

Weekly Scripture and Sermon Study: History & Context Guide
2 Timothy 2:14-26

History, Culture, & Context

In this section of 2 Timothy, Paul warns Timothy about false teachers and instructs him on how to resist and respond to them.

In vv. 14-19, Paul urges Timothy to instruct the believers to “stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them.” This means arguing over unimportant details or having foolish discussions. This was one of the problems with “false teachers”, as they caused strife in the church by their quibbling over unimportant details (see 1 Timothy 6:3-5). In verse 17, Paul illustrates Hymenaeus and Philetus as examples of those that have “...left the path of truth, claiming that the resurrection of the dead has already occurred; in this way, they have turned some people away from their faith.” Hymenaeus was also mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20, where Paul turns him over to Satan because his false teaching was destroying people’s faith.



The NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible commentary for v. 18 explains, “In contrast to the present experience of the Spirit, believers’ future bodily resurrection and future specific climax to history were barely conceivable in Greek thought. The false teachers modified a key element of the gospel, possibly to fit their cultural perspective.”

In vv. 20-21, a metaphor of a “large house” that contains utensils that are “made of gold and silver, while some are made of wood and clay” is used to portray both faithful and unfaithful members of the church.

In vv. 22-26, Paul implores Timothy to “shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace...” We are to “have nothing to do with senseless controversies” as they breed quarrels. Instead, we are to be “...kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness.” Paul indicates there is hope for those false teachers that “repent and come to know the Truth, and that they may escape the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

Questions to Consider

1. Why is it important to study the Word of God?
2. How are we to work through our disagreements with others? What should this look like?
3. How do you identify “false teaching”? In what ways do you correct “false teaching” with “Truth”?
4. Why is Hymenaeus and Philetus’ teaching of the resurrection so dangerous (see 1 Cor 15:12-19)?