

Books & Parchments

by Wayne Goff

“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come – and the books, especially the parchments,” **2 Timothy 4:13.**

One wonders what “books” and “parchments” Paul has in mind here. We will never know for sure but they must have been precious to Paul since he was a man of few material possessions sitting in a Roman prison waiting to be executed. But with what earthly time he had left, he wanted to read and study something. It would not be hard to make a case for his own inspired writings or some Old Testament Scriptures. “Book” most likely refers to “scrolls” since the concept of bound books was not done yet. For example, Jesus was “handed the book of the prophet Isaiah” (Lk. 4:17). He read an excerpt from it, then “closed the book” and gave it back to the attendant and sat down (**Lk. 4:20**). In all these references the Greek term is **biblion** and means “scroll, papyrus, strip; Bible.”

Reading and studying God’s Word at *any time in life* is such a wonderful privilege and blessing. But it becomes even more valuable as the end of life on earth nears our horizon. Suddenly the eternal is more easily seen than the temporal.

I’m moving my library out of the office I have used for over twenty-five years. When I moved to Kansas City I had 50 boxes of books. I’m sure I have more than double that now. Poor Timothy couldn’t have brought those to me if I had been Paul! Trying to figure out which books to keep is a difficult thing, but space will not allow, and time is scarce, and older eyes can’t read everything. But it will take some time to make those final decisions, and Lord willing, I can do that during the rest of this year. *Selfishly* I would like to keep all the books I have accumulated, but that would be **selfish** of me. The good news is that I found some books I had lost, and some I had forgotten that I even owned!

Emily deserves a lot of credit for my library. She sacrificed financially when we were young and poor, finding a way to pay for my “book fever,” like all young preachers. Now I am trying to pay her back just a little bit by selling some of the books I no longer need. It’s a losing proposition since we cannot get back the same amount we paid for the books. But she has been loving, kind and patient toward me in all these things, and even now she is helping me organize my library in my “new” office at home. Every preacher should be so fortunate to have a “preacher’s wife” like mine.

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