

2 Timothy Lesson 8 Articles

Verse 4:1 **“the living and the dead”** refers to Jesus’ judgment of all conscious creation (cf. Phil. 2:10). Some will be alive at the time of the Second Coming (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13–18; some are with the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8) and some (the wicked) are in Hades (cf. Rev. 20:13; Matt. 11:23; Luke 16:23).¹

Verse 4:2 The church (Christian) must be ready to rebuke. Ambrose of Milan was one of the great figures of the early Church. He was an intimate friend of Theodosius, the Emperor, who was a Christian, but a man of violent temper. Ambrose never hesitated to tell the Emperor the truth. “Who,” he demanded, “will dare to tell you the truth if a priest does not dare?” Theodosius had appointed one of his close friends, Botherich, as governor of Thessalonica. Botherich, a good governor, had occasion to imprison a famous charioteer for infamous conduct. The popularity of these charioteers was incredible and the populace rose in a riot and murdered Botherich. Theodosius was mad with anger. Ambrose pled with him for discrimination in punishment, but Rufinus, his minister of state, deliberately inflamed his anger and Theodosius sent out orders for a massacre of vengeance. Later he countermanded the order, but too late for the new order to reach Thessalonica in time. The theatre was crammed to capacity with the doors shut, and the soldiers of Theodosius went to and fro slaughtering men, women and children for three hours. More than seven thousand people were killed. News of the massacre came back to Milan and when Theodosius presented himself at the Church service the next Sunday, Ambrose refused him admission. The Emperor pled for pardon. Eight months passed and again he came to Church. Again Ambrose refused him entry. In the end the Emperor of Rome had to lie prostrate on the ground with the penitents before he was allowed to worship with the Church again. In its great days the Church was fearless in rebuke.

In our personal relationships a word of warning and rebuke would often save a brother from sin and shipwreck. But, as someone has said, that word must always be spoken as “brother setting brother right.” It must be spoken with a consciousness of our common guilt. It is not our place to set ourselves up as moral judges of anyone; nonetheless it is our duty to speak that warning word when it needs to be spoken.²

¹ Utley, R. J. (2000). *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy* (Vol. Volume 9, p. 170). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

² Barclay, W. (Ed.). (1975). *The letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (pp. 205–206). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.