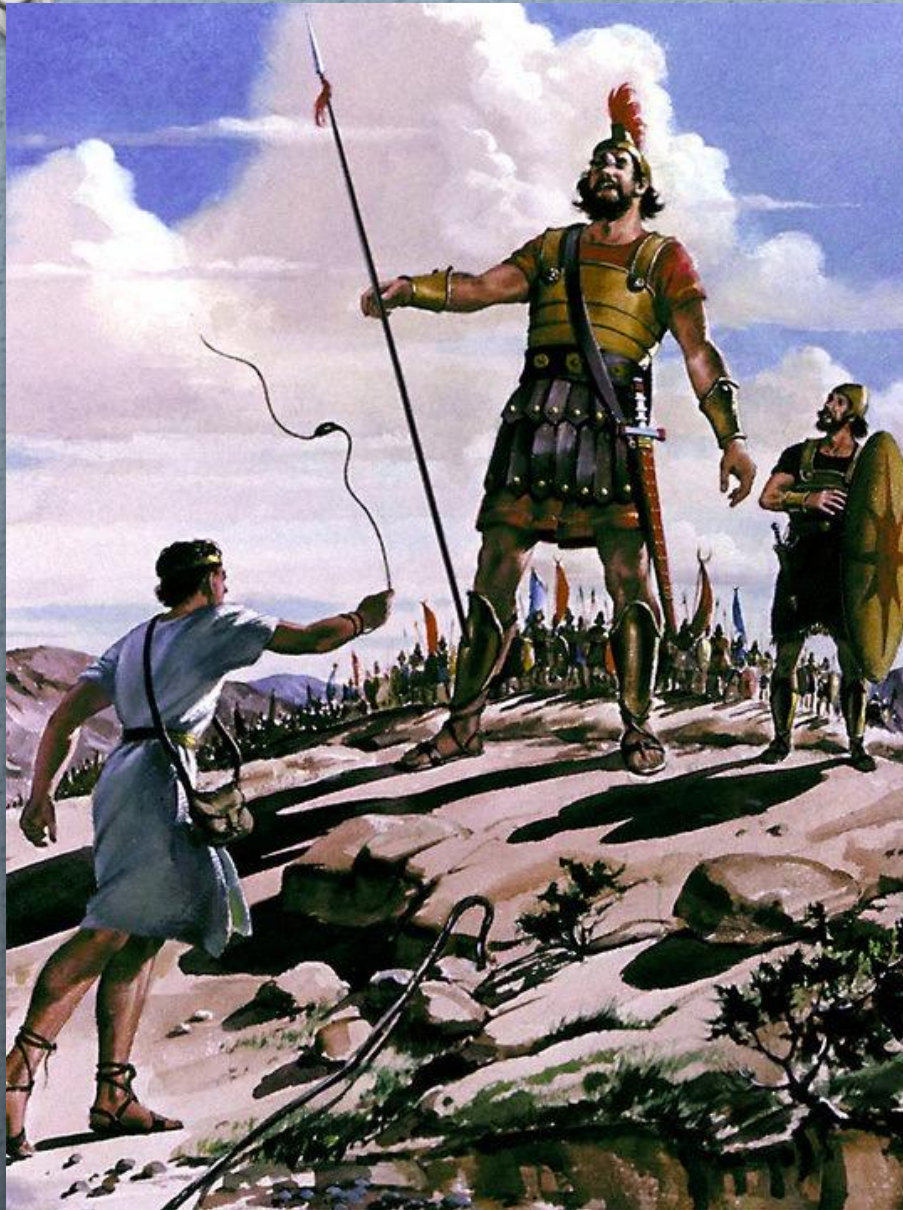
In the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power... always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth... You, however, [su de: **but you**] have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings. (1 Tim 3:1-11)

But you!

Evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you [su de, **but you**], continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:13-15)

But you!

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season... For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you [su de, **but you**] always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (4:3-5)



- David stood up for God and His people when all others would not.
- David's mighty men held their ground against enemy armies, even when all others fled.
- They awakened others' courage.

Equip godly leaders

- What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Appoint elders and deacons whose faith, character, and families are worthy of being reproduced. (1 Timothy 3)
- Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor. (1 Tim 5:17)

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If the Tiber reaches the walls... If the earth quakes, if there is famine, if there is plague, they cry at once, “The Christians to the lions!” (Tertullian)

God is able to guard, and he enables you to guard treasure.

I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

(2 Timothy 1:12-14)

Will Christianity vanish?

We may have to watch an increasing apostasy in the church, as our generation abandons the faith of its fathers. Do not be afraid! God will never allow the light of the gospel to be finally extinguished. In entrusting the deposit to our hands, he has not taken his own hands off it. He is himself its final guardian, and *he* will preserve the truth he has committed to the church...

Guard it faithfully. Spread it actively. Suffer for it bravely. This is our threefold duty. (John Stott)