

# Second Timothy 1:15-18

**“You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.”**

- This section of four verses:
  - Provides examples for Timothy of the good and the bad people in Paul’s ministry:
    - First, those who were ashamed of Paul and the Gospel – Asia, Phygelus, Hermogenes
    - Second, those who were NOT ashamed of Paul and the Gospel – Onesiphorus, and his household (also, from Asia)
  - Is part of the whole exhortation to Timothy that began in verse 1:3:
    - to embrace the true sincere faith that he has,
    - fan his gift into a flame,
    - not to fear suffering, but join with Jesus and Paul in suffering,
    - hold to the Truth of the Word of God
    - and, mostly, “do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.”
  - The decision that will have to be made as you study this is to answer the question,
    - Is it Personal: “Is Paul talking about people turning away from Paul or supporting Paul a personal issue as if it comes down to friendship or a business advantage or a social liability?”
    - Is it the Truth: “Is Paul talking about people who turn their back on Paul because they have forsaken the Truth, the Gospel and Jesus? And, those who support Paul are supporting Paul because they support the Truth, the Gospel and Jesus Christ?”
  - The characters:
    - Those who have “turned away”:
      - All in Asia
      - Phygelus
      - Hermogenes
    - Those who have “refreshed” Paul and were “not ashamed of his chains” for Jesus:
      - Onesiphorus
      - The household of Onesiphorus
  - The POINT to Timothy: Do not forsake me like Asia, Phygelus and Hermogenes. But, do refresh me and have no shame of me like Onesiphorus.
    - Since Timothy has spent years in Ephesus in Asia Timothy knows all these people personally and has interacted with them.
    - Timothy knows the circumstances. This is why when we read these verses we are left with questions without answers because the person to whom this letter was sent knows the people, the circumstances, the background information, the

first hand experiences and information and the rumors/hearsay. We do not even know:

- Who Phygelus, Hermogenes or Onesiphorus are.
  - Where they live. Ephesus? For sure, Asia.
  - How had they forsaken Paul? Words? Deeds? Legal charges? Lack of legal support?
  - We are left to piece together the understanding that they forsook both Paul and Jesus Christ? Or, just Paul after his arrest, but still held to the Gospel?
  - “ALL in Asia” means every believer in Asia? No, because several are going to be mentioned as faithful yet in Asia, and even in Ephesus including Timothy. And, the church that Timothy was leading. So, is “ALL” a hyperbole? An exaggeration for emphasis on the damage that has been done? A cry out of frustration and for self-pity? An emphasis on the importance of Timothy’s decision to remain faithful?
- The text will say that Timothy knows these people and the circumstances better than Paul does because Timothy is there in Ephesus with boots on the ground.
  - Interestingly even higher critics of this letter who reject the fact that Paul actually wrote this letter willingly accept these verse as authentic and from the pen of Paul because of the details and the need for the reader (Timothy) to already have personal information and experience to fill in the blanks and make sense of the letter.

2 Timothy 1:15 – “You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”

1492 [e]	3778 [e]	3754 [e]	654 [e]	1473 [e]	3956 [e]	3588 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]
Oidas	touto	hoti	apestraphēsan	me	pantes	hoi	en	tē
15 Οἶδας	τοῦτο	, ὅτι	ἀπεστράφησάν	με	πάντες	οἱ	ἐν	τῇ
You know	this	that	turned away from	me	all	those	in	-
V-RIA-2S	DPro-ANS	Conj	V-AIP-3P	PPro-A1S	Adj-NMP	Art-NMP	Prep	Art-DFS

773 [e]	3739 [e]	1510 [e]	5436 [e]	2532 [e]	2061 [e]
Asia	hōn	estin	Phygelos	kai	Hermogenēs
Ἀσία	, ὧν	ἐστίν	Φύγελος	καὶ	Ἑρμογένης .
Asia	among whom	are	Phygelus	and	Hermogenes
N-DFS	RelPro-GMP	V-PIA-3S	N-NMS	Conj	N-NMS

1. “You know” – two different words in 1:15 and 1:18
  - a. Here, in 1:15, “You know” from the Greek **oidas** refers to hearsay knowledge that had come from Rome to Ephesus. This was all Timothy could have known about what was happening.
  - b. 1:18, “You know” is from Greek **ginoskeis** and indicates Timothy had personal knowledge of the service Onesiphorus had provide him ad Paul in Ephesus.

- c. Paul is using this “You know” as an emphatic idiom with a tone of exhortation, to say something like, “Now, you know, the majority of people including some of our friends and church leaders, have decided NOT to do what I am commanding YOU TO DO!”
- 2. “in the province of Asia” is literally “in the Asia”.
  - a. The western half of Turkey today.
  - b. Likely refers to all of the province of Asia, but at least refers to Ephesus.
    - i. About this time 66-68 AD the Jewish wars against Rome have broken out (beginning in 66 AD). This is the time the faithful Christians who understood Jesus’ words to flee Jerusalem did so. The Apostle John left Jerusalem and settled in Ephesus right about this time. Even in John’s writing of 1, 2, 3 John we hear of divisions in the church and church leaders rejecting John himself, along with the message and John’s students that were sent to teach the churches.
  - c. Some commentators, though overwhelmingly rejected, suggest the reading “in Asia” should refer to Asians who had come from Ephesus (etc.) to find and support Paul in court became fainthearted and ashamed and fled back to Ephesus. That would mean the reading should be translated “from Asia” or “All of the believers who came from Asia to support me have turned away and returned home,....only Onesiphorus continued to look for me, find me and support me....and, he is now dead.”
- 3. “ALL in Asia”
  - a. Does this mean every believer in the province of Asia has deserted Paul? It could be, but seems unlikely it was a 100% disaster because:
    - i. Several are going to be mentioned later in this letter (4:19) as faithful yet in Asia and in Ephesus including Timothy and the church that Timothy was leading.
    - ii. Other options for interpreting and understanding Paul’s “all”:
      - 1. Is “ALL” a hyperbole?
      - 2. An exaggeration for emphasis on the damage that has been done?
      - 3. A cry out of frustration and depression?
      - 4. An emphasis on the importance of Timothy’s decision to remain faithful?
      - 5. Indeed, large numbers of people had turned away.
- 4. “turned away” or “deserted” is from **apostrepho** and refers to doctrinal apostasy
  - a. Since Paul makes it personal saying they have “turned away from me” we can assume they have personally rejected Paul and found new leadership. They have forsaken their alliance with Paul and aligned with others.
  - b. Since Paul is not “a personality preacher” or a self-promoter or an individual trying to start his own church or ministry, but one who totally lines up with Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the Church this would mean that “turning away” from Paul could mean nothing short of forsaking his teaching. At minimum, it means they have forsaken a portion of his teaching, which in reality (as seen in Galatia and Corinth) they have corrupted the truth and no longer have the pure Gospel.
  - c. This is the same verb used in this letter and Titus that refers to abandoning the Gospel.
    - i. 2 Timothy 4:4 – “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound[a] 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.

- ii. Titus 1:14 – “This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who **turn away from the truth**.”
- d. A different verb is used of deserting Paul for personal reasons in 2 Timothy 4:10: “For Demas, in love with this present world, **has deserted** me and gone to Thessalonica.
- 5. Phygelus and Hermogenes – we know nothing more about them. Likely, they were:
  - a. Known very well by Paul and Timothy
  - b. Friends at some level with Paul
  - c. “Christian Leaders” who had worked with Paul, under Paul
  - d. They were cowards (they had “fled” in the face of battle, something Paul does not want Timothy to do.)
  - e. Broke away from Paul and Paul’s doctrine to embrace a different teaching and lead people in a different direction
  - f. 2 Timothy 2:17-17 mentions two more – Hymenaeus and Philetus
  - g. These men – all four – had become Paul’s opposition in Ephesus and Asia. (John would have to deal with them soon.)

2 Timothy 1:16 – **“May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains,”**

	1325 [e]	1656 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	3588 [e]	3683 [e]		3624 [e]	3754 [e]	4178 [e]
	Dōē	eleos	ho	Kyrios	tō	Onēsiphorou		oikō	hoti	pollakis
16	Δόη	ἔλεος	ὁ	Κύριος	τῷ	Ὀνησιφόρου		οἴκῳ	, ὅτι	πολλάκις
	May grant	mercy	the	Lord	to the	of Onesiphorus		household	because	often
	V-AOA-3S	N-ANS	Art-NMS	N-NMS	Art-DMS	N-GMS		N-DMS	Conj	Adv

	1473 [e]	404 [e]		2532 [e]	3588 [e]	254 [e]	1473 [e]	3756 [e]	1870 [e]	
	me	anepsyxen		kai	tēn	halysin	mou	ouk	epaischyntē	
	με	ἀνέψυξεν	,	καὶ	τὴν	ἄλυσίν	μου	οὐκ	ἐπαισχύνθη	.
	me	he refreshed		and	the	chain	of me	not	he was ashamed of	
	PPro-A1S	V-AIA-3S		Conj	Art-AFS	N-AFS	PPro-G1S	Adv	V-AIP-3S	

1. “household of Onesiphorus”
  - a. It would seem Onesiphorus is NOT with his household in Ephesus otherwise if Onesiphorus was in Ephesus where Timothy is Paul would have written, “May the Lord grant mercy to Onesiphorus and his household.”:
    - i. Onesiphorus has been with Paul in Rome
    - ii. Onesiphorus does not appear to be with Paul any longer in Rome
    - iii. It is highly probable from what is written here, and later, that Onesiphorus is no longer alive.
    - iv. We could push this one step further and suggest that Onesiphorus died in Rome possibly by some form of persecution or execution for having been aligned with Paul.

- v. This would make Paul’s request for Timothy to come visit him even more treacherous.
  - vi. And, Timothy may have come and been arrested in the fall of 67 AD, but released after Nero’s death (by suicide fleeing his Praetorian Guard) on June 9, 68 AD which would line up perfectly with the 68 AD writing of the book of Hebrews as stated in Hebrews 13:23: “You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.”
  - vii. 2 Timothy 4:19 again mentions Onesiphorus’ family, but the man is not mentioned: “Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.”
2. “mercy” is for Onesiphorus’ household is present tense; but “mercy” for Onesiphorus’ in 1:18 is future tense. This is another fairly strong indication that Onesiphorus is no longer alive.
  3. “refreshed” – physically such as food and drink; emotionally such as visits in prison, support, encouragement.
    - a. Prisoners were supported by friends and family, not the Roman government
    - b. Onesiphorus refreshed Paul
  4. “not ashamed of my chains”
    - a. This means Onesiphorus was willing to risk his own reputation and life for Paul and Paul’s Gospel by visiting Paul a criminal in a Roman prison
    - b. This does NOT mean Onesiphorus was not embarrassed.

2 Timothy 1:17 – “**but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me—**“

235 [e]	1096 [e]	1722 [e]	4516 [e]	4709 [e]	2212 [e]	1473 [e]	2532 [e]	2147 [e]
alla	genomenos	en	Rhōmē	spoudaiōs	ezētēsen	me	kai	heuren
17 ἀλλὰ	γενόμενος	ἐν	Ῥώμῃ	, σπουδαίως	ἐζήτησέν	με	καὶ	εὔρεν .
But	having arrived	in	Rome	earnestly	he sought out	me	and	found [me]
Conj	V-APM-NMS	Prep	N-DFS	Adv	V-AIA-3S	PPro-A1S	Conj	V-AIA-3S

1. Onesiphorus was a faithful friend and a true believer.
2. Onesiphorus /**on-ay-sif-or-os**/ means “bringing advantage” or “bearer of profit”
  - a. From:
    - i. Onesimos – meaning “useful”
    - ii. Phero – meaning “to bear”, “carry”, “bring forth”
  - b. Onesimos was a slave of Philemon a Christian in Colossae, Asia who became a believer and followed Paul’s teaching. Onesimos /on-ay-sim-os/ means “useful”. From the word “onesis which means “use”, “profit”, “advantage”
3. Onesiphorus is being used by Paul as an example for Timothy.
4. “having arrived in Rome” most likely from Ephesus
5. “earnestly he searched for me” literally means “he looked diligently”
  - a. Paul was not easy to find among the many Roman prisoners.
  - b. Onesiphorus had to put forth effort and invest time and resources finding Paul
6. “found me”

2 Timothy 1:18 – “may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.”

1325 [e]	846 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	2147 [e]	1656 [e]	3844 [e]	2962 [e]	1722 [e]	1565 [e]	3588 [e]
Dōē	autō	ho	Kyrios	heurein	eleos	para	Kyriou	en	ekeinē	tē
18 Δώη	αὐτῷ	ὁ	Κύριος	εὐρεῖν	ἔλεος	παρὰ	Κυρίου	ἐν	ἐκείνῃ	τῇ
May grant	unto him	the	Lord	to find	mercy	from	[the] Lord	in	that	-
V-AOA-3S	PPro-DM3S	Art-NMS	N-NMS	V-ANA	N-ANS	Prep	N-GMS	Prep	DPro-DFS	Art-DFS

2250 [e]	2532 [e]	3745 [e]	1722 [e]	2181 [e]	1247 [e]	957 [e]	4771 [e]	1097 [e]
hēmera	kai	hosa	en	Ephesō	diēkonēsen	beltion	sy	ginōskeis
ἡμέρα !	καὶ	ὅσα	ἐν	Ἐφέσῳ	διηκόνησεν	βέλτιον ,	σύ	γινώσκεις .
day	And	how much	in	Ephesus	he served	very well	you	know
N-DFS	Conj	RelPro-ANP	Prep	N-DFS	V-AIA-3S	Adv-C	PPro-N2S	V-PIA-2S

1. “may the Lord grant...from the Lord...”
  - a. Two mentions of “the Lord” most likely is not as redundant in the Greek since the first was common phrase that would not have stumbled over the second mention of “Lord” in the same sentence.
  - b. Others say the first Lord is Jesus Christ, God the Son, seeking divine mercy for Onesiphorus from the Lord, God the Father.
2. “that day” is the Second Coming
  - a. This Day has already been mentioned in 1:12, “But 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.”
3. Onesiphorus’ behavior in Rome was just like his behavior back home in Ephesus when Paul and Timothy were together in Ephesus in 55-57 AD, and, then again, in 65-66 AD when Paul returned from Spain, but before he was arrested.
  - a. Timothy had experienced Onesiphorus’ hospitality and service in Ephesus himself.
4. “you know very well” is from the Greek *beltion* which is comparative meaning “better” as in “you know better than me” or “you know better than I can tell you”