

## Resources

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“An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy” by Matthew **Henry** in Volume 6 of *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*

“Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon” in *Calvin’s Commentaries* by John **Calvin** (1556)

“The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy” by Albert **Barnes** in *Barnes’ Notes on the Old & New Testaments* (1949)

*Second Timothy* by D. Edmond **Hiebert** (1958)

“Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews” by Alexander **Maclaren** in Volume 10 of *Maclaren’s Expositions of Holy Scripture* (1959)

“The Second Epistle to Timothy” by Wilbur **Wallis** in *The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (1971)

*Commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* by Ronald **Ward** (1974)

“1, 2 Timothy” by Ralph **Earle** in Volume 11 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (1978)

“The Second Epistle to Timothy” by C. Sumner **Wemp** in the *Liberty Commentary on the New Testament* (1978)

“Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles” by William **Hendriksen** in the *New Testament Commentary* (1979)

“2 Timothy” by A. Duane **Litfin** in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (1983)

*The Pastoral Epistles* by Homer **Kent** (1986)

“Focus on II Timothy and Titus” in *Biblical Viewpoint* (April 1987)

*1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* by Gordon **Fee** in the New International Biblical Commentary (1988)

*Be Faithful: 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* by Warren **Wiersbe** (1988)

*1, 2 Timothy; Titus* by Thomas **Lea** [2 Timothy by Lea] and Hayne Griffin in The New American Commentary (1992)

*The Pastoral Epistles* by George **Knight** in The New International Greek Testament Commentary (1992)

*1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* by R. Kent **Hughes** [1 & 2 Timothy by Hughes] & Bryan Chapell (2000)

*Pastoral Epistles* by William **Mounce** in the Word Biblical Commentary (2000)

“The Second Epistle to Timothy” by A. T. **Robertson** in *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (2000)

“2 Timothy” by S. M. **Baugh** in Volume 3 of the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (2002)

*The Letters to Timothy and Titus* by Philip **Towner** in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (2006)

*Commentary on 1-2 Timothy and Titus* by Andreas **Kostenberger** (2017)

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptural citations are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

## Introduction to 2 Timothy

The book of 2 Timothy is found among the Epistles (or letters) of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, it is one of the Pauline Epistles.<sup>2</sup> The Pauline epistles of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are commonly designated the “Pastoral Epistles” (a designation first given to these books in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century), having been written to two men, Timothy and Titus, who temporarily functioned as the “pastors” of the churches in the city of Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5) respectively.<sup>3</sup>

### Author

The human author of 2 Timothy is clearly the apostle Paul (1:1). Paul typically made use of an “amanuensis” (≈ secretary) to record the content of his epistles (see, for example, Romans 16:22). In the case of the Pastoral Epistles, the most likely amanuensis was Luke (see 2 Timothy 4:11).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The New Testament can be subdivided as follows: Gospels (Matthew-John), History (Acts), Epistles (Romans-Jude), and Prophecy (Revelation).

<sup>2</sup>The Epistles can be subdivided as follows: Pauline Epistles (Romans-Philemon) and General (or Non-Pauline) Epistles (Hebrews-Jude). D. Edmond Hiebert (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2:23) subdivides the Pauline Epistles as follows: Soteriological [doctrine of salvation] Group (Romans-Galatians), Christological [doctrine of Christ] Group (Ephesians-Colossians and Philemon; the so-called “Prison Epistles”), Eschatological [doctrine of last things] Group (1 & 2 Thessalonians), and Ecclesiological [doctrine of the church] Group (1 Timothy-Titus; the so-called “Pastoral Epistles”).

<sup>3</sup>Technically, Timothy and Titus were not the pastors of these churches (the church in Ephesus already had pastors, Acts 20:17-38), but were Paul’s “apostolic representatives,” Paul having given them the temporary assignment of overseeing the congregations in these areas. Fee (p. 21) states in this regard: “It is a mistaken notion to view Timothy or Titus as model pastors for a local church. The letters simply have no such intent. Although it is true that Timothy and Titus carry full apostolic authority, in both cases they are itinerants on special assignment, there as Paul’s apostolic delegates, not as permanent resident pastors.” Hendriksen (p. 4) calls Timothy and Titus “vicars apostolic.” House (p. 46) calls Timothy “a legate to care for the church at Ephesus.” Timothy and Titus simply served in Paul’s place, providing the apostolic oversight that the churches in the first century needed until the completion of the New Testament canon.

<sup>4</sup>Many have noted the similarities in vocabulary between the Pastoral Epistles and Luke and Acts (see, for example, Mounce, pp. cxxvii-cxxviii; Fee, p. 26; and especially Knight, pp. 48-51).

## Recipient(s)

The primary recipient of 2 Timothy was clearly Timothy (1:2). The secondary recipients were the believers in the churches in the city of Ephesus to whom Timothy ministered (the “you” in 2 Timothy 4:22 is a second person plural).

Who was Timothy?<sup>5</sup> The first appearance of Timothy in Scripture is in the opening verses of Acts 16, where Paul (accompanied by Silas), during the early part of his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22), came to the town of Lystra (in modern-day Turkey) and made Timothy part of the second missionary team<sup>6</sup> (Luke would become the fourth member of the team soon thereafter). Timothy was already a believer at this time (Acts 16:1 calls him “a disciple”). When was he converted and who led him to the Lord? One possibility is that he was converted as a child and was led to the Lord by his mother, Eunice, and/or his grandmother, Lois (see 2 Timothy 3:14-15; cf. 2 Timothy 1:5). A more likely possibility is that he was converted during Paul’s visit to Lystra (Acts 14:6-23) during Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28).<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, Paul refers to Timothy as his “son” (2 Timothy 1:2 and 2:1; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 2:22, 1 Timothy 1:2, and 18, as well as 1 Corinthians 4:15 and Philemon 10). Fee (p. 1) suggests that Timothy’s mother and grandmother were also converted at this time. While Timothy’s mother and grandmother were believers, his father apparently was not (Acts 16:1).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>For an excellent biographical sketch of Timothy, see pages 89-103 of *In Paul’s Shadow* by Hiebert.

<sup>6</sup>According to Hiebert (*In Paul’s Shadow*, p. 94), Timothy was 20-22 years-old at the time.

<sup>7</sup>According to Ralph Earle (“1 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:349), the year was 47 A.D. Kent (p. 16) suggests some preparatory factors to Timothy’s conversion: “Because of the childhood training which Timothy had received in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:14, 15), in addition to the example of ‘unfeigned faith’ [2 Timothy 1:5, KJV] exhibited in his grandmother and mother, he was prepared for a receptive hearing of the gospel message. Timothy also had opportunity to witness Paul’s sufferings for the cause of Christ, since at Lystra occurred the stoning and extraordinary recovery of the apostle (Acts 14). Doubtless those factors all had a part in convincing young Timothy that Jesus was truly his Messiah.”

<sup>8</sup>The name, “Timothy” means “honoring God” (House, p. 46). Hiebert (*In Paul’s Shadow*, p. 91) gives a possible reason why his mother named him so: “When her son was born, Eunice hopefully called him ‘Timothy,’ meaning ‘honoring God.’ Determined to retrieve her

Not only did Timothy accompany Paul on his second missionary journey, but also on his third one (Acts 18:23f). Timothy was also with Paul during Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:16-31), as seen by Timothy's inclusion in the salutations of three of the four Prison Epistles (see Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, and Philemon 1). Most assume that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment and embarked on a fourth missionary journey<sup>9</sup>, accompanied once again by Timothy. While on the fourth journey, Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to combat the false teachers that were threatening the churches in that city (1 Timothy 1:3). While Timothy was in Ephesus, Paul wrote to him the epistles of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy.<sup>10</sup>

Physiologically, Timothy was frequently ill (see 1 Timothy 5:23). Psychologically, he may have been timid/easily intimidated.<sup>11</sup> Chronologically, he was likely in his

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disappointment with her marriage, she set herself to the sacred task of his godly training.”

<sup>9</sup>For one reconstruction of the fourth journey, see pages 1762-1763 of *The Zondervan NASB Study Bible*.

<sup>10</sup>That Timothy was still in Ephesus when Paul wrote the letter of 2 Timothy to him can be surmised by several clues: 1) At the conclusion of the letter, Paul sends greetings to the household of Onesiphorus (4:19), and earlier in the letter (in 1:16-18) Paul implies that Onesiphorus is from Ephesus; 2) According to 4:12, Paul sends Tychicus to Ephesus, presumably not only as the bearer of the letter, but also to take Timothy's place while Timothy comes to be with Paul in Rome (4:9 and 21); 3) Timothy was clearly in Ephesus when Paul wrote 1 Timothy to him (1 Timothy 1:3), and two of the false teachers Timothy was to combat in Ephesus, Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:20), are apparently still a problem there (see 2 Timothy 2:17 and 4:14-15); 4) At the conclusion of the letter, Paul sends greetings to Prisca (aka Priscilla) and Aquila (4:19), who, according to Acts 18:18-19 and 24-26, resided in Ephesus for a time (according to Romans 16:3, Prisca and Aquila were no longer in Ephesus, but in Rome; it is assumed that they later moved back to Ephesus); and 5) In 4:13, Paul asks Timothy to make a stopover in Troas, which was located on the route between Ephesus and Rome.

<sup>11</sup>While most, based on such passages as 1 Corinthians 16:10-11, 1 Timothy 4:12, and 2 Timothy 1:7-8, think that Timothy was timid, some think otherwise. Representative of the majority opinion is Hiebert (*In Paul's Shadow*, p. 97): “The warning [of 1 Corinthians 16:10-11] implies that Timothy was naturally somewhat timid and might allow himself to be browbeaten by some arrogant individual.” Representative of the minority opinion is Kent (p. 22): “The more I have studied these Pastoral Epistles, the less convinced I have become of Timothy's timidity. The tremendous confidence Paul reposed in Timothy, sending him to this most important field [Ephesus], reveals him to have been worthy to some degree at least of the title ‘man of God’ that

middle to late 30s when Paul wrote his epistles to him.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the mission to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), other special missions Paul sent Timothy on included missions to Macedonia (Acts 19:22), Corinth (1 Corinthians 4:17 and 16:10-11), Philippi (Philippians 2:19), and Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

According to Hebrews 13:23, Timothy was at some point imprisoned, presumably for his faith. According to tradition, he died a martyr's death.

While the primary recipient of the book of 2 Timothy was Timothy (the "your" in 4:22 is singular), its secondary recipient was the church at Ephesus (the "you" in 4:22 is plural). Ephesus was the leading city in the Roman province of Asia. It was located on the banks of the Aegean Sea, in modern Turkey. In Paul's day the city of Ephesus had a population of several hundred thousand.<sup>13</sup> Ephesus was famous for being the home of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the temple of the Greek goddess, Diana (also known as Artemis, her Latin name). You may recall that Paul caused quite a stir while in Ephesus because his ministry there severely curbed Diana worship, raising the ire of the Ephesian silversmiths (Acts 19:23-41). Today, the city of Ephesus lies in ruins.

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Paul uses of him (1 Tim. 6:11)." Fee (p. 2) concurs: "... [A] person of his youthfulness who could carry out (apparently alone) the earlier missions to Thessalonica and Corinth was probably not totally lacking in courage." Mounce (p. lviii) also concurs: "The often-painted picture of Timothy as a weak, timid person is not supported by the evidence. He was Paul's 'first lieutenant,' someone Paul felt comfortable sending into difficult situations, as he did repeatedly throughout Acts." Lea (n.p.) adds: "It is unlikely that anyone who had already accomplished the assignments previously mentioned lacked courage or forcefulness."

<sup>12</sup>According to Hiebert (*In Paul's Shadow*, p. 93), the Greek word used of Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12, translated "youthfulness" by the NASB, designates anyone under 40.

<sup>13</sup>Suggestions as to the population of the city of Ephesus in Paul's day vary. William Combs ("Acts & Pauline Epistles" class notes, p. 81) says 250,000. Curtis Vaughan (*Ephesians*, p. 15) says over a third of a million. Edward Roustio ("The Epistle to the Ephesians," in the *Liberty Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 503) says 340,000. Homer Kent, Jr. (*Ephesians: The Glory of the Church*, p. 5) says 250,000-500,000. Towner (p. 37) says 100,000.

Paul ministered in Ephesus very briefly at the end of his second missionary journey (see Acts 18:19-21) in the early 50s A.D. During his third missionary journey, he ministered in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31) in the mid-50s A.D. (see Acts 19:1-41), his longest stint in any one place during his three missionary journeys and likely the time during which the Ephesian church was started. He first went to the synagogue (as was his custom), preaching for 3 months (Acts 19:8). After encountering some resistance, he spent the next two years preaching in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10). At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul briefly met with the elders of the Ephesian church in Miletus (Acts 20:17-38). After (presumably) being released from his first Roman imprisonment (during which imprisonment he wrote the book of Ephesians to this church), Paul apparently took a fourth missionary journey, which included a stop in Ephesus (see 1 Timothy 1:3).

The believers in Ephesus were primarily Gentiles (see Ephesians 2:11, 3:1, and 4:17). Besides being overseen by Timothy (see 1 Timothy 1:3), according to tradition the church of Ephesus was later also overseen by the apostle John. The Ephesian church was the first of the seven churches of Asia addressed in Revelation 2-3 (see Revelation 2:1-7).

### **Date**

It is surmised by most that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment (a house arrest; see Acts 28:16-31), went on a fourth missionary journey, wrote the epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus while on the fourth journey, was rearrested<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Where was Paul when arrested? Perhaps the best guess is Troas (4:13). “[Troas] is a good possibility since [Paul] left important personal possessions (cloak, books, parchments; 4:13) in that city. If he underwent a quick, hostile seizure in Troas, then it is very likely that he was rushed off to Rome without an opportunity to contact his friends or to gather his things” (Gromacki, p. 302). “Paul had left his precious books and parchments, materials vitally necessary for his missionary labors, at Troas (4:13), suggesting that his departure from there had been hasty and perhaps involuntary. From this it may be conjectured that Troas was the place of arrest” (Hiebert, *Second Timothy*, p. 8). Another possibility, based on 1:4 and 4:14, is Ephesus. What led to Paul’s arrest? Perhaps Alexander the coppersmith agitated for it (see 4:14) once Christianity was declared an illegal religion by Nero in 64 A. D. following the burning of half of the city of Rome in July of that year, an event that Nero blamed on Christians.

and re-imprisoned<sup>15</sup> (in the infamous Mammertime Dungeon<sup>16</sup>), wrote the epistle of 2 Timothy during his second Roman imprisonment (that Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote 2 Timothy is seen by 1:8, 16-17, and 2:9), and was executed by being beheaded shortly afterwards (by Nero, Rome's emperor from 54-68 A.D.).<sup>17</sup> Most place the date of writing for 2 Timothy in the middle to late 60s A.D.<sup>18</sup> It was the last of the thirteen biblical books penned by Paul and was likely sent to Timothy by way of Tychicus (4:12).

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<sup>15</sup>Hiebert (*Second Timothy*, pp. 7-8) contrasts Paul's two imprisonments: "During the imprisonment in Acts 28 Paul was treated with considerable indulgence by the Roman government, being permitted to live 'in his own hired dwelling' (v. 30); now he is kept in close confinement and regarded as a 'malefactor' (1:16; 2:9). Then he was surrounded by a considerable circle of co-workers and friends (Acts 28:17-31; Col. 4:10-14; Phil. 1:13, 14); now he is almost alone (4:11) and former friends are turning from him (1:15). During the Acts 28 imprisonment he was freely accessible to all who wished to see him (v. 30); now even Onesiphorus could find him only after diligent search and at personal risk (1:16, 17). Then, as seen from the Prison Epistles, Paul confidently expected to be released (Phil. 1:25, 26; 2:24; Philemon 22); now he is looking forward to death, convinced that his end has come (4:6-8). Thus the situation reflected in II Timothy is vastly different from that during the first Roman imprisonment."

<sup>16</sup>Hughes (p. 169; cf. Hendriksen, p. 234) describes the Mammertime prison as "a dismal underground chamber with a single hole in the ceiling for light and air." Hiebert (*Second Timothy*, p. 48) calls it a "Well-Dungeon" and "a damp and chilly vaulted pit."

<sup>17</sup>Much of this information comes from the famous church historian Eusebius (quoted in Hendriksen, p. 27): "Luke also, who handed down the Acts of the apostles in writing, brought his narrative to a close by the statement that Paul spent two whole years in Rome in freedom, and preached the word of God without hindrance. Tradition has it that the apostle, having defended himself, was again sent upon the ministry of preaching, and coming a second time to the same city, suffered martyrdom under Nero. While he was being held in prison, he composed the second epistle to Timothy, at the same time signifying that his first defence had taken place and that his martyrdom was at hand."

<sup>18</sup>House (63 or 64); Fee and Stuart (64); Carson and Moo (64 or 65); Carson, Moo, and Morris (mid-60s); Knight and Gromacki (64-67); Kent (64-68); Barnes (65); Lea and Kostenberger (65 or 66); Earle and Hendriksen (65-67); Wallis (65-68); Hiebert and Wemp (66); Baugh (66-67); Litfin, Jensen, the *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, and MacArthur (67); Robertson and Thiessen (67 or 68); Martin (68).

## Occasion

What prompted Paul to write what he wrote in 2 Timothy when he wrote it? A combination of historical factors yields the answer to this question. First, Onesiphorus had come from Ephesus to see Paul in Rome (1:16-18) and (presumably) told Paul about conditions back in Ephesus. Based on 2:14-18, 23, 3:6-9, 13, and 4:3-4, it is clear that the church in Ephesus continued to be (see 1 Timothy 1:3-7, 18-20, 4:1-7, 6:3-5, and 20-21a) threatened by false teachers<sup>19</sup> (two of whom Paul singles out by name in 2:17; cf. 1 Timothy 1:20), something Paul foresaw back in Acts 20:29-30. Paul writes what he writes to strengthen Timothy's hand in his fight with these false teachers (accordingly, there is a strong emphasis in 2 Timothy on the ministry of the Word, in 1:13-14, 2:2, 15, 3:15-17, and 4:1-2).

Second, with the pronounced change in Nero's attitude toward Christians, a severe wave of persecution was starting to be unleashed, with Paul being one of the first in its path (1:8, 12, 16, and 2:9). Paul realized that Timothy in Ephesus would also be in its path (3:12). Thus, Paul also writes to fortify Timothy against the coming wave (see 1:8, 2:3, and 4:5).<sup>20</sup>

Third, Paul realized that his sojourn on earth was quickly coming to an end (see 4:6-7). By God's grace, he had escaped execution following his first trial (4:16-17). Not expecting to fare as well at his next trial, he sends Tychicus to Ephesus (4:12), presumably to take Timothy's place, so Timothy can join Paul in Rome ASAP (4:9 and 21). Paul writes 2 Timothy to urge Timothy to make this trek. Along the way, he was to pick up John Mark (4:11) and make a stop in Troas to retrieve Paul's cloak, what Hiebert (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2:357) calls "a sort of

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<sup>19</sup>The nature of the false teaching in Ephesus will be discussed in conjunction with comments on the verses in 2 Timothy that allude to it. Knight (pp. 11-12), Mounce (pp. lxix-lxxvi), and Towner (pp. 42-50) discuss it at length.

<sup>20</sup>Hebrews 13:23 speaks of Timothy being "released," the time and circumstances of which no one is certain. It is possible that this is speaking of an arrest (and perhaps imprisonment) Timothy experienced at the hands of Nero (when he came to be with Paul in Rome?) subsequent to the writing of 2 Timothy (if Hebrews was written after 2 Timothy). Gromacki (p. 307) rightly writes regarding Timothy's trek to Rome: "This would require an act of love and spiritual courage."

‘overall’ made of heavy material” (to provide warmth for Paul in his dark, damp dungeon of a cell during the upcoming winter; see 4:21) and books (4:13).<sup>21</sup> Whether Timothy and John Mark arrived in Rome in time to see Paul before his death remains an unanswered question.

### **Purpose**

Closely tied to the occasion of 2 Timothy is its purpose. In the discussion of the occasion of the epistle above, three purposes were identified: Paul wrote the epistle of 2 Timothy to 1) fortify Timothy against the false teachers in Ephesus; 2) fortify Timothy against the coming wave of persecution; and 3) summon Timothy to his side.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>In a case of history repeating itself, William Tyndale, while imprisoned in the castle of Vilvoorde (near what is today Brussels, Belgium) in the winter of 1535-1536 prior to his martyrdom, wrote (cited in Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2:358): “I believe, right worshipful, that you are not unaware of what may have been determined concerning me. Wherefore, I beg your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap, for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth, too, to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts also are worn out. He has a woollen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he has also warmer night-caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent to the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ; whose Spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen.” Charles Spurgeon, commenting on Paul’s request for his books in 4:13, once said: “He is inspired, yet he wants books. He has been preaching at least thirty years, yet he wants books. He’s seen the Lord, yet he wants books. He’s had a wider experience than most men, yet he wants books. He’s been caught up to heaven and has heard things that are unlawful to utter, yet he wants books. He’s written a major part of the New Testament, yet he wants books.”

<sup>22</sup>These purposes are reflected in the following interpreters: “The purpose of the letter is to charge Timothy to persevere in the ministry of the gospel—to fill the apostle’s immense gospel sandals” (Hughes, p. 170); “Paul’s main purpose in writing was to inspire and challenge Timothy to take up the torch of the gospel ministry left by the apostle” (Jensen, p. 394); “The purpose of 2

## Theme

Closely tied to the purpose of 2 Timothy is its theme. Following Wiersbe, who entitles his commentary on 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, “Be Faithful,” the theme of 2 Timothy is faithfulness. Paul wants Timothy to be faithful to the task he (and ultimately the Lord) had given him in Ephesus, in spite of the obstacles of false teachers and persecution, just as Paul had been faithful to the task God had given him (4:7). Litfin (p. 749) accordingly states: “The primary theme of the letter is the need for faithfulness in the face of hardship.”

## Structure

Due to its nature, the epistle of 2 Timothy does not easily yield a tidy outline. Mounce (p. cxxxvi) states in this regard: “Because of the intent of 2 Timothy, its structure is less pronounced. It is an affectionate, personal letter and is more flowing.” He also states (p. 500): “Much of 2 Timothy is stream of consciousness, and it is difficult and not always helpful to divide the letter into smaller divisions.” Hendriksen (p. 218) likewise adds: “There are no sharp divisions. Rather, the emphasis gradually shifts from one point to another. When a new point is made, the old one is not entirely relinquished. The thoughts overlap like shingles on a roof.”

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Timothy was to encourage Timothy in his ministry at Ephesus” (Litfin, p. 749); “Its main purpose was to strengthen Timothy for the arduous task which Paul himself was about to relinquish” (Tenney, p. 341); “The epistle was intended to undergird and encourage Timothy in that dark hour” (Hiebert, *In Paul’s Shadow*, p. 102); “The primary reason for writing is simple—to call Timothy to his side. But the larger reason is this appeal to Timothy’s loyalty, especially in light of so many defections and Paul’s own imprisonment” (Fee, p. 13); “... Paul’s purpose in writing II Timothy may be summarized as follows: (1) To urge Timothy to come to Rome as soon as possible in view of the apostle’s impending departure from this life (4:9, 21; cf. 4:6-8). (2) To admonish him to keep clinging to the *sound doctrine*, defending it against all error, and enduring hardship as a good soldier. This second item is characteristic of the entire letter” (Hendriksen, pp. 43-44; emphasis his); “Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy for several reasons: (1) He wanted Timothy to finish up a few details in Ephesus and come to see him in Rome before he died. (2) In light of the fierceness of the opposition in Ephesus, he encouraged Timothy to remain true to him and to the gospel message, to willingly suffer for the gospel. (3) Paul also wanted to bring Timothy up to date on the activities and whereabouts of his coworkers” (Mounce, p. lxiv); “The immediate purpose of the letter was to summon Timothy (4:9, 11, 13, 21)” (Kent, p. 244).

The introduction (1:1-5) is a typical one, beginning with a salutation, identifying the writer and the recipient, along with a greeting (1:1-2), and ending with a thanksgiving (1:3-5).

The body of the letter (1:6-4:8) begins in 1:6 with an almost seamless segue between it and the introduction. The body is tied together by numerous exhortations from Paul to Timothy<sup>23</sup>: “kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you” (1:6); “do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel” (1:8); “retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me” (1:13); “guard ... the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*” (1:14); “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2:1); “the things which you have heard from me ... entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2:2); “suffer hardship with *me*” (2:3); “remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* ... not to wrangle about words” (2:14); “be diligent to present yourself approved to God ..., accurately handling the word of truth” (2:15); “avoid worldly *and* empty chatter” (2:16); “flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace” (2:22); “refuse foolish and ignorant speculations” (2:23); “avoid such men as these [those spoken of in 3:1-5a]” (3:5b); “continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of” (3:14); “preach the word” (4:2); and “be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (4:5).

The conclusion to the letter (4:9-22) is a somewhat typical one, consisting of a request for Timothy to join Paul in Rome, along with accompanying instructions (4:9, 11b, 13, and 21a), the status of Paul’s associates (4:10, 11a, 12, and 20), a warning regarding a man named Alexander (4:14-15), an update on Paul’s case (4:16-18), some greetings (4:19 and 21b), and a benediction (4:22).

### **Outstanding Characteristics**

Its testimony to the bond between belief and behavior. The Pastoral Epistles at points make explicit the connection between creed and conduct that is implicit in

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<sup>23</sup>“Paul’s constantly recurring directions to Timothy and Titus are a pervasive note in these letters [the letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus]” (Knight, p. 4). Wemp (p. 619) says that 2 Timothy “reads like a coach’s halftime pep-talk to a discouraged team.”

Scripture (it is implied, for example, in the way Paul structures many of his letters—such as Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians). Bad belief begets bad behavior (see 2:14, 16, 23, and 3:1-8, where the bad behavior of 3:1-5 is begotten by the bad belief of 3:6-8), while correct creed creates correct conduct (see 2:20-21, 3:10, and 16-17). Accordingly, the book of 2 Timothy emphasizes the need for sound or healthy doctrine<sup>24</sup> (1:13 and 4:3; cf. the book’s emphasis on the ministry of the Word, mentioned under “Occasion” above), contrasting it with unsound or unhealthy doctrine (2:17), as well as the need for sound or healthy behavior (2:19b, 21, and 3:17).

Paul’s final words.<sup>25</sup> As mentioned previously, the epistle of 2 Timothy was the last book Paul ever wrote. As such, its words have added weight or significance. “The deep conviction of the writer that he was about to be put to death for holding the Christian faith (4:6-8) is to be kept in mind in all discussions of this letter” (Carson, Moo, and Morris, p. 379).

### **Other Sources<sup>26</sup> Consulted for This Lesson**

*An Introduction to the New Testament: Volume 2: The Pauline Epistles* by D. Edmond Hiebert

*An Introduction to the New Testament* by D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris

*New Testament Survey* by Robert Gromacki

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<sup>24</sup>The emphasis on right belief in 2 Timothy is seen in 1:13 (“sound words”); 1:14 (“the treasure”); 2:2 (“the things which you have heard from me”); 2:15 (“the word of truth”); 2:18, 25, 3:7, 8, and 4:4 (“the truth”); 3:8 and 4:7 (“the faith”); 3:10 and 16 (“teaching”); 3:14 (“the things you have learned”); 4:2 (“instruction”); and 4:3 (“doctrine”).

<sup>25</sup>Hiebert (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2:350) calls 2 Timothy Paul’s “swan song,” as does Wemp (p. 619). Several writers call it Paul’s “last will and testament” (so Hughes, p. 170; Fee, p. 13; Hiebert, *Second Timothy*, p. 5; Jensen, p. 392; and Fee and Stuart, p. 379).

<sup>26</sup>Besides the resources listed at the start of this study.

*Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament* by H. Wayne House

*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts* (revised and updated edition)

*In Paul's Shadow: Friends & Foes of the Great Apostle* by D. Edmond Hiebert

*The Zondervan NASB Study Bible*

*The New Open Bible, Study Edition*

*A Concise New Testament Theology* by I. Howard Marshall

*Introduction to the New Testament* by Henry Thiessen

*Introducing the New Testament* by D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo

*How to Read the Bible Book by Book* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

*The Zondervan Handbook to the Bible*

*The MacArthur Bible Handbook* by John MacArthur

*The New Testament, Its Background, Growth, and Content* by Bruce Metzger

*Jensen's Survey of the New Testament* by Irving Jensen

*New Testament Survey* by Merrill Tenney

*Survey of the Scriptures, Part 3*, by Alfred Martin

# Introduction to 2 Timothy

## Teaching Outline

- I. The Book of 2 Timothy
  - A. An epistle
    - 1. Introduction (1:1-5)
    - 2. Body (1:6-4:8)
    - 3. Conclusion (4:9-22)
  - B. A Pauline epistle (ecclesiology)
  - C. A “Pastoral Epistle”
  
- II. The Human Author of 2 Timothy: Paul (1:1)
  - A. In Mammertime prison (1:8, 16, and 2:9) in Rome (1:17)
  - B. About to be martyred (4:6)
  
- III. The Recipients of 2 Timothy
  - A. The primary recipient: Timothy (1:2)
    - 1. His salvation
      - a. Won by Paul (Paul’s “son”—1:2 and 2:1; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:15 and 17, as well as Philemon 10)
      - b. Watered by his mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois (1:5 and 3:14)
    - 2. His service
      - a. Part of 2<sup>nd</sup> Pauline missionary journey
      - b. Part of 3<sup>rd</sup> Pauline missionary journey
      - c. (Part of 4<sup>th</sup> Pauline missionary journey)
        - (1). “Pastor” of churches in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3)
    - 3. Other
      - a. Geography: from Lystra (Acts 16:1)
      - b. Family: child of a mixed marriage (Acts 16:1)
      - c. Physiology: frequently ill (1 Timothy 5:23)
      - d. Psychology: timid (?)
      - e. Chronology: mid- to late 30s AD
  - B. The secondary recipients: Ephesian churches (4:22)
  
- IV. The Occasion of 2 Timothy: visit of Onesiphorus (1:16-18)

- V. The Purposes of 2 Timothy
  - A. Fight false teaching (2:17-18, et. al.; cf. Acts 20:29-30)
  - B. Be faithful in the face of persecution (1:8, 2:3, and 4:5)
  - C. Come see your father in the faith (4:9)

## 2 Timothy 1:1-11

### **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, (1:1)**

Paul begins the introduction of the epistle of 2 Timothy (1:1-5) in typical<sup>27</sup> fashion (cf. Ezra 7:12, Daniel 4:1, Acts 15:23, and 23:26) with a salutation (1:1-2), consisting of the naming of the writer (verse 1), the naming of the (primary) recipient (verse 2a), and a greeting (verse 2b).

Paul calls himself “**an apostle of Christ Jesus**”<sup>28</sup> (cf. 1:11). An apostle was literally a “sent one” (see John 13:16, where “one who is sent” is the Greek noun, *apostolos*). The New Testament apostles were sent on a mission (by the Lord Jesus Christ) with a message (the gospel). There were basically two categories of apostles in the early church. The more significant group consisted of “the Twelve” plus Paul.<sup>29</sup> The less significant group included such individuals as Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7), and James (Galatians 1:19). The main difference between the two groups is that the first were apostles in a more official sense, serving in that capacity for life and wherever they went

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<sup>27</sup>The epistles of Hebrews and 1 John are atypical in this regard.

<sup>28</sup>Hiebert (p. 20) casts light on the prominence of Christ in the salutation: “...[T]he name of Christ Jesus is mentioned three times. How Paul loved and gloried in that adorable name! The very thought of Him runs through all of his thinking and writing. He cannot move, think, or live without Him. Truly for Paul ‘to live is Christ’ (Phil. 1:21).”

<sup>29</sup>According to Robert Thomas (*Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, p. 77), to be an apostle in the official sense, one had to meet three criteria: 1) personal contact with Christ while on earth; 2) a witness of Christ’s resurrection; and 3) direct appointment by Christ. “Secondary” apostles (such as James) did not meet the third requirement. For Paul, all three requirements were met at the same time on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. For similar lists of requirements, see Hendriksen (pp. 50-51) and Knight (p. 58).

(Hendriksen, p. 50). Many interpreters see particular significance in Paul calling himself an apostle at the start of this epistle, an indicator that Paul had more than Timothy in mind when writing what he wrote.<sup>30</sup> Most likely, Paul is trying to strengthen Timothy's hand in the latter's fight with the false teachers at Ephesus by reminding the Ephesians that he (Paul) is an apostle (verse 1) and that Timothy has Paul's backing (Paul calls Timothy his "beloved son" in verse 2<sup>31</sup>).

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ "**by the will of God**" (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, and Colossians 1:1; see also "according to the commandment of God our Savior" in 1 Timothy 1:1 and Titus 1:3). Paul knew that God's will for his life was to be an apostle to the Gentiles because he was told so directly by the Lord (see Acts 22:14-15, 21, and 26:16-18). Kent (p. 246) rightly reminds us that the will of God for our lives, as it did for Paul's life, may include suffering: "The will of God which had constituted him an apostle also was leading him at the time of writing as a doomed prisoner in Rome to the end of his earthly career. Yet Paul had no misgivings about the will of God for his life. Just because suffering enters one's life, it is no indication that the individual is out of God's

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<sup>30</sup>... Paul intended that his letter also be read by and to the church in Ephesus, and ultimately by the church universal. If his writing was for Timothy alone, he would never have begun with such a formal and lofty assertion of his apostleship ..." (Hughes, p. 170). "In his typical fashion Paul began this letter identifying himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus, a reminder Timothy hardly needed. No doubt this is another indication that Paul knew he was writing first to Timothy but ultimately to a much wider audience" (Litfin, p. 749). "From the very preface we already perceive that Paul had not in view Timothy alone; otherwise he would not have employed such lofty titles in asserting his apostleship; for what purpose would it have served to employ these ornaments of language in writing to one who was fully convinced of the fact?" (Calvin, p. 182). "Although some find it unlikely that Paul would identify himself as an 'apostle of Christ Jesus' in a letter to a personal friend and colleague, this self-designation is in place when one realizes that Paul is not just writing as a friend but with the authority of an apostle to instruct and admonish Timothy about his ministry and his responsibilities ... and also to communicate to the Christians under Timothy's care the basis of authority for what Paul is asking Timothy to do ...." (Knight, p. 363). See also Mounce (pp. 463-464) in this regard. Remember, as was pointed out earlier (under Recipient(s) in the introduction to the letter), the "you" in 4:22 is a plural, pointing to the Ephesian church as a secondary recipient of the letter.

<sup>31</sup>"By this designation he not only testifies his love of Timothy, but procures respect and submission to him; because he wishes to be acknowledged in him, as one who may justly be called his son" (Calvin, p. 184).

will.”

Paul’s apostleship was not only by the will of God, but also “**according to the promise of life<sup>32</sup> in Christ Jesus**” (cf. Acts 13:23, 32-33, and 26:6-7) In other words, the message Paul was sent to proclaim as an apostle was the promise of life contained in the gospel (see Romans 1:1-2 and Titus 1:2-3), the good news that in and through Jesus Christ one may pass from death to life (John 5:24; cf. Romans 6:23 and 1 John 5:11-12). “As from the beginning God promised eternal life in Christ, so now he has appointed [Paul] to be the minister for proclaiming that promise” (Calvin, p. 183). The life Paul is speaking of (cf. verse 10) is eternal life, a quality of life, life at its fullest, “that which is life indeed” (1 Timothy 6:19). Knowing Christ as one’s Savior is truly living! This life includes both the present (i.e., sanctification) and future (i.e., glorification; see 1 John 2:25) spiritual life of the believer (see 1 Timothy 4:8).

### **To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (1:2)**

As mentioned in the lesson on the introduction to 2 Timothy (under “Recipient(s)”), the primary recipient of the epistle is Timothy. Paul calls Timothy “**my beloved son**” (cf. 2:1, as well as 1 Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 2:22, 1 Timothy 1:2, and 18). Timothy was Paul’s “**son**,” primarily in the sense that Paul was the human instrument God used to bring Timothy to faith in Christ.<sup>33</sup> That Paul calls Timothy his “**beloved**” son (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:17, as well as Romans 16:5, 8, 12, and 1 Corinthians 4:14) in this letter (contrast with “true child” in 1 Timothy 1:2) is testimony to the intimate nature of it in view of its historical circumstances.

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<sup>32</sup>Most interpreters take “of life” as an “objective genitive,” i.e., life is the object of the promise (Hiebert, p. 24: “the promise which had life as its contents”; cf. Knight, p. 364 and Hendriksen, p. 224).

<sup>33</sup>“The reason of the appellation is, that he had begotten him in Christ; for, although this honour belongs to God alone, yet it is also transferred to ministers, whose agency he employs for regenerating us” (Calvin, p. 184).

Paul's typical<sup>34</sup> greeting is "grace and peace"<sup>35</sup> (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, Titus 1:4, and Philemon 3). In 1 Timothy (1:2), and here in 2 Timothy, however, he adds mercy: "**grace, mercy, and peace**" (cf. 2 John 3).<sup>36</sup> What significance, if any, is there to the fact that Paul departs from his typical practice and includes "**mercy**" in his greeting here in 2 Timothy? Calvin (p. 184) suggests a reason: "The word *mercy*, which he employs here, is commonly left out by him in his ordinary salutations. I think that he introduced it, when he poured out his feelings with more than ordinary vehemence." Knight (p. 66) also suggests a reason: "... [I]t may well be that Paul sensed that Timothy needed this nuance of God's favor because he felt himself in special difficulty ...." Is there an interrelationship between grace, mercy, and peace? If there is, grace and mercy would be the cause of peace/peace the consequence of grace and mercy. In other words, grace and mercy would be the root, peace the fruit. As Hiebert (p. 26) writes: "'Peace' is the state of salvation and spiritual well-being which results from the experience of God's grace and mercy." Grace is getting the good one does not deserve<sup>37</sup>, while mercy is not getting the bad one does deserve. "**Peace**" includes both "peace with God" (Romans 5:1) and "the peace of God" (Philippians 4:7), with the second flowing from the first. Only one who is at peace with God (a believer) can experience the peace of God.

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<sup>34</sup>While this greeting was typical for Paul, it was atypical for his day. The typical greeting was *chairen* ("greetings"—Acts 15:23, 23:26, and James 1:1). Paul, however, was fond of using *charis* ("grace") instead. Commenting on Paul's greeting in Philippians (grace and peace), Gordon Fee, on page 70 of his commentary on Philippians (*Paul's Letter to the Philippians* in The New International Commentary on the New Testament), states: "Here is a marvelous example of Paul's 'turning into gospel' everything he sets his hand to."

<sup>35</sup>"Grace" was the typical Greek greeting, while "peace" (*shalom*) was the typical Jewish one. Both are mentioned in the benediction of Numbers 6:24-26, and one wonders if Paul had this particular passage in mind when giving this greeting.

<sup>36</sup>Jude also has a three-fold greeting, but instead of the three being grace, mercy, and peace, they are mercy, peace, and love (Jude 2). Galatians 6:16 also combines peace and mercy.

<sup>37</sup>"God's grace is his active favor bestowing the greatest gift upon those who have deserved the greatest punishment" (Hendriksen, p. 370).

The grace, mercy, and peace Paul wishes upon Timothy finds its source in both God the Father and God the Son (“**from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord**”). By combining the two under one preposition (“**from**”), Paul is implicitly affirming the deity of Christ.<sup>38</sup>

**I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, (1:3)**

Paul continues the introduction to the epistle of 2 Timothy (1:1-5) in typical fashion with a thanksgiving (1:3-5), thanking God for Timothy (though Paul does not explicitly state that it is Timothy he is thanking God for, one may reasonably infer so from the context). Notice that Paul directs his thanksgiving to the right Person, God (“**I thank God**”). Paul often thanked God for his readers (see Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4, Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, and Philemon 4, as well as 1 Thessalonians 2:13 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13). Paul remained a thankful person to the end, in spite of the circumstances he was facing when writing these words.

The God Paul thanked was One whom he served with a clear conscience (“**whom I serve with a clear conscience**”; cf. Acts 23:1 and 24:16). Though captive in body, Paul was free in spirit, free from the shackles of a guilty conscience<sup>39</sup> (free because of Christ, Hebrews 10:22), in spite of his pre-conversion past. The Greek verb translated “**serve**” by the NASB is the Greek verb for “worship” (cf. the same verb translated the same way in Romans 1:9, as well as the noun form translated “service of worship” in Romans 12:1). Serving God in the work of the ministry is one of the highest forms of worship.

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<sup>38</sup>“Through subtle literary devices Paul is making a christological statement about the relationship between God and Christ” (Mounce, p. 8 of his commentary on 1 Timothy). “The union of the two Persons under the government of the one preposition ‘from’ is strong circumstantial evidence concerning Paul’s faith in the true deity of Christ Jesus” (Hiebert, p. 27).

<sup>39</sup>One is reminded of the words of the hymn, “Faith of Our Fathers”: “Our fathers, chained in prisons dark, Were still in heart and conscience free.”

Paul's service for God was not unlike that of his ancestors ("**the way my forefathers did**"; cf. Acts 24:14).<sup>40</sup> With these words, Paul suggests a continuity between what he was doing in his day and what his Jewish ancestors were doing in their day. Both were serving the one true and living God. Fee (p. 222) is probably correct in suggesting that the reason Paul mentions this continuity here is in direct response to the false teachers in Ephesus, who were essentially claiming that they were the true successors of the religion of the Old Testament (see 1 Timothy 1:7) and that Paul was not.

What prompted Paul to thank God for Timothy was his frequent remembrance of Timothy in his prayers ("**as I constantly remember<sup>41</sup> you in my prayers**"; cf. Philippians 1:3-4 and 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3). Whenever Paul remembered Timothy in prayer, his prayers for Timothy were accompanied by thanksgiving for Timothy. Paul prayed for Timothy "**constantly**," meaning not that his intercession for Timothy was incessant, but that it was regular<sup>42</sup>, with regular times of prayer both "**night and day**"<sup>43</sup>; cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 5:5).

**longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. (1:4)**

Verse 4 is somewhat parenthetical. In verse 3, Paul thanks God for Timothy. In

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<sup>40</sup>In verse 3, Paul is not saying that his forefathers served God with a clear conscience, but only that his forefathers served God. "With a clear conscience" applies only to Paul. Whether Paul's forefathers served God with a clear conscience or not, Paul does not specify.

<sup>41</sup>Words for memory are recurrent in 1:3-6, forming a linguistic thread, tying these verses together: *mneian* ("remember" in verse 3), *memnemenos* ("recall" in verse 4), *hupomnesin* ("mindful" in verse 5), and *anamimnesko* ("remind" in verse 6).

<sup>42</sup>"The word constantly, which occurs in most of the thanksgivings, does not refer to unceasing prayer and thanksgiving ... but indicates that he always remembered Timothy in his regular times of prayer" (Fee, p. 222).

<sup>43</sup>Whereas we, as Westerners, might think more in terms of "day and night," rather than vice versa, the Jews thought in terms of "night and day," since the Jewish day went from sundown of one day to sundown of the next (cf. the evening and morning, rather than the morning and evening, of the days of creation in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31).

verse 5, he specifies what about Timothy he thanks God for, Timothy's faith. In between (in verse 4), he expresses his heartfelt desire to see Timothy, a desire that accompanied Paul's remembrances of Timothy in his prayers (verse 3). Whenever Paul prayed for Timothy, he could not help but at the same time experience a longing to see Timothy again ("**longing to see you**"; cf. Paul's longing to see the Romans in Romans 1:11 and 15:23, his longing for the Philippians in Philippians 1:8 and 4:1, and his longing to see the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3:6; cf. also the longing of Epaphroditus for the Philippians in Philippians 2:26).<sup>44</sup> This longing was intensified due to the circumstances under which Paul wrote. The Greek participle translated "**longing**" is *epipotheo*, an intensified form of the Greek verb for "desire," *potheo* (intensified by the Greek preposition, *epi*).

One of the things Paul specifically remembered about Timothy was his tears ("**even as I recall your tears**"). Paul likely had a specific incident in mind, the last time Paul and Timothy were together. Like Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 (see verse 37), this parting evidently was also a tearful one. Interpreters are divided as to the parting to which Paul is referring. Robertson sees it as the parting between Paul and the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:37. Others (such as Hughes, Litfin, and Hiebert) consider it to be the parting when Paul was arrested (either in Ephesus or, more likely, Troas). Still others (so Fee, Knight, and Mounce) consider it to be the parting recorded in 1 Timothy 1:3, when Paul left Timothy in Ephesus. In the opinion of this writer, this final option is the strongest one.

Should Timothy heed Paul's plea to come see him in Rome, and if Timothy made it to Rome before it was too late, the result of such a reunion would be complete joy for Paul ("**so that I may be filled with joy**"; cf. Romans 15:13). Are others filled with joy whenever they see us?

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<sup>44</sup> "[Paul] must have had a large heart to carry such a loving concern for so many people" (Earle, p. 394). This big heartedness is the virtue known as magnanimity. Are we so magnanimous?

**For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well. (1:5)**

The specific virtue in Timothy's life for which Paul thanked God was his faith ("**For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you**"; cf. Romans 1:8, Ephesians 1:15-16, Colossians 1:3-4, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, and Philemon 4-5, where Paul thanks God for the faith of his readers; for other virtues of his readers, besides faith, for which Paul thanked God, see Ephesians 1:15-16, Colossians 1:3-4, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, and Philemon 4-5). According to some interpreters, the Greek participle translated "**mindful**" (literally "having received a reminder") connotes being reminded from without, i.e., from an outside source (see Earle, p. 394). According to Kent (p. 248), the fact that this participle is in the Greek aorist tense signifies that Paul has a specific incident in mind. If both of these premises are correct, perhaps something Onesiphorus told Paul about Timothy (1:16-18) refreshed Paul's memory of Timothy's faith. For what do others remember us?<sup>45</sup> Paul calls Timothy's faith "**sincere**" (literally "unhypocritical," the Greek noun being *anupokritos*; cf. 1 Timothy 1:5, as well as James 1:6-8). In saying this, Paul is likely contrasting Timothy's faith with the insincere faith exhibited by the false teachers in Ephesus (see 2 Timothy 2:17-18) and/or by some of Paul's former colleagues (see 2 Timothy 1:15, 4:10, and 16).

Like Paul ("the way my forefathers did," verse 3), Timothy had an ancestry worth emulating. Specifically, the sincere faith that was in Timothy was the same sincere faith that was first in his grandmother, Lois, and in his mother, Eunice ("**which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well**"). Assuming that the faith of which Paul is speaking is saving faith, the fact that this faith "**first**" dwelt in Timothy's grandmother (presumably his maternal grandmother) and mother before it dwelt in him leads one to believe that Timothy's grandmother and mother were converted prior to Timothy and, hence, not at the same time as Timothy (during Paul's visit to Lystra in Acts

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<sup>45</sup>“What a tribute to the godliness of Timothy that the incident which brought him forcibly to Paul's attention was a Christian virtue! Are we sufficiently outstanding in Christian graces that a virtue displayed by another will serve to remind onlookers of us? So often, it is the faults of Christians which serve as reminders to others” (Kent, p. 248).

14:6-23 on his first missionary journey). The impact of a godly grandmother or mother (or any such relative) upon a younger family member is inestimable. In reminding Timothy of his godly heritage, Paul was likely trying to motivate Timothy to remain faithful.

# Introduction of 2 Timothy (1:1-5) Teaching Outline

- I. Salutation (1:1-2; cf. Daniel 4:1 and Acts 23:26)
  - A. Writer (1:1)
    - 1. His mission
    - 2. His Master
    - 3. His message
  - B. Recipient (1:2a)
  - C. Greeting (1:2b)
- II. Supplication (1:3-5)
  - A. Focused on God the Father (1:3a)
  - B. Faithful and frequent (1:3b; cf. salutations of most of the Pauline epistles)
  - C. Affectionate (1:4)
  - D. For the sincere faith of his son in the faith (1:5)

**For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (1:6)**

Paul now moves to the body of the letter (1:6-4:8) and does so in almost seamless fashion, tying his initial exhortation to Timothy here in verse 6 with the sincere faith of Timothy he extols in verse 5 with the prepositional phrase, “**for this reason.**”<sup>46</sup> In light of Timothy’s sincere faith, Paul exhorts Timothy to continually rekindle (the Greek verb translated “**kindle afresh**” is in the present tense) his spiritual gift (“**I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you**”; cf. 1 Timothy 4:14’s “do not neglect the spiritual gift within you”). *Biblical Viewpoint* (p. 9) describes such rekindling as “to put a stick into the coals of a fire and stir them into a raging flame.” Accordingly, the NIV and ESV translate the verb as “fan into flame.”

What is the “**gift**” of which Paul speaks? Most likely, it is the complex of abilities God had bestowed (“**of God**”) upon Timothy for the accomplishment of his current mission. Most likely, these abilities were in Timothy prior to his conversion, ignited (in the case of some) and redirected (in the case of others) when Timothy was converted, and honed during Timothy’s years as Paul’s associate. God had uniquely equipped Timothy for the challenges he faced in Ephesus, and Paul reminds Timothy of this fact to further motivate him to remain faithful to the task.<sup>47</sup> “Timothy did not need any new spiritual ingredients in his life; all he had to do was ‘stir up’ what he already had” (Wiersbe, p. 121).

While Paul’s exhortation to “**kindle afresh**” these abilities can be interpreted to imply that Timothy had let his fire die down, such an interpretation is not demanded. As Mounce (p. 476) states: “Just because people are encouraged by someone does not mean that they are failing. It can mean that they are being encouraged to continue despite the pressure.” Accordingly, Hiebert (p. 35) views Paul’s exhortation to Timothy here as a preventative rather than a corrective. A corollary to Timothy’s giftedness was his ordination (“**through the laying on of**

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<sup>46</sup>Another tie is the literary phenomenon mentioned in footnote 41.

<sup>47</sup>“... [E]very Christian worker engaged in however small a task requires assurance that God never commissions anyone to a task without imparting a special gift appropriate for it” (Donald Guthrie, quoted in Mounce, p. 476).

**my hands**”; see Numbers 27:18-23 and Deuteronomy 34:9 for Old Testament precedent; see Acts 6:6, 13:3, and 1 Timothy 5:22 for New Testament practice). Timothy’s ordination, like today’s ordinations, was simply an official, public recognition of giftedness for gospel ministry. In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul indicates that Timothy’s ordination, unlike today’s ordinations, was confirmed by a prophetic utterance (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18; see also Acts 13:1-3 for a similar scenario: an assumed prophetic utterance in verse 2 followed by an ordaining in verse 3) and that it was officially recognized by the laying on of the hands of “the presbytery,” i.e., a group of elders. Here in 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul singles himself out as part of that group (“**my hands**”).<sup>48</sup> Fee (p. 226) suggests the reason for the difference: “In 1 Timothy 4:14..., where a part of the concern was to authenticate Timothy before the church, Paul mentions the laying on of hands by the elders. Here, where the interest is almost totally personal, the focus is on Paul’s own part in that call, thus appealing to their close personal ties.”<sup>49</sup> When and where did Timothy’s ordination take place? The most likely answer is in Lystra in Acts 16, when Paul drafted Timothy to be part of the second missionary team. An alternative possibility is that it took place at the outset of Timothy’s current Ephesian mission.

**For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. (1:7)**

To further motivate Timothy to be faithful to his task in Ephesus (“**for**”), Paul reminds Timothy not only of his godly heritage (verse 5) and the gift God had given him (verse 6), but also of the power God had given him (verse 7). Paul expresses this final thought first in terms of a negative (“**God has not given us a spirit of timidity**”). There is debate among interpreters as to whether or not the “s” in “spirit” should be capitalized. While the NASB (as well as the KJV, NKJV, NIV, and ESV) do not capitalize it, other translations (such as the TEV, CEV, and The Living Bible) do. Among interpreters who do not capitalize it are Hiebert, Knight, Lea, Ward, and Mounce. Among interpreters who do are Fee, Hughes, and

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<sup>48</sup>Calvin (p. 189) rightly calls Paul “the chief actor in it.”

<sup>49</sup>In this regard, notice the prevalence of first person plural pronouns in this section of the letter: “us” (verse 7), “our” (verse 8), “us” (verse 9; 2x in the Greek, 3x in the English), “our” (verse 9), and “our” (verse 10).

Hendriksen. In the opinion of this writer, the first option (small “s”) is preferable. Thus, Paul is speaking of a disposition or frame of mind (cf. the same usage of spirit in such passages as Romans 11:8, 1 Corinthians 4:21, Galatians 6:1, and 1 Peter 3:4). The difference between the two positions, however, is very slight, as the spirit of power, love, and discipline given to Timothy was likely given in conjunction with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at his regeneration and was, therefore, a spirit that was generated by the Holy Spirit.

Unknown to the English reader is the fact that the Greek negative particle, translated “not” by the NASB, is first in the Greek sentence, for emphasis.

Paul’s use of the Greek noun translated “**timidity**” (KJV and NKJV: “fear”) in this verse is, for some, an indicator that Timothy was timid/fearful by nature (see footnote 11 for a brief discussion of this point).

After assuring Timothy that God had given him the power to tackle the task at Ephesus in terms of a negative (“God has not given us a spirit of timidity”), Paul makes the same point in terms of a positive (“**but of power and love and discipline**”; cf. Romans 8:15 for a similar negative-positive contrast). As mentioned previously, the spirit “**of power**” that Timothy had been given (initially at conversion) was a Holy Spirit-generated one<sup>50</sup> (see the following references pertaining to the Holy Spirit and power: Luke 4:14, Acts 1:8, 10:38, Romans 15:13, 19, 1 Corinthians 2:4, Ephesians 3:16, and 1 Thessalonians 1:5; also compare Acts 6:5 with Acts 6:8).

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<sup>50</sup>“The power of the Holy Spirit within [the servant of God] has enabled many a naturally timid man to develop a boldness not his own when called in the name of God to fulfill a difficult ministry” (Donald Guthrie, quoted in Mounce, p. 478). “...[T]hey who have slavish meanness and cowardice, so that they do not venture to do anything in defence of the truth, when it is necessary, are not governed by that Spirit by whom the servants of Christ are guided. Hence it follows, that there are very few of those who bear the title of ministers, in the present day [these words were penned in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century], who have the mark of sincerity impressed upon them; for, amongst a vast number, where do we find one who, relying on the power of the Spirit, boldly despises all the loftiness which exalts itself against Christ? Do not almost all seek their own interest and their leisure? Do they not sink down dumb as soon as any noise breaks out? The consequence is, that no majesty of God is seen in their ministry” (Calvin, pp. 191-192).

Not only does the Holy Spirit give his servant power, but also “**love**” (see the following references pertaining to the Holy Spirit and love: Romans 5:5, 15:30, Galatians 5:22, and Colossians 1:8). Power needs to be tempered and channeled by love.

Not only does the Holy Spirit give his servant power and love, but also “**discipline**” (NASB marginal note: “sound judgment”; cf. related words from the same root in the Pastoral Epistles: “prudent” in 1 Timothy 3:2, “sensible” in Titus 1:8, 2:2, 5, and 6, “sensibly” in Titus 2:12, “discreetly” in 1 Timothy 2:9, and “self-restraint” (NASB marginal note: “discretion”) in 1 Timothy 2:15). Power and love need to be tempered and channeled by sound judgment.

**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, (1:8)**

In what Mounce (p. 479) calls the “thesis statement of 2 Tim 1:3-2:13,” Paul, in light of what he has just said in verse 7 (the reason the “**therefore**” that starts verse 8 is there for), exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel or of Paul (“**do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner**”). In other words, God had given Timothy the power to serve in the gospel (verse 7), so Timothy did not need to be ashamed of it or of Paul, who also served in it (start of verse 8). As in verse 7, the Greek negative particle, translated “**not**” by the NASB, is first in the Greek sentence, for emphasis.

The “**testimony of our Lord**<sup>51</sup>” is undoubtedly a reference to the gospel (the second half of verse 8 being parallel to the first half; thus, “the testimony of our

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<sup>51</sup>Most interpreters (so Fee, Hendriksen, Knight, Towner, and Mounce) take “of our Lord” in “the testimony of our Lord” as an “objective genitive,” i.e., the Lord (Jesus Christ) is the object of the testimony. Thus, one could translate: “the testimony about or concerning our Lord” (so NIV and ESV; cf. the translation of a nearly identical Greek construction by the NASB in 1 Corinthians 1:6). The fact that Paul uses “Lord” (as opposed to “Christ” in 1 Corinthians 1:6) could be significant, as the Roman emperor (Nero at the time) was expected to be worshipped by the populace and was, thus, to be addressed as “lord” (see Acts 25:25-26). In other words, Paul’s subtle point would be that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:11; cf. Acts 10:36 and 1 Corinthians 8:6), not Nero. Paul appears to make the same subtle point with the word “appearing” in verse 10 (see comments on).

Lord” in the first half = “the gospel” in the second half). Paul was not ashamed of the gospel (see Romans 1:16; cf. Mark 8:38//Luke 9:26); neither should Timothy.<sup>52</sup>

Nor was Timothy to be ashamed of Paul’s imprisonment for the sake of the gospel; Paul was not (2 Timothy 1:12), nor was Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16). Notice that Paul refers to himself as a prisoner of the Lord (“**His prisoner**”; cf. Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, Philemon 1, and 9), not a prisoner of Rome. “[Paul] is in Caesar’s dungeon, but Nero is not his captor—Christ is” (Hughes, p. 179).

The flip side (“**but**”) of not being ashamed of the gospel or of Paul (verse 8a) is joining Paul in suffering for the gospel (“**join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God**,” verse 8b; cf. 1 Peter 4:16). The words, “**join with ... in suffering**” are a translation of one word in the original, *sugkakopatheo* (cf. 2 Timothy 2:3, where the same verb is translated “suffer hardship with”), the etymology of which consists of a combination of several Greek words (*pathein*, “to suffer” + *kakos*, “harm” + *sun*, “with”). While Hiebert (p. 37) is of the opinion that Paul is personifying the gospel (“suffer hardship with the gospel”), most interpreters (and translators) rightly supply the pronoun “me” (in italics in the NASB, indicating that it has been supplied by the translators). Just as God had empowered Timothy to serve in the gospel (verse 7), so He would empower him to suffer for the gospel (“**according to the power of God**”).

**who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, (1:9)**

Having spoken of suffering for the gospel in verse 8, Paul speaks of several gospel truths in verses 9 and 10. The God whose power would enable Timothy to suffer for the gospel (end of verse 8) is the God “**who has saved us and called us with a**

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<sup>52</sup>As with verse 6’s “kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you,” Paul’s exhortation to Timothy to not be ashamed of the gospel or of Paul in verse 8 can be interpreted to imply that Timothy had been. Once again, however, such an interpretation is not demanded. Kent (p. 251) states in this regard: “The mode of expression in the phrase ‘be not ashamed’ (aorist subjunctive) offers clear evidence that Timothy was not at fault along this line. The connotation is, ‘Don’t start being ashamed,’ rather than, ‘Stop being ashamed’ (for which the present imperative would be necessary).” See also Hiebert (p. 37) and Lea (n.p.), who make the same point.

**holy calling**” (start of verse 9). The calling of which Paul speaks is what theologians commonly call the “effectual call,” the summons to salvation that the saved will infallibly hear and to which they will respond (cf. John 10:27, Acts 2:39, Romans 1:6-7, 8:28, 30, 9:11, 24, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 9, 24, 26, Galatians 1:6, 15, Ephesians 1:18, 4:1, 4, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 5:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:14, 1 Timothy 6:12, 1 Peter 1:15, 2:9, 5:10, 2 Peter 1:3, 10, Jude 1, and Revelation 17:14).

Fee (p. 229) is probably correct when he makes the case that “**with a holy calling**” (so the more literal translation of the NASB, KJV, and NKJV) is better translated “to a holy life” (so the more dynamic translation of the NIV). See such passages as Ephesians 1:4, 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 4:7, and 2 Thessalonians 1:11 in this regard. We are saved to be sanctified.

The call of salvation is not by works (“**not according to our works**”). See also Romans 3:20, 28, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:9, and Titus 3:5. Rather (“**but**”), the call of salvation is according to God’s purpose and grace (“**but according to His own purpose and grace**<sup>53</sup>”). In regards to the first (purpose), see Romans 8:28, 9:11, Ephesians 1:11, and 3:11. In regards to the second (grace), see Galatians 1:6, 15, Ephesians 2:8, and Titus 3:7.

The gracious nature of the call of salvation is further seen by the fact that God granted believers saving grace before the beginning of time (“**which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**”). As Hughes (p. 181) states: “And since God gave grace to us in Christ before history began, it is absolutely certain that salvation is not from our works. God the Father gave us grace in Christ before we did or could do any good works.” Likewise, Calvin (p. 195) writes: “... [F]or, if God chose us before the creation of the world, he could not have regard to works, of which we had none, seeing that we did not then exist.” See especially Ephesians 1:4 in this regard. Saving grace is granted to the believer “**in Christ Jesus**” (cf. Romans 5:15, 17, 21, and Ephesians 1:6), meaning that it is only because of Christ’s sinless life and sin-destroying death that salvation is possible.

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<sup>53</sup>“Purpose and grace” may be hendiadys for “gracious purpose.” According to the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (p. 541), hendiadys is “the expression of an idea by the use of usu. two independent words connected by *and* (as *nice and warm*) instead of the usual combination of independent word and its modifier (as *nicely warm*).”

**but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, (1:10)**

The saving grace granted to the believer in eternity past (end of verse 9) was revealed in time with the first advent of Christ (“**but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,**” start of verse 10; cf. Titus 1:3, 2:11, and 3:4). Since saving grace is granted to the believer “in Christ” (verse 9), it can thereby be said that this grace was “**revealed**” by the appearance of Christ. Commenting on the Greek noun translated “**appearing**” by the NASB, Mounce (p. 484) states: “It describes the appearance of a god or king, and in the Ephesian context sets Christ against pagan gods and emperor worship in hellenized language that would have been immediately recognized by the Ephesian church.”

When Christ appeared the first time, He “**abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**” The Greek verb rendered “**abolished**” by the NASB means to render inoperative, to “make of none effect, reduce to powerlessness” (Hiebert, p. 40), to “put out of commission” (Hendriksen, p. 233). This Christ did to death (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26), debilitating it, by His death on the Cross (and His resurrection), rendering death ineffective (Kent, p. 252), taking the sting (1 Corinthians 15:55-56) out of death for the believer, depriving it of its powers and terrors, by taking the sting Himself (Hiebert, pp. 40-41). See John 8:51, 11:26, and Hebrews 2:14-15 in this regard.<sup>54</sup>

Not only did Christ abolish death through His death and resurrection, but He also (“**and**”) “**brought life and immortality to light**” through it. Hence, as Hiebert (p. 40) puts it, Christ’s work was both destructive and constructive. Just as God’s saving grace was revealed through the appearance of Christ (verse 10a), so also life and immortality<sup>55</sup> were brought to light “**through the gospel**” (verse 10b),

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<sup>54</sup>An excellent illustration of this truth is found on page 96 of *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching* (edited by Michael Green). Another excellent illustration of this truth is found on page 189 of *Christ-Centered Preaching* by Bryan Chapell.

<sup>55</sup>Like “purpose and grace” in verse 9, “life and immortality” in verse 10 may be, as Hendriksen (p. 233) suggests, hendiadys (see footnote 53 for a definition of this literary device) for “immortal life,” another way of saying “eternal life.”

meaning that it is the instrumentality of the gospel message that brings life and immortality (cf. comments on verse 1).

**for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. (1:11)**

The gospel, the instrumentality of which brings life and immortality (end of verse 10), is the gospel for the sake of which (“**for which**”) Paul “**was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher,**” verse 11; cf. 1 Timothy 2:7). Unlike Timothy (see comments on verse 6), Paul, being an apostle (see comments on verse 1), was appointed to his post directly by God apart from any human intermediary (cf. Galatians 1:1).

Paul’s commission as an apostle included being a preacher and a teacher. Knight (p. 378) sees the first as being evangelistic in nature, with the second being edificational in nature. The Greek noun translated “**preacher**” by the NASB is the Greek word for herald (cf. the verbal form of this same noun in 2 Timothy 4:2: herald the Word). A preacher is a herald, one commissioned to completely and accurately deliver a message from the King.

## 2 Timothy 1:12-2:2

**For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (1:12)**

It was because of (“**For this reason**”) his calling/commission to be an apostle (1:11) of the gospel (1:8-10) that Paul was languishing in a Roman prison (“**I also suffer these things**”; cf. 1:8). However, Paul was not ashamed of this fact (“**but I am not ashamed**”; cf. Romans 1:16). Though we, as believers, will be (3:12) called upon to suffer shame for the sake of Christ’s name, we should never be ashamed of the fact. Rather, we should rejoice over it. See especially Acts 5:41 and 1 Peter 4:16 in this regard. Paul was not ashamed of his imprisonment (1:12); neither should Timothy (1:8).

Paul gives a two-fold reason why he was not ashamed of his imprisonment. The first reason was his faith in God (“**for I know whom I have believed**”). Paul’s faith was placed in the right object. The Greek verb translated “**have believed**” is in the perfect tense, signifying a past, point-in-time action with ongoing effects (I have believed and continue to believe). At a point in time in the past (at conversion), Paul had placed his trust in God for his soul’s salvation and was continuing to place his trust in God, despite his present circumstances. Paul was not ashamed of his imprisonment because He knew God, and knowing God (i.e., having a relationship with Him) is well worth any shame suffered for His name.

A second reason why Paul was not ashamed of his imprisonment is because He was fully convinced that the God in Whom he had placed his trust was fully capable of protecting that trust to the end (“**and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day**”). As with “have believed” before it, the Greek verb translated “**am convinced**” is in the perfect tense (I have been convinced and continue to be convinced). God, being omnipotent (all-powerful), was certainly able to protect Paul’s trust (“**He is able to guard**”). There is some question as to whether Paul is speaking of something God had entrusted to him (so the ESV), such as the gospel, as in 1:14 (cf. 1 Timothy 1:11 and 6:20; so Hiebert and Wallis) or something he had entrusted to God. The majority of interpreters consulted (so Calvin, Fee, Hendriksen, Kent, Knight, and

Mounce) opt for the second (so also the NASB, NIV, KJV, and NKJV). Assuming this to be correct, the question then becomes: To what exactly does the “**what**” refer? What had Paul entrusted to God? While various answers to this question have been given<sup>56</sup>, the best answer, in the opinion of this writer, is Paul’s soul.<sup>57</sup> See also 1 Peter 4:19 in this regard.

Paul was not ashamed of his imprisonment because he was convinced that the God to Whom he had entrusted his soul would keep it safe “**until that day**,” regardless of what happened to his “earthly tent” (2 Corinthians 5:1). Accordingly, this verse implicitly teaches the doctrine of eternal security. “**That day**” (cf. 1:18 and 4:8, as well as Matthew 7:22, Luke 10:12, 21:34, and 2 Thessalonians 1:10) is a reference to Judgment Day. Paul was not ashamed to suffer because he knew that his soul was secure. As Barnes (p. 217) says: “If the soul is safe, why need we be disturbed by the loss of health, or property, or other temporal comforts?”

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<sup>56</sup>According to Fee (p. 232), the answer is Paul’s life or Paul’s commitment to Christ and his gospel. According to Hughes (p. 182), the answer is Paul’s life commitment to the gospel. According to Knight (p. 380), the answer is Paul’s life. According to Mounce (p. 488), the answer is “the sum total of all that Paul has entrusted to God, including his life, apostolic ministry, converts, etc.” According to Towner (p. 476), the answer is “the gospel (and by implication the entire Pauline mission).”

<sup>57</sup>Accordingly, Calvin (p. 201) views the “what” as eternal life, Hendriksen (p. 235) as Paul and his complete salvation, Henry (p. 835) as “the salvation of our souls, and their preservation to the heavenly kingdom,” and Barnes (p. 216) as “the soul, with all its immortal interests.”

## 2 Timothy 1:6-12

### Teaching Outline

Introduction: In introducing 2 Timothy, it was suggested that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy for 3 reasons. Two of these reasons were: 1) to encourage Timothy to fight false teaching and 2) to encourage Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution (the third was: to encourage Timothy to come see his father in the faith, Paul). In this section of the letter, which begins the body of the book, Paul identifies three gifts that God had given to both Timothy and himself (and to us!) to fortify them in the good fight (4:7) against such foes.

- I. Gifts of the Spirit (1:6 and 11)
  - A. Timothy's gift (1:6)
  - B. Paul's gifts (1:11)
- II. Gift of a spirit (1:7-8)
  - A. What it is not: trepidation (1:7a)
  - B. What it is: power (1:7b; cf. 1:8b)
  - C. What it does not produce: shame (1:8a; cf. 1:12a)
  - D. What it does produce: sharing (1:8b)
- III. Gift of salvation (1:9-10 and 12b)
  - A. Not by our works (1:9)
  - B. But by God's work
    1. The work of God the Father
      - a. Saving (1:9)
      - b. Securing (1:12b)
    2. The work of God the Son (1:10; cf. 1:9's "in Christ Jesus")
  - C. By faith (1:12b)

**Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. (1:13)**

No doubt in light of the threat posed by the false teachers in Ephesus, Paul gives Timothy two interrelated commands in verses 13 and 14: preserve the Truth (verse 13) and protect the Truth (verse 14). First, Timothy was to preserve the Truth (“**Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me**”).<sup>58</sup> The Greek verb translated “**retain**” in this context most likely means to keep (so NIV) or preserve (cf. the same verb translated “holding to” in 1 Timothy 3:9 and “maintained” in Revelation 6:9).

That which Timothy is to keep or preserve is “**the standard of sound words.**” The Greek noun translated “**standard**” (cf. Romans 6:17, same Greek word) has the idea of a pattern, outline, sketch, or model. “As an artist has his sketch before him, so Timothy is to use the outline which he has heard from Paul as his model for his work and never depart from it” (Hiebert, p. 44). Hiebert (pp. 44-45, quoting Charles Erdman) continues: “The reference to Paul’s teaching under the word ‘pattern’ implies that ‘such an outline may be expanded and that other statements of the truth will be helpful, but they must be in accordance with the beliefs which Paul himself has set forth in the gospel message committed to Timothy.’” The words that Timothy was to preserve Paul calls “**sound,**” a word that connotes health (the word is used of physical health in Luke 5:31, 7:10, 15:27, and 3 John 2).<sup>59</sup> Healthy doctrine is a recurring theme in the Pastoral Epistles (see 1 Timothy 1:10, 4:6, 6:3, 2 Timothy 4:3, Titus 1:9, 13, 2:1, and 2; cf. the same concept with a related Greek word in Titus 2:8; cf. the same concept with a different Greek word in 1 Timothy 4:6), no doubt to contrast it from the unhealthy doctrine being dispensed by the false teachers (see 2:16-17). The sound words Timothy was to preserve were words he had heard from Paul (“**which you have heard from me**”; cf. 2:2) during the many years they had spent together in the

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<sup>58</sup>“It was Timothy’s responsibility to preserve sound teaching from being corrupted through distortion, dilution, deletion, and addition” (Litfin, p. 751).

<sup>59</sup>“This metaphorical use of a medical term may show the influence of the physician Luke” (Knight, p. 89; Mounce makes the same observation on p. 41 of his commentary on 1 Timothy). Remember, it was suggested that Luke was Paul’s amanuensis for the Pastoral Epistles (see under “Author” in the lesson on the introduction to 2 Timothy).

ministry, words more or less recorded for us today in the Pauline Epistles.

Not only was Timothy to fulfill the mandate to preserve the Truth, but he was to do so in a particular manner or spirit (“**in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus**”; cf. 1 Timothy 1:14, as well as 1 Timothy 3:13), faith and love being “the atmosphere in which the ‘sound words’ are to be preserved” (J. H. Bernard, quoted in Knight, p. 381), perhaps meaning motivated by faithfulness to God and love for God and people. Such faith and love is characteristic of those who are connected to Christ (“**in Christ Jesus**”), i.e., believers.

**Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. (1:14)**

Not only was Timothy to preserve the Truth (verse 13), but he was also to protect It <sup>60</sup> (“**Guard,**” verse 14; cf. 1 Timothy 6:20; remember, Paul was being guarded by a Roman soldier as he wrote these words). This Timothy could do only through the enabling of the indwelling Holy Spirit (“**through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us**<sup>61</sup>”; on the Spirit’s indwelling, see especially 1 Corinthians 6:19, as well as Romans 8:11).<sup>62</sup>

What Timothy was to guard was the Truth (“**the treasure which has been entrusted to you**” ≈ “the standard of sound words which you have heard from me” in verse 13). Guarding a deposit entrusted to one’s care is “a metaphor, drawn from common life, reflecting the highest kind of sacred obligation in ancient society, namely, being entrusted with some treasured possession for safe-keeping while another is away” (Fee, p. 160).<sup>63</sup> Timothy had been given the

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<sup>60</sup>Calvin (p. 203) is of the opinion (wrongly, in this writer’s opinion) that the thing Timothy is commanded to guard in verse 14 is his ministerial gifts.

<sup>61</sup>Once again (see footnote 49), Paul, through the use of a first person plural pronoun (“us”), identifies himself with Timothy, likely as a means of encouraging Timothy.

<sup>62</sup>“Paul can exhort Timothy to guard the good deposit because he knows that the Holy Spirit is indwelling Timothy and therefore will be the one through whom Timothy will be able to carry out the exhortation” (Knight, p. 382).

<sup>63</sup>William Barclay (quoted in Mounce, p. 487) likewise states: “The typical picture in the word is that of a man going upon a journey and depositing with, and entrusting to, a friend his most

most sacred of trusts, preserving (1:13) and protecting (1:14) the Truth with which he had been entrusted (1:14; cf. Galatians 2:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 1 Timothy 1:11, 6:20, 2 Timothy 2:2, and Titus 1:3, as well as 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 and 9:17). In 2:2, Paul will instruct Timothy to pass this sacred trust on to others, as Paul had passed it on to him (1:13-14). Implied in such a trust is accountability to the Owner of the Truth (see 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, and James 3:1). While God guards what the believer entrusts to His care, his soul (verse 12), the believer is to guard what God entrusts to his care, the Truth (verse 14).<sup>64</sup>

**You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (1:15)**

While verses 15-18 appear to be somewhat digressionary, they are not absolutely so. As Knight (p. 383) puts it: “This section’s connection with the preceding is that it provides negative and positive examples that make Paul’s admonition to Timothy all the more relevant.” In other words, there were some who were not willing to, as 1:8 says, join with Paul in suffering for the gospel (verse 15), and there was one who was (verses 16-18). The implication is that Paul wants Timothy to avoid the example of the first and follow the example of the second. Like the examples of Timothy’s mother and grandmother (1:5) and Paul (1:8 and 12), the example of Onesiphorus served as a further incentive for Timothy to be faithful.

Paul reminds Timothy of the fact that virtually all those living in the Roman province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital, had deserted Paul (“**You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me**”). Mounce (p. 493, following Donald Guthrie) is probably correct in viewing Paul’s words at this point as somewhat hyperbolic (so also Ward, p. 157 and Lea, n.p.). Not every Asian had deserted Paul; Timothy and Onesiphorus had not. However, the

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precious and valued possessions .... To be faithful to such a trust, and to return such a deposit unharmed, were amongst the highest and most sacred obligations which ancient thought recognized.”

<sup>64</sup>“With his usual skillful way with words, Paul is saying in effect that as God has guarded the deposit of his life (and will guard Timothy’s) so also Timothy must guard the deposit of the faithful account of the gospel that God has entrusted to him” (Knight, p. 380).

overwhelming majority had.<sup>65</sup> Paul's awareness of this fact likely came from Onesiphorus. Timothy's awareness of it came from his presence in Ephesus.

The Greek verb translated "**turned away from**" is in the aorist tense, signifying a particular event in connection with which this desertion took place (Knight, p. 383). What was the event? One possibility is Paul's arrest. A more likely possibility is Paul's first trial (see 4:16). In other words, no one was willing to journey to Rome and risk his life by testifying in Paul's behalf. Those in Asia known to be sympathetic to Paul, such as Timothy and Onesiphorus, undoubtedly would not have been summoned (they would have been dismissed as biased witnesses).

Paul singles out two individuals among the deserters ("**among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes**"; cf. Paul's singling out of the deserter, Demas, in 4:10). This is the only mention of these two men in Scripture; therefore, nothing more is known about them. Why did Paul single them out? The most likely reason is because they were particularly prominent, perhaps being in positions of leadership. As such, they would have been particularly culpable for their actions, and their desertion would have been particularly painful for Paul. Ultimately, we can only speculate. Timothy knew the details; therefore, we do not. By singling out Phygelus and Hermogenes, Paul is thereby putting Timothy on alert regarding them.

**The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; (1:16)**

In contrast to Paul's "fair-weather friends" (Hughes, p. 185), Phygelus and Hermogenes, and all those like them (verse 15), who "got going" when the going got tough, was a man by the name of Onesiphorus (verses 16-18). The name, Onesiphorus means "help-bringer" (Earle, p. 398) or "profit-bearer" (Baugh, p. 484 and Kostenberger, n.p.). Onesiphorus lived up to his name, bringing help to Paul when he needed it most. Paul invokes God's mercy upon Onesiphorus's household ("**The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus**"). The fact that Paul invokes God's mercy upon Onesiphorus's household (verse 16; cf. 4:19), in

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<sup>65</sup>Kent (p. 256) rightly views the "all" as "those who were in some position to help but refused to do so."

distinction from Onesiphorus himself (verse 18), and the fact that when he invokes God's mercy upon Onesiphorus he does so with a future orientation ("on that day," verse 18), has led some to speculate that Onesiphorus had died (perhaps as a direct result of his ministry to Paul in Rome). This is the position of both Fee and Robertson. Wiersbe, Kent, Ward, and Barnes are convinced that this was not the case. All the other interpreters consulted who speak to the issue (so Hughes, Knight, Hiebert, Hendriksen, Mounce, Towner, and Lea) allow for either possibility, ultimately claiming ignorance. In the opinion of this writer, it is more probable that Onesiphorus was alive. Kent (p. 257) is probably correct in suggesting that "the most likely reason his house alone is mentioned (1:16; 4:19) is that Paul knew that Onesiphorus had not yet returned home to Ephesus."<sup>66</sup>

In the spirit of Matthew 5:7 ("Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy"), Paul invokes God's mercy upon the household of Onesiphorus because ("for") Onesiphorus was merciful to him ("**he often refreshed me**"). The Greek adverb translated "**often**" is first in the sentence, for emphasis (the Greek reads: "often me he refreshed ..."), drawing attention to the frequency with which Onesiphorus refreshed Paul, most likely by repeated visits to him in prison. The type of refreshment Onesiphorus gave Paul is not specified, but most likely included not only psychological (mental, emotional, spiritual), but also physiological (physical) refreshment.<sup>67</sup> Are we refreshing to others, reviving their spirits like a breath of fresh air?<sup>68</sup> Besides Onesiphorus, the New Testament mentions several individuals who were refreshing: Stephanus, Fortunatus, and

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<sup>66</sup>Knight (p. 386), commenting on verse 18, likewise states: "It has been suggested that this reference to 'that day' and to Onesiphorus separately from his family (v. 16; 4:19) means that he was dead (e.g., Bernard, Fee). This is, of course, a possibility, but the separate references may only mean that Onesiphorus and his family were apart from one another when Paul wrote, or that Paul wanted to express his appreciation not only for Onesiphorus's ministry but also for the support and understanding of his family." In regards to the second suggestion of Knight, Hiebert (*In Paul's Shadow*, p. 184) writes: "The entire family of Onesiphorus was involved in the cost of his service, and Paul yearned that all of them might receive God's blessing because of it."

<sup>67</sup>"In a culture in which imprisonment often included self-sustenance, such 'refreshment' probably included food as well as 'cheering up'" (Fee, p. 236; cf. Mounce, p. 496).

<sup>68</sup>"The verb 'refreshed' ... conveys the picture of providing a cool, refreshing breeze for a man about to faint" (Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, p. 181).

Achaicus, who were refreshing to Paul and the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:17-18); the Corinthians, who were refreshing to Titus (2 Corinthians 7:13); and Philemon, who was refreshing to the saints in Colosse (Philemon 7).

Part of the reason Onesiphorus was refreshing to Paul is that he was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment ("**and was not ashamed of my chains**"). Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment (1:16); nor was Paul (1:12); neither should Timothy (1:8). The Greek word translated "**chains**" by the NASB is actually singular ("chain"), perhaps implying that Paul was continually chained to a Roman soldier (so Hiebert, p. 48). More likely, this is a case of metonymy<sup>69</sup>, with "chain" standing for "imprisonment" (so Mounce, p. 496).

**but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me— (1:17)**

As proof positive that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment (end of verse 16), Paul mentions the fact that once Onesiphorus reached Rome, he "**eagerly**" (cf. Titus 3:13, where the same Greek adverb is translated "diligently") searched for Paul until he found him (verse 17). Onesiphorus did not make a half-hearted attempt, conclude that Paul could not be found, and return to Ephesus, assuring himself, "O well, I tried."

**the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus. (1:18)**

As he did upon Onesiphorus's household in verse 16, Paul invokes God's mercy upon Onesiphorus himself here in verse 18 ("**the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day**"). Most interpreters (so Hughes, Fee, Hendriksen, Lea, Kostenberger, and Knight) view the first "**Lord**" as a reference to God the Son and the second "**Lord**" as a reference to God the Father.

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<sup>69</sup>According to the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (p. 732), metonymy is "a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated (as 'crown' in 'lands belonging to the crown')."

Roman Catholicism has incorrectly seen in this verse justification for their doctrine of prayer for the dead (which it bases upon 2 Maccabees 12:45-46; 2 Maccabees is one of the fourteen or fifteen Old Testament Apocryphal books deemed canonical by the Catholic Church, but rightly rejected by Protestants). However, per the comments on verse 16 above, there is little consensus that Onesiphorus was actually dead. Furthermore, Paul's words are not an intercession, but an invocation. "Though the papists will have it that he was now dead; and, from Paul's praying for him that he might find mercy, they conclude the warrantableness of praying for the dead; but who told them that Onesiphorus was dead? And can it be safe to ground a doctrine and practice of such importance on a mere supposition and very great uncertainty" (Henry, p. 837)?

By using the Greek verb translated "**find**" here in verse 18, Paul is undoubtedly making a wordplay with the same verb in verse 17 (verse 17: "and he found me"; verse 18: "the Lord grant to him to find mercy").

Paul concludes his commendation of Onesiphorus by reminding Timothy of Onesiphorus's ministry in Ephesus ("**and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus**"), a ministry the extent of which is signified by the plural noun translated "**services**<sup>70</sup>" by the NASB. Timothy, being in Ephesus, would know these services "**very well**" (cf. comments on verse 15). Whether in Ephesus with Timothy or in Rome with Paul, Onesiphorus served with distinction.

**You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2:1)**

In contrast to Phygelus and Hermogenes ("**You**<sup>71</sup>"), and in light of what Paul had

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<sup>70</sup>The Greek verb is *diakoneo*, from which we get our English word, "deacon," prompting Wiersbe (p. 127) to suggest that Onesiphorus may have been a deacon in one of the churches in Ephesus.

<sup>71</sup>The "you" that begins this verse is emphatic. The Greek literally reads: "You, therefore, child of me, you be strengthened in the grace, the one in Christ Jesus." The emphasis is seen in two ways: 1) The Greek second person personal pronoun ("you") is the first word in the sentence, for emphasis and 2) this Greek second person personal pronoun is used, normally unnecessary since the person (second person) is already inherent in the Greek verb translated "be strong"; the result is a repetition of the "you," for emphasis.

said to him in chapter 1 (the reason the **“therefore”** is there for<sup>72</sup>), Paul exhorts Timothy, his spiritual son (**“my son”**; cf. 1:2 and comments on), to **“be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”** It is only as Timothy is spiritually strengthened by God’s grace that he will be able to fulfill the exhortations of chapter 1 (verses 6, 8, 13, and 14). Once again (cf. 1:7, 1:8's “according to the power of God,” and 1:14's “through the Holy Spirit”), Paul is reminding Timothy that God is the One who supplies strength for the task. Accordingly, the Greek verb translated **“be strong”** (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:13, which uses a different Greek verb) is in the passive voice (cf. the same Greek verb used in a similar sense in Ephesians 6:10, Philippians 4:13, 1 Timothy 1:12, and 2 Timothy 4:17; cf. a cognate Greek noun used in a similar sense in 2 Peter 1:3), indicative of the fact that Someone else is doing the strengthening. This passive, however, should not be misconstrued to imply that Timothy was not to play an active role, for the verb is in the imperative mood (i.e., a command); thus, it is something in which Timothy is to play a necessary role, something in which he is responsible to participate through spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible intake, etc.). See the similar Philippians 2:12-13.

The “strength which God supplies” (1 Peter 4:11) is **“in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”**; thus, there is no room for boasting in how spiritually strong one is; it is by the grace of God that the believer is what he is (1 Corinthians 15:10). God’s sanctifying grace is **“in Christ Jesus”**; Jesus is the conduit through which the grace of God initially flows to the believer in salvation (see the end of 1:9 and 1:10) and continues to flow in sanctification, both by virtue of the believer’s connection to Christ (cf. comments on “in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” in 1:13).

**The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2:2)**

In words reminiscent of 1:13-14, Paul exhorts Timothy to pass the Truth on to future generations.<sup>73</sup> As in 1:13, the Truth Timothy was to pass on consisted of what he had heard<sup>74</sup> from Paul’s lips (**“the things which you have heard from**

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<sup>72</sup>Interpreters who see the “therefore” in 2:1 as referring back to more or less all of chapter 1 include Hiebert (p. 51), Hendriksen (p. 245), Knight (p. 389), and Mounce (p. 503).

<sup>73</sup>What R. C. H. Lenski (quoted in Hiebert, p. 53) calls “true apostolic succession.”

<sup>74</sup>While the Greek verb translated “have heard” by the NASB is in the aorist tense, which usually

me”). This was necessarily the case then, as the New Testament canon was still in the process of being completed. Today, we have these “**things**” (2:2)/these “sound words” (1:13)/this “treasure” (1:14) in the Pauline Epistles.

Timothy heard these truths from Paul “**in the presence of many witnesses.**” The idea here is that the truths Paul taught Timothy were not private, esoteric utterances (as the teachings of the false teachers perhaps were), but were publicly-proclaimed ones, subject to verification by a host of (“**many**”) witnesses (cf. John 18:20). This fact was especially significant, as very soon Paul would no longer be around to vouch for their veracity.

The truths that Paul (one) passed on to Timothy (two), “the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,” were in turn to be passed on to others (three), “entrust these to faithful men,” who were in turn to pass them on to yet others (four), “who will be able to teach others also.” Paul, realizing that his home-going was imminent, passes the torch of Truth on to Timothy, a torch that Timothy was to pass on to others.

Timothy was to entrust the Truth to faithful men (“**entrust these to faithful men**”). The concept of entrusting the Truth to others was dealt with at length in the comments on 1:14. The men to whom Timothy was to entrust the Truth were to be “**faithful**” men (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:2 and 1 Timothy 1:12), i.e., dependable, reliable, or trustworthy (see 2:11, where the same Greek adjective translated “faithful” here in 2:2 is translated “trustworthy”) men, men who could be counted on to not adulterate (2 Corinthians 4:2) or desert the Truth. Timothy himself was such a man (see 1 Corinthians 4:17).

Not only were these men to be men of character (“faithful”), but also men of competence, capable of effectively teaching the Truth to others (“**who will be able to teach others also**”; cf. 1 Timothy 3:2, 2 Timothy 2:24, and Titus 1:9).<sup>75</sup> While

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signifies a point-in-time action in the past (thus, some believe Paul is limiting the time to the day of Timothy’s ordination), here it is most likely a “constative aorist” (so Hiebert and Kent). As such, it views the action as a whole without attributing a time element to it.

<sup>75</sup>That teachers are to be characterized both by character and competence is seen in such passages as 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, where the qualifications for the pastorate are primarily issues of character and secondarily issues of competence, as well as such passages as Romans 15:14,

the men Paul specifically has in mind may very well be pastors, the principle of transmitting the Truth applies to every teacher of the Truth (every believer). It was essential that Timothy heed Paul's exhortation here, as Timothy would soon be leaving Ephesus to visit Paul in Rome, with the possibility of never returning.

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where Paul is convinced that the Romans are "full of goodness" (character) and "filled with all knowledge" (cognition) and, therefore, "able also to admonish one another" (competence).

## 2 Timothy 1:13-2:2

### Teaching Outline

Introduction: In introducing 2 Timothy, it was suggested that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy for 3 reasons. One of the reasons was to encourage Timothy to fight false teaching (the other two were: to encourage Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution and to encourage Timothy to come see his father in the faith, Paul). Fighting false teaching involves not only an exposure of it, but also an exposition of the Truth. Accordingly, throughout the epistle there is an emphasis upon the Word of God (2:15, 3:15-17, 4:2, et. al.). In this section of the letter, Paul gives three commands regarding the Truth.

- I. Preserve the Truth (1:13)
  - A. The Truth has a set form (cf. Romans 16:17)
  - B. The Truth makes one spiritually fit (cf. 1 Timothy 4:6; contra 2 Timothy 2:16-17)
  - C. The Truth is to be preserved in a certain fashion
- II. Protect the Truth (1:14; cf. 1 Timothy 6:20)
  - A. The Truth is a stewardship (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, and 1 Timothy 1:11)
  - B. The Truth is protected by the Spirit
- III. Pass On the Truth (2:2; cf. 1:13-14)
  - A. Pass It on to faithful men (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:2)
  - B. Pass It on to capable men

## 2 Timothy 2:3-13

### **Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (2:3)**

Paul once again (cf. 1:8) exhorts Timothy to join him in suffering for the gospel (“**Suffer hardship with *me*”**; see comments on the same verb, translated “join with in suffering,” in 1:8; cf. 2:9 and 4:5, which use a related verb). Paul was suffering for the gospel (cf. 1:12 and 2:9); Timothy was to do so, as well (cf. 4:5). By God’s grace (see 2:1 and comments on), he could. Mounce (p. 507) may be correct in suggesting that with these words [including presumably Paul’s words to Timothy in 1:8] Paul is preparing Timothy for any suffering he may face when he comes to see Paul in Rome.

To illustrate the kind of hardship of which he is speaking, Paul uses a military analogy<sup>76</sup> (“**as a good soldier of Christ Jesus**”). Considering the circumstances under which Paul wrote (being continually guarded by Roman soldiers), this particular analogy has added significance. Timothy is to suffer hardship as a good soldier suffers hardship. While Paul specifically has Timothy in mind, this command applies to every minister of the gospel in particular and to every Christian in general. Every believer is a soldier of Christ. The question for the Christian is not: Am I a soldier of Christ? The question is: Am I a good soldier of Christ? According to this verse, a good soldier of Christ is one who is so committed to the cause of his Commander-in-Chief that he is willing to suffer for it.

### **No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (2:4)**

Paul continues the soldier analogy he began in verse three. A good soldier of Christ is willing to suffer for the cause of his Commander-in-Chief (verse 3) because he is devoted to His cause (verse 4). Such a soldier does not allow outside interests to divert his focus (“**No soldier in active service entangles**

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<sup>76</sup>Paul is fond of using military analogies. See 2 Corinthians 6:7, 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:11-17, Philippians 2:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, 1 Timothy 1:18, and Philemon 2.

**himself in the affairs of everyday life<sup>77</sup>”).<sup>78</sup> With these words, Paul is not prohibiting Timothy or other ministers of the gospel from marrying (see 1 Corinthians 9:5, 1 Timothy 3:2, 4:3, and Titus 1:6) or “moonlighting” (Paul plied his tent-making trade while serving in the ministry, Acts 18:3), unless these outside interests entangle<sup>79</sup>, i.e., prevent one from carrying out his calling. “The analogy teaches that ministers should not be distracted by the normal affairs of everyday life in such a way that they cannot and do not give themselves wholeheartedly to their commander and his orders” (Knight, p. 393).**

A good soldier of Christ is devoted to the cause of Christ because he wants to please his Commander-in-Chief (“**so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier**”). A good soldier of Christ is one whose aim is to please Christ (see especially 2 Corinthians 5:9, Ephesians 5:10, and Colossians 1:10; cf. John 8:29, Romans 12:1, 14:18, Galatians 1:10, Philippians 4:18, Colossians 3:20, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 4:1, Hebrews 11:5, 13:16, 21, 1 Peter 2:5, and 1 John 3:22). Is our foremost desire to please Christ, or is it to please self<sup>80</sup> and/or other men (Galatians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:4)? Notice that the Christian soldier does not enlist himself in Christ’s army; rather, Christ enlists him.

**Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. (2:5)**

Making more or less the same point he did in verses three and four (“**Also**”), a point that will be discussed in the comments on verse seven below, Paul moves from a military analogy to an athletic one (“**if anyone competes as an athlete**”).

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<sup>77</sup>BAGD (p. 256) suggests “become entangled in civilian pursuits.” BAGD is an acronym for the leading Greek lexicon (≈ dictionary), a work by men named Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker.

<sup>78</sup>In a similar vein, the code of the fourth century Roman general, and later emperor, Theodosius (quoted in Hughes, p. 195) read: “We forbid men engaged in military service to engage in civilian occupations.”

<sup>79</sup>According to BAGD (p. 256), the Greek verb translated “entangles” was used outside of the New Testament “of sheep whose wool is caught in thorns” and “of hares who are caught in thorns.”

<sup>80</sup>It has been said: “There are only two choices on the shelf: pleasing God or pleasing self.”

Just as Paul was fond of using military analogies (see footnote 76), so he was fond of using athletic ones (see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:12-14, 1 Timothy 4:7-8, 6:12, and 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Paul likely has the Greek Isthmian games (≈ the modern Olympics) in mind when he writes these words. Accordingly, the “**prize**” was the crown or wreath of laurel leaves given to the victor (the “perishable wreath” spoken of in 1 Corinthians 9:25; ≈ the modern Olympic gold medal). In order for the athlete to win this prize, he had to compete according to a strict set of rules, rules that not only governed the event itself, but also the ten-month training period leading up to the event. If any of these rules were broken, the athlete would be disqualified and, therefore, fail to win the prize he was seeking (“**he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules**”).<sup>81</sup> Paul uses this analogy to encourage Timothy to keep “competing” (enduring) and to do so “lawfully” (KJV), so that he might not disqualify himself (1 Corinthians 9:27), but rather that he might receive his prize at the end of the race (2 Timothy 4:7-8; cf. James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10).

### **The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. (2:6)**

Paul now gives a third analogy, an agricultural one, the point of which is the same as the previous two analogies. While Paul’s words in this verse are consistent with the biblical precept that ministers of the gospel are to receive financial remuneration (see 1 Corinthians 9:6-14, especially verse 7, as well as Galatians 6:6 and 1 Timothy 5:17-18), this is likely not Paul’s point here. Paul’s point is that endurance is a prerequisite to reward. The farmer must work hard<sup>82</sup> before he can receive the reward of the harvest.<sup>83</sup> Timothy must endure the hardship that

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<sup>81</sup>The writer is reminded of the “doping” disqualifications at the 2004 Olympic games in Athens.

<sup>82</sup>The Greek participle translated “hard-working” is one that connotes labor to the point of exhaustion. It is used elsewhere by Paul of his own labors in 1 Corinthians 4:12, 15:10, Galatians 4:11, Philippians 2:16, Colossians 1:29, 2 Thessalonians 3:8, and 1 Timothy 4:10. As 1 Corinthians 15:10 and Colossians 1:29 make clear, this labor was divinely-enabled labor, a point consistent with the overall context within which this farming analogy is used (see 2:1 and comments on).

<sup>83</sup>Accordingly, Calvin (p. 212) translates: “The husbandman must labour before he receive the

comes with cultivating the crop (his ministry in Ephesus) before he can harvest it and enjoy its fruits. While eschatological (end time) reward is primarily in view, present reward is also involved. As Hiebert (p. 57) states: “The fruits of the minister are produced through his preaching of the Gospel, producing fruit in the life of others. But in thus producing fruits in the lives of others he is the first to partake of the blessings of the Gospel. He has the reward already in this life of partaking year by year of the fruits of his labors, but he will reap the harvest of his labors in the glory beyond.”

**Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. (2:7)**

Paul exhorts Timothy to give concentrated thought to what he has just said in the previous four verses (“**Consider what I say**”; cf. 1 Timothy 4:15). By doing so, Timothy would be able to grasp the significance and ramifications of the analogies of the soldier (verses 3-4), the athlete (verse 5), and the farmer (verse 6). The point of the analogies, confirmed by the succeeding context (see comments on verses 8, 10, and 12), is that, as Kent (p. 262) has put it, “before the crown there must be the cross” or, as others have put it, “no pain, no gain.” Timothy must be willing to endure the pain of the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer in order to receive the gain awaiting him in the future. As C. K. Barrett (quoted in Hughes, pp. 196-197) has put it: “Beyond warfare is victory, beyond the athlete’s effort is the prize, and beyond agricultural labor is the crop.” By reminding Timothy of such future gain, Paul is thereby motivating him to endure present pain (cf. Romans 8:16-25 and 1 Corinthians 15:58). At the end of the epistle (4:6-8), Paul will use himself as an example of one who had so endured and who would, thus, shortly receive his reward.

Though Timothy was responsible to apply his intellect to understand what Paul was saying (“Consider what I say” is an imperative, i.e., a command), he would not have to do so apart from God’s help (“**for the Lord will give you understanding in everything**”).<sup>84</sup> Most likely, Paul is speaking of illumination, the supernatural,

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fruits.”

<sup>84</sup>Once again (see 2:1 and comments on), Timothy is able to do what Paul is commanding him to do only because of God’s enablement.

Spirit-wrought ability to grasp the certainty and significance of Scripture. To the degree that Timothy applied himself to understand Paul's words, to that degree Christ ("**the Lord**"), by His Spirit (Acts 16:7, Romans 8:9, Galatians 4:6, Philippians 1:19, and 1 Peter 1:11), would give Timothy the ability to understand their full import. The assurance that God would illuminate his mind as he sought to understand Paul's words undoubtedly motivated Timothy to seek such understanding.<sup>85</sup>

### **Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, (2:8)**

In words very much reminiscent of Romans 1:1-4 and through the use of what may have been an early Christian creedal or catechistic statement, Paul sets before Timothy the ultimate inspiration/motivation for enduring pain on the pathway to gain, Jesus Christ ("**Remember Jesus Christ**"<sup>86</sup>; see especially Hebrews 12:2-3 in this regard).<sup>87</sup> "Remember" is in the present tense, indicating that Timothy was to continually keep the example of Christ in the forefront of his mind.

Christ's gain, His exaltation, included His resurrection ("**risen from the dead**"). The Greek participle translated "**risen**" is in the perfect tense (as it is in 1 Corinthians 15:4), emphasizing the fact that Christ remains risen (cf. Romans 6:9 and Revelation 1:18).<sup>88</sup> By mentioning Christ's resurrection, Paul is likely drawing attention to His deity (a la Romans 1:4).<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Accordingly, Knight (p. 396) calls Paul's words at the end of verse seven "a promise that Paul gives to Timothy in order to encourage the response that he has just urged on Timothy [in the first half of the verse]."

<sup>86</sup>Wiersbe (p. 131) gives as analogies two battle cries from American history: "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

<sup>87</sup>Litfin (p. 753) calls Christ "the ultimate example of endurance leading to success."

<sup>88</sup>Hiebert (pp. 58-59) writes in this regard: "The perfect tense of the participle rendered 'risen' denotes not merely the fact of His resurrection but that He is now the ever-living risen Lord. The human Jesus who once suffered and died is no longer in the tomb, but is alive forevermore and able to aid and sustain Timothy, and every afflicted believer."

<sup>89</sup>By mentioning Christ's resurrection, Paul may also be responding to one of the errors of the

Christ, being the promised Messiah, was a “**descendant of David**” (cf. Matthew 1:1, 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30-31//Mark 10:47-48//Luke 18:38-39, Matthew 21:9, 15, 22:42//Mark 12:35//Luke 20:41, John 7:42, Acts 2:30, 13:22-23, Romans 1:3, and Revelation 22:16). By mentioning Christ’s lineage, Paul is likely emphasizing His humanity (a la Romans 1:3).<sup>90</sup>

Both Christ’s deity (“risen from the dead”; cf. Romans 1:4, 10:9, and 1 Corinthians 15:4) and His humanity (“descendant of David”; cf. Romans 1:3) are key components of the gospel (“**according to my gospel**”), His humanity making His sinless life (Romans 8:3) and sacrificial death (Hebrews 2:14-17) possible and His deity making His life and death effectual for man’s salvation. The fact that Paul calls the gospel “**my**” gospel, as he does in Romans 2:16 and 16:25 (cf. “our” gospel in 2 Corinthians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, and 2 Thessalonians 2:14), may be his way of contrasting the gospel he was preaching with the false gospel the false teachers in Ephesus were preaching.

**for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. (2:9)**

Paul once again (cf. 1:8 and 12) makes mention of the fact that he is suffering for the sake of the gospel (“**for which I suffer hardship**”), the “**which**” referring back to the word, “gospel” at the end of verse eight. The Greek verb translated “**I suffer hardship**” is *kakopatheo* (literally “to suffer harm”; cf. 4:5, where the same verb is translated “endure hardship”), a cognate of *sugkakopatheo* (literally “to suffer harm with”; see comments on 1:8) in 1:8 and 2:3.

The extent or degree of Paul’s suffering for the sake of the gospel was “**even to imprisonment as a criminal**” (cf. the same Greek prepositional phrase used elsewhere in the New Testament with the idea of extent or degree: “to the point

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false teachers in Ephesus (see 2:18).

<sup>90</sup>By mentioning Christ’s lineage, Paul may also be once again (cf. comments on “the way my forefathers did” in 1:3) emphasizing the continuity of his gospel with the religion of the Old Testament as opposed to the discontinuity of the false gospel of the false teachers in Ephesus with the same.

of death” in Philippians 2:8 and “to the point of shedding blood” in Hebrews 12:4). The Greek word translated “**criminal**” literally means “evil worker” (*kakourgos*, from *kakos*, “evil” + *ergon*, “work”). It is used elsewhere in the New Testament of the two “criminals” crucified with Jesus (see Luke 23:32, 33, and 39). As his Lord did before him, Paul suffered the ignominy of being treated as a criminal, and not just a “common” criminal, but a contemptible one, as “the word translated ‘criminal’ is a strong one, a technical term used for violent people—murderers, thieves, traitors who were punished by torture” (Hughes, p. 203).

But, praise God, though the Lord’s messenger may be bound, His message is never so (“**but the word of God is not imprisoned**”)!<sup>91</sup> As Martin Luther wrote in the hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”: “The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still.”<sup>92</sup> Paul is clearly making a wordplay at this point with the noun, “imprisonment” (Greek *desmon*) in the first half of the verse and the verb, “imprisoned” (Greek *dedetai*) in the second half of the verse. The verb translated “**imprisoned**” is in the perfect tense, signifying that the Word of God has not been bound and will continue not to be. In Paul’s first Roman imprisonment, though he himself was imprisoned (under house arrest), God’s Word was not (see Acts 28:31 and Philippians 1:12-18). Likewise, in this, his second Roman imprisonment, though he himself was imprisoned (in the Mamertime prison), God’s Word was not (see 4:17).<sup>93</sup>

**For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and with it* eternal glory. (2:10)**

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<sup>91</sup>I’m borrowing the messenger-message terminology from Fee (p. 247) and Mounce (p. 514).

<sup>92</sup>“A famous picture in the convent library in Erfurt, Germany, depicts young Martin Luther poring over a copy of Scripture in the morning light. The dawn steals through the open lattice, illuminating the Bible and his eager face. A broken chain hangs from the Bible” (Hughes, p. 203).

<sup>93</sup>During Paul’s temporary imprisonment in Philippi in Acts 16, God’s Word was not imprisoned, as the Philippian jailer and his household came to faith in Christ through the witness of the prisoners, Paul and Silas.

Paul continues the focus on his imprisonment for the sake of the gospel he began in verse nine. What is the “**reason**” Paul endures all things for the elect (“**For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen**”)? Some view it as being what Paul has just previously said at the end of verse nine, the fact that God’s message is not bound, though His messenger may be (so Hendriksen). Others view it as being what Paul is about to say at the end of verse ten, that the elect may obtain salvation (so Knight). In the opinion of this writer, the second option is preferable.

The Greek verb translated “**endure**” literally means to abide or remain under (*hupomeno*, from the Greek verb, *meno*, “to abide or remain” + the Greek preposition, *hupo*, “under”). It connotes an active resistance as opposed to a passive resignation. Fee (p. 250) describes it as holding one’s ground patiently in trouble or affliction. Paul was willing to actively abide or remain under the trial of imprisonment until God in His time made a way of escape (for Paul, the escape would prove to be martyrdom).

While Paul certainly had a stake in his own endurance (4:6-8), here he gives as the reason for it the benefit of other believers (“**for the sake of those who are chosen**”; cf. 2 Corinthians 1:6, Ephesians 3:1, 13, Colossians 1:24, and Titus 1:1). By enduring, Paul would not only ensure his own salvation, but also the salvation of others (cf. 1 Timothy 4:16). The elect Paul has in mind may include both those who had already come to Christ and those who yet would. In regards to the first, see 1 Timothy 4:16. In regards to the second, see Acts 18:9-10. As Paul endured the trial of imprisonment, those already saved would be inspired to “keep the faith” in spite of their hardships. Furthermore, God would use the testimony of Paul’s endurance of hardship (as He apparently did in Acts 16 and Philippians 1; cf. footnote 7) to bring others to faith in Christ. Truly, our “toil is not *in vain* in the Lord”; therefore, let us “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58)! The witness of our lips and of our lives is the means God powerfully uses to keep fellow believers in the faith and to bring unbelievers to the faith.

The reason Paul endures all things for the sake of God’s own is “**so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and with it* eternal glory.**” As he

endures his imprisonment, Paul is thinking not only of himself (not an “I’ve got mine; you get yours” mentality), but also of other believers, both present and future (“**so that they also**”).

Salvation is “**in Christ Jesus**” (cf. 3:15) and in Christ Jesus alone, for He is the only One who could have done and did do (live a sinless life and die an infinitely valuable death) what was required for man’s salvation. The “icing on the cake” of salvation is “**eternal glory**<sup>94</sup>” (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17, 2 Thessalonians 2:14, and 1 Peter 5:10), i.e., everlasting existence in heaven.

As with the analogies of verses 3-6 and the example of Christ in verse 8, with this verse Paul once again makes the point that pain is a prerequisite to gain/the cross comes before the crown. In this case, Paul’s pain/cross is the pathway not only to his own gain/crown, but also to the gain/crown of other believers. Our lives have eternal repercussions, both for ourselves and for others.

**It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; (2:11)**

In what most interpreters believe was an early Christian hymn (so Mounce, Hiebert, Wallis, Kostenberger, Earle, and Hendriksen; Kent calls it a hymn or a confession; Fee calls it a hymn or a poem; Hughes calls it a poem; Knight calls it a baptismal confession), likely penned by Paul (so Fee, Kostenberger, and Mounce), Paul recites a “trustworthy statement” (“**It is a trustworthy statement**”; KJV: “faithful saying”; cf. 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9, and Titus 3:8 for other such trustworthy statements/faithful sayings in the Pastoral Epistles) in verses 11-13.

The Greek adjective translated “**trustworthy**,” as it does in 2:2 (see comments on), connotes reliability, dependability. In other words, this is a statement you can “take to the bank.” The most likely reason Paul inserted this hymn at this point in

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<sup>94</sup>“Since [the Greek word for glory] is used normally in the NT of God’s glory, majesty, and sublimity, it is natural that it also be used of the future eternal state and realm of existence in which his splendor is everywhere and immediately present and, as here, of that in which the redeemed participate in a marvelous and endless way as they behold his splendor in a full and direct way” (Knight, p. 400).

the epistle is articulated by Knight (p. 402): “The saying seems to be cited because its emphasis on ‘enduring’ [v. 12] undergirds Paul’s statement about ‘enduring’ [v. 10] ....” This is the likely reason for the “**For**” that begins the statement (cf. Fee, p. 248, who sees the “For” as connecting the statement with all Paul says in verses 1-10, not just with verse 10).

The first stanza of the hymn summarizes the teaching of Romans 6:1-11, that those who have been united with Christ in His death have also been united with Him in His resurrection (“**if we died with Him, we will also live with Him**”; besides Romans 6:1-11, these same truths are taught in Galatians 2:20, Colossians 2:12-13, 20, and 3:1). While there are some interpreters who view “**died**” as referring to physical death, such as martyrdom (so Hiebert), Paul most likely has spiritual death (i.e., death to sin’s bondage) in mind (so Knight). Those who have died with Christ (from a human perspective, at the moment of conversion) also live with Him. The life Paul has in mind likely includes not only the believer’s present existence on earth (sanctification), but also his future existence in heaven (glorification). See 1 Timothy 4:8 in this regard.

**If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; (2:12)**

The second stanza of the four-stanza hymn found in verses 11-13 (“**If we endure, we will also reign with Him**”) is, as has been suggested (see comments on verse 11), the reason for the hymn’s inclusion in this section of the epistle. Once again (see comments on verses 6, 7, 8, and 10), Paul is making the point that pain is a prerequisite to gain. If the believer endures the pain of the present/the “sufferings of this present time” (Romans 8:18), he will receive the gain of glory (cf. Matthew 10:22, 24:13//Mark 13:13, Romans 8:17-18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, James 1:12, and 1 Peter 5:1). The gain of glory includes reigning with Christ (“**we will also reign with Him**”; cf. Revelation 3:21, 20:4, and 6, as well as Romans 8:17).

The third stanza of the hymn stands in direct contrast to the second one. In contrast to those who endure (verse 12a) are those who apostatize (verse 12b). Those who so deny (NIV: “disown”) Christ will be denied by Christ (“**If we deny Him, He also will deny us**”; cf. Matthew 10:33//Luke 12:9), with this denial coming on Judgment Day (see Matthew 7:23). In light of the historical

circumstances surrounding the recording of these words, such a turning away from the faith was a real possibility. Most interpreters are of the opinion that Paul is speaking of apostasy at this point, a turning away from the Christian faith by one who once professed it (e.g., Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2:17-18; cf. 2 Peter 2:1 and Jude 4), rather than a temporary lapse (e.g., Peter just prior to Christ's crucifixion). As Knight (p. 406) states: "The finality of [Christ's] denial of those who have denied him will be as permanent and decisive as theirs has been of him, and will thus not be as in Peter's case, where forgiveness was sought and received. For that situation something else must be said, and to that the saying turns with its fourth and last statement."

### **If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. (2:13)**

The fourth and final stanza of the hymn is a corollary of the second and third ones. While a true believer will not apostatize, neither will he perfectly endure. Though at times believers fail to persevere in good works, God remains faithful to His promises to preserve the believer ("**If we are faithless, He remains faithful**"; cf. Romans 3:3-4). See especially 1 Corinthians 1:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, and Hebrews 10:23 in this regard. For the nuance of the Greek adjective translated "faithful," see comments on 2:2.

God is faithful to such promises because faithfulness is part of His very essence ("**for He cannot deny Himself**"; see 1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:13, 2 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, Hebrews 10:23, 11:11, and 1 Peter 4:19). There are certain things God cannot do. One of them is act contrary to His nature. Were God to be unfaithful, He would cease to exist. Praise be to God, His faithfulness to us is based, not upon our fickle, fallen, faithless nature, but upon His immutable (unchanging and unchangeable) nature<sup>95</sup>!

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<sup>95</sup>"God is always himself" (Hughes, p. 206 and Maclaren, p. 60).

## 2 Timothy 2:3-13

### Teaching Outline

Introduction: In introducing 2 Timothy, it was suggested that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy for three reasons. One of these reasons was to encourage Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution (the other two were: to encourage Timothy to fight false teaching and to encourage Timothy to come see his father in the faith, Paul). In this section of the letter, Paul encourages Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution by teaching him a principle, illustrated by three pictures, two people, and a poem.

- I. Pictures (2:3-6)
  - A. An armed forces picture (2:3-4)
    1. A good soldier endures hardness/is faithful (2:3)
    2. A good soldier does not entangle himself/is focused (2:4)
      - a. Not a prohibition of marriage or of “moonlighting”
      - b. But a protection of his mission and a pleasing of his Commander
  - B. An athletic picture (2:5)
    1. A good athlete has character
    2. A good athlete is crowned
  - C. An agricultural picture (2:6)
    1. A good farmer exerts himself
    2. A good farmer eats what he reaps
- II. Principle (2:7): perseverance leads to a prize (1 Corinthians 15:58 and James 1:12)
- III. People (2:8-10)
  - A. Christ (2:8; cf. Hebrews 12:2-3)
  - B. Paul (2:9-10; cf. 4:7-8)
    1. Messenger
    2. Message
    3. Motive

## 2 Timothy 2:14-26

Paul now begins a new major section in the book of 2 Timothy by turning his focus to the false teachers in Ephesus.<sup>96</sup> Most likely, it is the mention of apostasy in 2:12b that launches this section.

**Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless *and leads* to the ruin of the hearers. (2:14)**

Paul begins this section of the letter by exhorting Timothy to “**Remind *them* of these things.**” A minister of the gospel must continually be reminding (the Greek verb translated “remind” is in the present tense; so NIV: “keep reminding them”) his hearers of the Truth (cf. Titus 3:1, 2 Peter 1:12, 3:1, and Jude 5).<sup>97</sup> The “*them*” (rightly supplied by the translators and, thus, italicized in the NASB) is perhaps a reference to the “faithful men” to whom Timothy was to entrust the Truth (2:2; so Hendriksen and Knight). It may also be a reference to the believers in Ephesus to whom Timothy was ministering. The “**these things**” is most likely a reference to the “trustworthy statement”/ “faithful saying” of 2:11-13 (so Hiebert, Wemp, Hughes, Mounce, and Fee<sup>98</sup>), though Knight views it generally as referring to everything Paul had taught Timothy (“the things” of 2:2) and specifically to everything Paul had just said to Timothy in 2:3-13.

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<sup>96</sup>According to Mounce, the body of the epistle (1:6-4:8) can be divided into two major sections: 1:6-2:13 and 2:14-4:8.

<sup>97</sup>Though certainly not an endorsement of the man, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Danish philosopher and theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, once said something to the effect that most people wrongly view the preacher as an actor and the congregation as an audience, silently grading his performance, when in reality we are the actors, God is the audience, and the preacher is the prompter, reminding us of our lost lines.

<sup>98</sup>Fee (p. 254) writes: “... [W]hat makes most sense of the context is to see it as referring specifically to the preceding ‘trustworthy saying’ (cf. Titus 3:8). That is, in light of the spreading ‘gangrene’ (v. 17) of the false teachings, keep reminding your people of the need for perseverance and of the awful consequences of rejecting Christ.”

Not only was Timothy to remind his hearers of the Truth, but he was also to warn them of falsehood (“**and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words**”). The gravity of this warning (“**solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God**”; cf. 1 Timothy 5:21, 6:13, and 2 Timothy 4:1) is seen by the fact that Timothy is to give it “under the very eye and with the full approval of God” (Hendriksen, p. 183). This directive is the first clear clue in the epistle that false teaching was a problem in Ephesus. One characteristic of this teaching was that it involved warring over words (cf. 1 Timothy 6:4 and Titus 3:9). The Greek verb translated “**to wrangle about words**” (*logomacheo*; cf. the noun form of this verb, translated “disputes about words” in 1 Timothy 6:4) literally means to fight with words (the Greek noun *logos*, “word” + the Greek verb *machomai*, “to fight”).<sup>99</sup>

The problem with such “word wars” was their detrimental effect (“**which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers**”). Not only were they of no positive value (“**useless**”; cf. Titus 3:9), but they were also downright destructive. The Greek noun translated “**ruin**” (*katastrophe*, from which we get our English word, “catastrophe”) literally means to turn upside down (the Greek preposition, *kata*, “down” + the Greek verb, *strepho*, “to turn”; the same word is used in 2 Peter 2:6 to describe the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah). Doctrine determines behavior/creed leads to deed. Bad belief leads to bad behavior (cf. 1 Timothy 1:10, 6:3-5, 2 Timothy 2:16, and 23).

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth<sup>100</sup>. (2:15)**

Sandwiched between Paul’s warning regarding the negative (false teaching) in verses 14 and 16-18 is Paul’s exhortation to Timothy regarding the positive (the Truth) here in verse 15. In contrast to the false teachers, who had gone astray

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<sup>99</sup>Hendriksen (p. 260) characterizes the false teaching as “word-battles.” Hughes (p. 208), following Walter Lock, characterizes the false teachers as “word-warriors.”

<sup>100</sup>This verse is the theme verse for the children’s program, AWANA, AWANA being an acronym for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed.

from the Truth (verse 18), Timothy was to make every effort to seek God's approval by accurately handling the Truth. The best way to expose falsehood is a complete and accurate exposition of God's Word, what Calvin (p. 221) calls "the best and most excellent remedy."

Paul exhorts Timothy to "**be diligent to present yourself approved to God.**" The Greek verb translated "**be diligent**" is translated elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles as "make every effort" (2 Timothy 4:9, 21, and Titus 3:12).<sup>101</sup> Timothy was to make every effort to gain God's approval (see comments on 2:4 on pleasing God, as well as 2 Corinthians 10:18). The Greek verb translated "**present**" connotes accountability (see Acts 27:24 and Romans 14:10, where the verb is found in judicial settings and translated "stand"). The Greek adjective translated "**approved**" also connotes accountability. It has the idea of being "tried and true," of being tested and passing the test/being found genuine. In other words, Timothy was to aspire to be approved by God, unlike the false teachers, who were unapproved (see 3:8, where the false teachers are called "rejected," the antonym of the Greek adjective translated "approved" here in verse 15; cf. Titus 1:16, where "worthless" is a translation of the same antonym).

The way Timothy<sup>102</sup> would earn God's approval was by being an unashamed workman, one who accurately handled God's Word ("**as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth**"). "**Workman**" signifies the fact that the ministry of the Word, when properly done ("**accurately handling**"), is a laborious task (cf. 1 Timothy 5:17-18). The minister who so ministers the Word will have no need to be ashamed when he one day stands

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<sup>101</sup>According to Hiebert (p. 67), the verb means "to make haste, to exert oneself, to be zealous or eager, to give diligence." Outside of the Pastoral Epistles, it is translated "eager" (in Galatians 2:10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:17) and "diligent" (in Ephesians 4:3 and 2 Peter 1:10). The KJV's translation of this verb in 2 Timothy 2:15 ("study") has unfortunately caused some to improperly use it as a proof-text for diligence in doing one's schoolwork. While such diligence is certainly called for and can be supported by biblical principle, it cannot be supported by this text (unless the school in question is a seminary or the like).

<sup>102</sup>As with the soldier analogy in 2:3-4, so the worker analogy here in 2:15 specifically applies to Timothy, but can also be applied to every minister of the gospel in particular and to every believer in general. May we all one day stand before our Lord and Savior approved, rather than ashamed, because we made every effort/worked hard to accurately handle His Word.

before the One who entrusted the Truth to him (cf. comments on 1:14).<sup>103</sup> The proper ministry of God’s Word (“**the word of truth**”; cf. Psalm 119:43, John 17:17, 2 Corinthians 6:7, Ephesians 1:13, Colossians 1:5, and James 1:18; by using the word, “**truth**,” Paul may be making a contrast with the falsehood of the false teachers) involves “**accurately handling**” it. The Greek participle translated “accurately handling” (*orthotomeo*) literally means “to cut straight” (the Greek adjective, *orthos*, “straight” + the Greek verb, *temno*, “to cut”). While all agree that Paul is speaking metaphorically, there is some question as to the precise point of the metaphor. Is the cutting idea prominent and, if so, does Paul have a specific type of “workman” in mind?<sup>104</sup> More recent interpreters (so Hendriksen, Knight, Towner, and Mounce) are of the opinion that the cutting idea is not the prominent one, but rather that the participle is purely metaphorical for properly handling God’s Word (thus, the more prominent idea is not cutting, but straight). This proper handling would include both accurate interpretation<sup>105</sup> and accurate proclamation of the Word,<sup>106</sup> neither of which the false teachers were doing. For examples of such improper handling, see 2 Corinthians 2:17, 4:2, and 2 Peter 3:16.

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<sup>103</sup>“This command draws the picture of a workman who has done his work well and therefore can submit it to his superior without hesitation or embarrassment” (Hughes, p. 210).

<sup>104</sup>Kent (p. 266) writes in this regard: “The metaphor has been understood of apportioning food, plowing, quarrying, or laying out a road. Since the context does not provide any light as to what type of workman was in Paul’s mind, the interpreter dare not dogmatize. Perhaps he was thinking of his own craft, tentmaking, and pictures the artisan trimming the hides precisely so that they will fit together.” Wiersbe (p. 136), suggesting that Paul has a builder in mind, makes the point that “in Paul’s day, a builder was fined if he failed to follow the specifications.”

<sup>105</sup>This verse (based on the KJV rendering “rightly dividing the word of truth”) has been improperly used as a proof-text for dispensationalism. In 1888, dispensationalist C.I. Scofield published *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. In 1920, dispensationalist Clarence Larkin published *Rightly Dividing the Word*. In 1991, covenant theologian John Gerstner published an anti-dispensational book entitled *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*. While, in the belief of this writer, heeding Paul’s admonition in this verse will lead one to espouse dispensationalism, this verse should not be used as a proof-text for dispensationalism.

<sup>106</sup>Or, as Hughes (p. 209) puts it, getting it straight and giving it straight.

**But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, (2:16)**

Paul once again (cf. verse 14) directly turns his focus to the false teachers, commanding Timothy to avoid their teaching (“**But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter**”; cf. 1 Timothy 6:20). See also 2:21, where Paul implicitly orders Timothy to separate from the false teachers (“if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*”), and 2:23, where Paul explicitly orders Timothy to separate from the false teaching of the false teachers (“But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations”). See also 1 Timothy 4:7, 6:20, and Titus 3:9, where Paul explicitly orders Timothy and Titus respectively to separate from the false teaching of the false teachers. Presumably based upon what Paul says in Titus 3:9 (and perhaps also 1 Timothy 1:6-7), Hendriksen (pp. 263-264) describes the “**worldly and empty chatter**” of the false teachers as “unholy, useless disputes about fictitious genealogical histories ... and hair-splitting debates about niceties in the law of Moses.”

Paul gives two reasons why he wants Timothy to avoid the false teachers and their teachings. The first reason (“**for**”) is given at the end of verse 16: “**it will lead to further ungodliness**” (or, as the NIV puts it, “those who indulge in it [the “godless chatter”] will become more and more ungodly”). Once again (cf. verse 14), bad belief leads to bad behavior. While the NASB’s “**it**” suggests that it was the false teaching of the false teachers (verse 16a) that would lead to further ungodliness, which was certainly true, most interpreters (so Earle, Hendriksen, Hiebert, Knight, Fee, Lea, and Mounce; cf. NASB margin) are of the opinion that Paul is technically speaking, not of the false teaching of the false teachers, but of the false teachers themselves. Either way, the point is the same: bad belief leads to bad behavior; therefore, bad belief and those who espouse it are to be avoided.

In the opinion of many interpreters (so Hiebert, Hendriksen, Mounce, Fee, and Knight), Paul’s use of the Greek verb translated “**will lead**” is an ironical jab at the false teachers (cf. 1 Timothy 4:15, 2 Timothy 3:9, and 13). As Knight (p. 413) states: “It may be that these people regarded themselves as ‘progressives’ and that Paul picks up the verb from their usage, ironically indicating that their progress is in ungodliness.” Fee (p. 255) likewise states: “...[T]he word ‘will advance’ is probably a slogan related to the elitist nature of their teaching. Thus, with a fine piece of irony, Paul allows that they are ‘advancing’ all right, but their

advance will be ‘all the more in ungodliness’ ....”

**and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, (2:17)**

Paul gives a second reason (“**and**”) why he wants Timothy to avoid the false teachers and their teachings: “**their talk will spread like gangrene**” spreads. Once again (cf. verse 16b), the progression (“**will spread**”) of the false teachers and their teaching is not a positive one. “**Talk**” is the Greek noun, *logos*, translated “word” in verse 15 (“word of truth”); Paul is likely drawing a contrast between the message of Timothy (verse 15) and the message of the false teachers (verse 17). “**Gangrene**” (the Greek word is *gaggraina*) is “decay of tissue in a part of the body where the blood supply is obstructed by injury, disease, etc., which continually spreads” (Knight, p. 413). Once again (cf. comments on “sound” in 1:13), the influence of Luke, the physician and Paul’s likely amanuensis for this letter, seems to be shining through. Verse 17a is a graphic illustration of the truth of verse 14 that false teaching leads to the ruin of the hearers. Just as gangrene demands amputation, so false teaching must be excised from the professing church.

As he did in 1:15, Paul singles out two individuals for censure. Two of the false teachers in Ephesus were men by the name of Hymenaeus and Philetus (“**Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus**”). As in 1:15, the most likely reason Paul mentions these two men specifically is because they were ringleaders among the false teachers. Hymenaeus is likely the same man mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20, a man whom, along with a man by the name of Alexander, Paul excommunicated from the church in Ephesus (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5). In spite of this discipline, Hymenaeus continued to disseminate his diseased doctrine in Ephesus, recruiting a new “sidekick” (Hughes, p. 211), Philetus, in the process. This is the only mention of Philetus in Scripture; thus, nothing more is known of him.

**men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. (2:18)**

For the first and only time in the epistle of 2 Timothy, Paul identifies one of the specific theological errors of the false teaching in Ephesus (“**men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place**”).

Hymenaeus and Philetus (“*men*”) had strayed from the truth (“**who have gone astray from the truth**”; cf. 1 Timothy 1:6 and 6:21), particularly straying from the truth of the resurrection (“**saying that the resurrection has already taken place**”). Most interpreters (so Kent, Hiebert, Litfin, Earle, Wiersbe, Kent, and Fee) are of the persuasion that these false teachers were denying the fact of physical/bodily resurrection (likely due to an underlying “dualism” that viewed the material as evil and the spiritual as good), espousing a spiritual resurrection only (at the point of conversion or perhaps baptism)<sup>107</sup> based upon a distortion of Paul’s teaching (2 Peter 3:16) on the subject, as reflected in such passages as Romans 6:4-5, Ephesians 2:5, and Colossians 2:12-13. In espousing such a view, these false teachers were essentially claiming that they had already received the glorified life that comes with resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:8), that they were already living in the end times (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:2). As Fee (p. 256) states: “This is probably some form of over-realized eschatology, that is, that the fullness of the End, especially the resurrection, has already been realized in our spiritual dying and rising with Christ.” Kent (p. 267) suggests that the false teachers used this falsehood to cast aspersions at men like Paul and Timothy: “The implication to be drawn was that we should be reigning now, instead of suffering.”

The unfortunate, but unsurprising, result of this falsehood concerning the resurrection was that the faith of some was being overturned (“**and they upset the faith of some**”). Fortunately, at this stage only “**some**” had been infected by the Ephesian heresy; however, unless men like Timothy stood against it, this diabolical (1 Timothy 4:1) disease would continue its deadly spread (verse 17a). The Greek verb translated “**upset**” (cf. Titus 1:11) has the idea of overturn (see the literal use of the term in John 2:15, where Jesus “overturned” the tables of the money changers in the temple). Denial of physical resurrection means a denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ, and denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ means a denial of the faith (see 1 Corinthians 15:12-17). Belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ is a central tenet of the gospel (see Romans 4:25, 10:9, and 1 Corinthians 15:1f).

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<sup>107</sup>“Perhaps they taught that salvation is a resurrection in a spiritual sense, so a believer must not expect a physical resurrection” (Wiersbe, p. 136).

**Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.” (2:19)**

In spite of the inroads being made by the false teachers in Ephesus (“**Nevertheless**”), God’s own were on firm footing (“**the firm foundation of God stands**”).<sup>108</sup> Most interpreters (so Hughes, Knight, Kent, Maclaren, Towner, Lea, Hiebert, Mounce, Calvin, and Hendriksen) are of the opinion that the “**foundation**” is a reference to the true church in general and/or to the true believers in Ephesus in particular (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15). This foundation is “**firm**,” one that cannot be “upset” or overturned like the “faith” of the false professors in verse 18. To further support this point, the Greek verb translated “**stands**” is in the perfect tense, meaning that this foundation has stood and will continue to do so.

The firm foundation of God is inscribed with a seal (“**having this seal**”; this might be compared to the signature of today) containing two inscriptions, the first signifying ownership<sup>109</sup> (“**The Lord knows those who are His**”; according to most interpreters, a citation of Numbers 16:5). The Greek verb translated “**knows**” connotes the relational knowledge of election (cf. Matthew 7:23//Luke 13:27). Accordingly, the verb is in the Greek aorist (i.e., past) tense, signifying the fact that God has known His own from eternity past (so Kent, Hiebert, and Hendriksen). No firmer foundation can be laid.<sup>110</sup>

The second inscription on the firm foundation of God is one that Mounce (p. 529) calls “one of the most strongly worded demands in Scripture,” the demand that

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<sup>108</sup>Knight (p. 409) calls Paul’s words in verse 19 “a counterbalance to the dismay that such apostasy [as that alluded to in verse 18] might bring.” Fee (p. 257) adds: “As always in Paul, Satan does not get the last word; God does. Just as in line 4 of the hymn/poem in verse 13, so here, the final word is not the faithlessness of some (v. 18), but the abiding faithfulness of God.”

<sup>109</sup>“What is intended is the ‘seal’ of ownership that the architect or owner would have inscribed on the foundation stone (similar in some ways to our modern cornerstones)” (Fee, p. 257).

<sup>110</sup>“God’s building rests not on the shaky foundation that we know God but that he knows us” (Fee, p. 258).

those who are His must be holy (“**and, ‘Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness’**”). In the opinion of many interpreters, Paul is once again quoting from Numbers 16, this time from verses 26. Numbers 16 records the rebellion of Korah, et. al. against Moses and Aaron, an uprising that led to the “downfall” (the earth swallowed them up) of the rebels. By alluding to this incident through these two citations, Paul is thereby likening the false teachers in Ephesus to Korah and his cronies, not exactly the kind of characters with whom one would want to be associated. **“Everyone who names the name of the Lord,”** that is, those who claim to be believers in Christ, must authenticate such a claim by their conduct. This conduct includes separating from sin (“**abstain from wickedness**<sup>111</sup>”).

The two inscriptions on the firm foundation of God go hand-in-hand. As Knight (p. 416) states: “Abstaining from evil is ... the second half of one great truth. God knows and chooses his people, and they manifest that reality by abstaining from evil.” Election invariably leads to a holy life (see John 15:16, Ephesians 1:4, and 1 Peter 1:1-2).<sup>112</sup> Therefore, if you are not holy, you are not His. Though the false teachers in Ephesus may have been naming the name of the Lord/claiming to be Christian, they belied such a claim by their corrupt conduct (cf. Titus 1:16).

**Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. (2:20)**

Paul ended verse 19 by making the point that those who are His must be holy, and that such holiness includes separating from sinful influence, particularly the sinful influence of false teachers and their teachings. In verses 20 and 21, Paul gives an analogy in support of (“**Now**”<sup>113</sup>) this point. The analogy is of a large house that

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<sup>111</sup>In this context, the particular wickedness from which one is to abstain is false teachers and their teaching. This principle of separating from sin may also be legitimately applied to wickedness in any form.

<sup>112</sup>“...[T]he telltale evidence of one’s election is holiness” (R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, p. 25).

<sup>113</sup>The Greek conjunction translated “now” by the NASB shows that verses 19 and 20 are connected.

contains both honorable vessels, those made of gold and silver, and dishonorable (less honorable?) vessels, those made of wood and clay (“**in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor**”; cf. Romans 9:21). Most interpreters (so Calvin, Wallis, Maclaren, Towner, Hendriksen, Hiebert, Knight, Wiersbe, Hughes, Earle, and Kent) see the “**large house**” (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15) as representing the professing church (the visible church). Accordingly, many of these same interpreters (so Wiersbe, Hiebert, Wallis, Hendriksen, and Kent) see the honorable vessels as representing either true believers in general (the invisible church) or true teachers in particular and the dishonorable vessels as representing either false professors in general or false teachers in particular. Mounce (pp. 531-532), however, cautions against pressing the analogy to such specific lengths.

**Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. (2:21)**

Paul applies the analogy of the household vessels started in verse 20 (“**Therefore**”). Those who want to be honorable vessels must separate from sin (“**if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor**”). The Greek verb translated “**cleanses**” is *ekkathairo*, an intensified form of the Greek verb, *kathairo*, “to make clean.” Thus, one might translate “cleanse thoroughly” (so Knight and Mounce). Is the “**these *things***” a reference to the false teachers (so Wiersbe, Hughes, Litfin, Kent, and Knight), the false teaching of the false teachers (so Fee and Towner), or both (so Hiebert, Wallis, Hendriksen, and Mounce)? Most likely, it is primarily a reference to the false teachers and secondarily to their false teachings, since it is difficult to separate the two.

The one who separates from sin will not only be an honorable vessel, but will also be “**sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.**” Separating from sin/cleansing makes one more sanctified (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:1). To be sanctified is to be set apart for a special purpose, to be used by the Master (the Greek word is *despotes*; cf. the same Greek noun, translated “Lord” in Luke 2:29, “Lord” in Acts 4:24, “Master” in 2 Peter 2:1, “Master” in Jude 4, and “Lord” in Revelation 6:10), the Lord, Jesus Christ. The more sanctified a believer becomes, the more prepared he is to be used by the Master in any capacity (“**prepared for every good work**”; cf. Ephesians 2:10, 2 Timothy 3:17, and Titus 3:1). The Greek

verbs translated “**sanctified**” and “**prepared**” are in the passive voice, indicative of the fact that such sanctifying and preparing are ultimately God’s doing.

**Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2:22)**

The thought of separating from sin, particularly the sinful influence of the false teachers and their teaching (cf. verses 14, 16, 19, and 21), continues (“**Now**<sup>114</sup>”), as Paul exhorts Timothy to “**flee from youthful lusts**” (cf. flee from immorality in 1 Corinthians 6:18 and flee from idolatry in 1 Corinthians 10:14). The Greek verb translated “**flee**” is used in Mark 16:8 of the flight of the women from the empty tomb and in Acts 7:29 of Moses’s flight to Midian after his murder of an Egyptian became known. There is some question as to the specific “**lusts**” Paul has in mind. According to Hiebert (p. 76), these lusts are “any and every sinful yearning or craving to which the soul of a young or a comparatively young man is exposed” (cf. Hendriksen, p. 273). Knight (p. 420) is more specific and “context conscious”: “[Paul’s] words about not being quarrelsome, about being patient when wronged (v. 24), and about gentleness when correcting those in opposition (v. 25) may give us some idea of the contrary tendencies of youthfulness about which he is warning. In the final analysis we can only say that this is a possibility: Paul does not say explicitly what he means by ‘youthful desires.’”

Sanctification is not just a matter of the absence of vice (fleeing from youthful lusts), but also (“**and**”) of the presence of virtue (“**pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace**”). See also 1 Timothy 6:11. Not only is the believer to separate from sin, but he is also to run after righteousness. The Greek verb translated “**pursue**,” like the Greek verb translated “flee” before it, connotes an earnest effort.<sup>115</sup> Like Timothy, we are to passionately pursue such virtues as

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<sup>114</sup>Once again (cf. footnote 113), the Greek conjunction translated “now” by the NASB shows that verses 21 and 22 are connected.

<sup>115</sup>According to Robertson (p. 541), the Greek verb translated “pursue” speaks of “a steady pursuit as if in a chase.” According to Hughes (p. 219): “The picture created by Paul’s contrasting commands of ‘flee’ and ‘follow’ (KJV) is dynamic. Timothy was to flee as fast as his feet would carry him away from the headstrong desires of youth .... At the same time he was to sprint, arms stretched out, after righteous conduct ....”

righteousness, faith, love, and peace.<sup>116</sup>

Timothy's pursuit of peace was to be **"with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."** Those who **"call on the Lord"** are believers (see Acts 9:14, 21, 22:16, Romans 10:12-14, and 1 Corinthians 1:2). In contrast to the false teachers, who may have professed (but not possessed) faith in Christ (cf. comments on verse 19), but whose faith was insincere (cf. comments on 1:5), the true believer is one who has a **"pure heart"** (cf. 1 Timothy 1:5). In other words, Timothy was to pursue peaceful relations with true believers, but was not to do so with the false teachers.

**But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. (2:23)**

Once again (cf. verses 14, 16, 19, 21, and 22), the thought of separating from the sinful influence of the false teachers and their teaching comes to the fore. In contrast to (**"But"**) the pursuit of righteousness, etc. called for at the end of verse 22, Timothy is to flee from the false teaching of the false teachers (**"refuse foolish and ignorant speculations"**). The Greek verb translated **"refuse"** is found elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles in 1 Timothy 4:7 (**"have nothing to do with"**), 5:11 (**"refuse"**), and Titus 3:10 (**"reject"**). Paul characterizes the false teaching of the false teachers as **"foolish"** (the Greek word is *moros*; cf. Titus 3:9), a word that in the Jewish mind (remember: though the New Testament writers wrote in Greek, they thought in Hebrew, being Jews) connotes not so much mental defect, as it does moral defect. Paul also characterizes the false teaching of the false teachers as **"ignorant,"** signifying that the false teachers did not know what they were talking about (cf. 1 Timothy 1:7 and 6:4). According to Mounce (p. 534), the Greek noun translated **"speculations"** (cf. the same Greek noun, translated **"controversial questions"** in 1 Timothy 6:4 and **"controversies"** in Titus 3:9, and a similar Greek noun, translated **"speculation"** in 1 Timothy 1:4) emphasizes the

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<sup>116</sup>Other virtues believers are commanded to pursue include: "hospitality" (Romans 12:13, where "practicing hospitality" is literally "pursuing hospitality"—see NASB marginal note); "the things which make for peace and the building up of one another" (Romans 14:19); "love" (1 Corinthians 14:1); "that which is good for one another and for all people" (1 Thessalonians 5:15); and "peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

false teaching's lack of content.

The reason why Timothy was to separate from the false teaching of the false teachers was, once again (cf. verses 14 and 16), its detrimental effect (“**knowing that they produce quarrels**”; cf. 1 Timothy 6:4-5). Once again (cf. verses 14 and 16), bad belief gives birth to (the Greek verb translated “**produce**” is the Greek verb for giving birth) bad behavior.

**The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, (2:24)**

With an obvious wordplay between the noun “quarrels” (the Greek word is *machas*) in verse 23 and the verb “quarrelsome” (the Greek word is *machesthai*) in verse 24, Paul ties verses 24-26 with verse 23. As in verse 22, Paul first tells Timothy what he must not be (“**The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome**”) before telling him what he must be. Timothy, being a minister of the gospel, was “**the Lord's bond-servant**” (see Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:10, Philippians 1:1, Colossians 4:12, and James 1:1, as well as Titus 1:1). While ministers of the gospel in particular are captives of Christ, all believers in general also are (see 1 Corinthians 7:22 and Ephesians 6:6, as well as Romans 6:22). Ministers of the gospel are not to be “**quarrelsome**,” what the pastoral qualification lists in the Pastoral Epistles describe as “pugnacious” (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7). Unlike the false teachers in Ephesus, Timothy was not to be a “word warrior” (see comments on verse 14).

While, negatively, ministers of the gospel, such as Timothy, are not to be quarrelsome, positively (“**but**”), they are to “**be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.**” In regards to the first quality, “**kind to all**,” Knight (p. 424) writes: “Although the Lord's servant may not be able to be at peace with all (v. 22), he is still called on to be kind and gentle to all” (cf. verse 25's “gentleness”). This quality of kindness does not negate the responsibility of the minister of the gospel to fight for the faith (see 1 Timothy 6:12, which immediately follows mention of gentleness at the end of 1 Timothy 6:11; cf. Jude 3), but merely mandates the manner in which he is to do so.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>“But not to quarrel does *not* mean that he must thereby let error go on its way. To the contrary. However, in standing against error he must exhibit a different disposition. He must be kind to

The second quality, the ability to teach (“**able to teach**”), is a qualification for the pastoral office (see 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:9, as well as 2 Timothy 2:2). In context, this ability to teach is for the intent of instructing the false teachers and their followers (verse 25) in hopes of freeing them from Satan’s clutches (verse 26). Thus, though Timothy must reject the false teachings of the false teachers (verse 23), he must still try to reach the false teachers with the gospel (verses 24-26).

The third quality, “**patient when wronged**,” was characteristic of Christ (see 1 Peter 2:23). Timothy was to be kind to the false teachers (“**be kind to all**”) and was not to respond to the false teachers in kind (“**patient when wronged**”).

**with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, (2:25)**

The minister of the gospel must correct those who oppose him (in Timothy’s case, the false teachers in Ephesus and their followers) and must do so with a gentle spirit (“**with gentleness** [cf. Galatians 6:1’s “gentleness,” 1 Timothy 6:11’s “gentleness,” and Titus 3:2’s “gentle”] **correcting those who are in opposition**”). “**Those who are in opposition**” (cf. Titus 1:9) may be the false teachers (so Hendriksen and Mounce), those affected by the false teachers (Fee), or both (so Hiebert and Knight). That the false teachers and their followers needed “**correcting**” (the Greek participle is *paideuonta*) was implied back in verse 23 (where “ignorant” is the Greek adjective, *apaideutos*).

As Timothy taught/corrected the false teachers and their followers kindly/gently, (verses 24b and 25a), God, consistent with His revealed (Deuteronomy 29:29b)/declared will (what He has revealed in Scripture: His general desire that all be saved), and in accordance with His secret (Deuteronomy 29:29a)/decretive will (whatsoever comes to pass: those who actually are saved), would use Timothy as the instrument through which He would (presumably) bring some of these

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everyone—even to his opponents. The point is attitudinal and reflects the very difficult stance of Ephesians 4:15 (‘speaking the truth in love’)” (Fee, p. 265; emphasis his). In other words, one is to have the right disposition while maintaining the right position, to contend for the faith (Jude 4) without being contentious.

individuals to Himself<sup>118</sup> (“**if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth**”). In order for such individuals to come to faith in Christ, God would ultimately have to “**grant them repentance**” (cf. Acts 5:31 and 11:18).<sup>119</sup> Repentance is the divinely-energized act of the sinner whereby he wholeheartedly turns from sin. Hendriksen (p. 276) defines it as “a radical change of view that leads to a radical change of life.” Repentance is an “about-face” whereby one goes from rejecting the Truth to acknowledging (i.e., wholeheartedly embracing) It (“**leading to the knowledge of the truth**”; cf. 1 Timothy 2:4, 4:3, 2 Timothy 3:7, Titus 1:1, and Hebrews 10:26). Repentance (“**repentance**”) and faith (“**the knowledge of the truth**”) comprise the two sides of the one coin called conversion.

**and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (2:26)**

At conversion, one comes to his senses (“**and they may come to their senses**”; cf. Luke 15:17). The Greek verb translated “**come to their senses**” connotes one who was once drunk, but has now become sober, or one who has been awakened out of sleep. At conversion, one also is released from Satan’s shackles (“**and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will**”). Not only does Satan blind unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4), but he also binds them. Everyone is a slave, either of God (see comments on verse 24) or of Satan.

There is some debate as to whom the “**his**” at the end of the verse is referring. Among those who opt for God are Robertson, Wiersbe, Kent<sup>120</sup>, and Mounce (cf.

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<sup>118</sup>The latter half of verse 25 would, thus, serve as a motivation for Timothy to do what the latter half of verse 24 and the first half of verse 25 called on him to do. As Knight (p. 425) states: “This possible outcome is described to give urgency and expectancy to the ministry that Paul has called for.”

<sup>119</sup>Far from this fact being a disincentive to evangelism, it is an incentive. As Calvin (p. 234) states: “Since the conversion of a man is in the hand of God, who knows whether they who to-day appear to be unteachable shall be suddenly changed by the power of God, into other men? Thus, whoever shall consider that repentance is the gift and work of God, will cherish more earnest hope, and, encouraged by this confidence, will bestow more toil and exertion for the instruction of rebels.”

<sup>120</sup>“The meaning is this: ‘They may return to soberness (out of the snare of the Devil, having

the NASB marginal note). Among those who opt for Satan are Earle, Fee, Hiebert, Hendriksen, Towner, Lea, Ward, and Knight. In context, Paul is speaking specifically of the false teachers in Ephesus and their followers, who as long as they held to their false beliefs, beliefs that can be described as nothing less than demonic/diabolical/devilish (1 Timothy 4:1), were unwittingly being held by Satan. Though they may have thought they were free, they were fettered. What a privilege it is for every minister of the gospel (every believer) to be used of God to set such prisoners free!

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been held captive by him) to do the will of That One (God)''' (Kent, pp. 271-272).

## 2 Timothy 2:14-26

### Teaching Outline

Introduction: In introducing 2 Timothy, it was suggested that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy for 3 reasons. One of the reasons was to encourage Timothy to fight false teaching (the other two were: to encourage Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution and to encourage Timothy to come see his father in the faith, Paul). Starting with this section, Paul turns his focus in the remainder of the letter to the fight with the false teachers at Ephesus.

#### I. Forsake the False

##### A. Forsake false beliefs (verses 14a, 16a, and 23a)

Because they are harmful (verses 14b, 16b-18, and 23b)

##### B. Forsake false behavior (verses 19, 22a, and 24a)

Because we are to be holy (verses 20-21)

Note: Belief and behavior are inseparable. What you believe determines how you behave, and how you behave displays what you truly believe (see verse 16; cf. 1 Timothy 1:9-10, 6:3, and Titus 1:1)

#### II. Pursue the True

##### A. Pursue true beliefs (verse 15; cf. verse 24's "able to teach")

Because we will be held accountable (verse 15)

##### B. Pursue true behavior (verses 22b and 24b)

Because unbelievers are held captive (verses 25-26)

## 2 Timothy 3:1-9

**But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. (3:1)**

Paul continues the focus on the false teachers he began in 2:14. In contrast to (“**But**”) the possibility that some of the false teachers may be won to Christ through Timothy’s ministry of the Word (2:24-26) is the harsh reality that such false teachers are not an aberration, but are to be expected in the “**last days**” in which Timothy lives (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1 and 1 John 2:18).<sup>121</sup> Paul wants Timothy to be continually<sup>122</sup> aware of (“**realize this**”) the fact “**that in the last days difficult times will come.**” Contrary to what is often thought, the “**last days**” (cf. Hebrews 1:2, James 5:3, and 2 Peter 3:3, as well as 1 Timothy 4:1’s “later times,” 1 Peter 1:20’s “last times,” 1 John 2:18’s “last hour,” and Jude 18’s “last time”) refer not just to the days prior to the Second Coming, but to the entire period between the two advents (comings) of Christ (see Hebrews 1:1-2 for the *terminus a quo*, i.e., the starting point). Knight (p. 428) calls this time “the time of the Messiah, the last period of days before the final messianic action takes place.” At various intervals within the last days “**difficult times will come.**” The Greek adjective translated “**difficult**” means “grievous, hard or painful” (Hendriksen, p. 283), “stressful” (Mounce, p. 541 and Ward, p. 186), harsh or rough (*Biblical Viewpoint*, p. 22), or “terrible” (so NIV). The same Greek word is translated “extremely violent” in Matthew 8:28.

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<sup>121</sup>That Paul is clearly speaking of the time in which he and Timothy were living is brought out by Calvin (p. 239) in his comments on 3:5: “This exhortation sufficiently shows that Paul does not speak of a distant posterity, nor foretell what would happen many ages afterwards; but that, by pointing out present evils, he applies to his own age what he had said about ‘the last times’; for how could Timothy ‘turn away’ from those who were not to arise till many centuries afterwards? So then, from the very beginning of the gospel, the Church must have begun to be affected by such corruptions.”

<sup>122</sup>The Greek verb translated “realize” is in the present tense, signifying a continual realization. In other words, Paul wants Timothy to be continually aware of the fact that he is living in the last times so that he will not be surprised by the presence of false teachers, a prime characteristic of this age/era.

**For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (3:2-4)**

The reason why various intervals within the last days will be so difficult is because of (“**for**”) the corrupt character of those living in such days.<sup>123</sup> Paul calls these individuals “**men**,” a gender neutral (as opposed to gender specific) term; thus, both men and women are in view. Paul characterizes such individuals with an eighteen-item “vice list<sup>124</sup>” in verses 2-4 (nineteen, if one includes verse 5a). “[T]he majority of the people at that time will be such as he indicates, although not all of these traits need be thought of as being combined in any single individual. Some of the traits will be outstanding in some people, while others will be prominent in other people” (Hiebert, p. 83). Based on the succeeding context (vs. 6f), it is evident that the vices listed were characteristic of the false teachers in Ephesus. Following is a list of the eighteen vices, with accompanying comments:

“**lovers<sup>125</sup> of self**”—the Greek word is *philautos* (the Greek verb, *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek pronoun, *autos*, “self”). Inordinate<sup>126</sup> love for self is the vice commonly called narcissism. One need look no further than the modern self-esteem craze to see one way this vice is played out in our society. Selfishness is the heart of sinfulness (see 2 Corinthians 5:15). Accordingly, many interpreters are of the opinion that Paul intentionally places this vice first in the list, because it is the vice

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<sup>123</sup>“The evil character of people living in these days makes them difficult” (Knight, p. 429). See 2 Peter 3:3, 1 John 2:18, and Jude 18.

<sup>124</sup>For other such vice lists in Paul, see Romans 1:29-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 2 Corinthians 12:20, Galatians 5:19-21, and 1 Timothy 1:9-10. For other vices of those living in the last days, see 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and Jude 18-19.

<sup>125</sup>What one loves (or does not love) is predominant in this vice list, with the first two vices (love of self and love of money in verse 2) and last vice (love of pleasure and lack of love for God in verse 4) “bookending” the list. In-between are two other such vices: lack of love for family (“unloving” in verse 3) and lack of love for what is good (“haters of good” in verse 3).

<sup>126</sup>I say, “inordinate” because, according to Ephesians 5:28-29, a certain level of concern for self is natural and proper.

from which all the others flow.<sup>127</sup> In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, who (presumably) were lovers of self, ministers of the gospel are not to be “self-willed” (Titus 1:7).

“**lovers of money**”—the Greek word is *philarguros* (the Greek verb, *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek noun, *arguros*, “silver”). This word is used of the Pharisees in Luke 16:14. In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, who (presumably) were lovers of money (see 1 Timothy 6:9-10; cf. the same regarding the false teachers in Crete in Titus 1:11), ministers of the gospel are to be “free from the love of money” (1 Timothy 3:3; cf. Titus 1:7’s “not fond of sordid gain”). The vice of materialism was as characteristic of that day as it is of ours.

“**boastful**”—this vice is also found in the Romans 1:29-31 vice list (“boastful” in Romans 1:30) and is contrary to the words of Proverbs 27:2.

“**arrogant**”—the Greek word is *huperephanos* (the Greek preposition, *huper*, “above” + the Greek verb, *phaino*, “to shine”). This vice is also found in the Romans 1:29-31 vice list (“arrogant” in Romans 1:30) and is, in the minds of many interpreters, associated with the previous vice, with the former (“boastful”) having to do with words and the latter (“arrogant”) having to do with attitude (so Knight, p. 431).<sup>128</sup> The same attitude is found later in the list (verse 4’s “conceited”). For a corrective to this arrogant attitude, see Romans 12:3 and Galatians 6:3.

“**revilers**”—the Greek word is *blasphemos*, from which we get our English word, blasphemous. At least two of the false teachers in Ephesus, Hymaneus and

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<sup>127</sup>“‘Lovers of self’ aptly heads the list since it is the essence of all sin and the root from which all the other characteristics spring” (Hiebert, p. 83). “...’[L]overs of self’ is put first, for when self rather than God (and others) is made the central focus of one’s life all else goes astray ....” and “The list begins and ends with words expressing a misdirection of ‘love.’ This suggests that what is fundamentally wrong with these people is that their life is misdirected and that the other vices flow from this misdirection” (Knight, p. 430). See also Calvin (p. 238), Wallis (p. 875), and Mounce (p. 543).

<sup>128</sup>Mounce (p. 545) similarly takes the former as having to do with behavior and the latter as having to do with feelings.

Alexander, were characterized by this vice (see 1 Timothy 1:20; cf. 1 Timothy 6:4's "abusive language"). Paul was characterized by this vice in his "B.C." (Before Christ) days, i.e., his pre-conversion days (see 1 Timothy 1:13). The object of such verbal vitriol/venom can be either God (as in James 2:7) or one's fellow man (as with Titus 3:2's "malign").

**"disobedient to parents"**—this vice is also found in the Romans 1:29-31 vice list (in verse 30).

**"ungrateful"**—the Greek word is *acharistos* (the Greek "alpha privative," *a* + the Greek word for grace, *charis*). An ungrateful person is one who has not come to grips with the graciousness of God, the fact that God often gives us what we do not deserve ("life and breath and all things," Acts 17:25). See also Romans 1:21.

**"unholy"**—according to Earle (p. 406), this word "describes the person who has no fellowship with God and so is living a merely 'secular' life." According to William Barclay (quoted in Fee, p. 270), it means "offending against the fundamental decencies of life." In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, whose lives (presumably) could be characterized as unholy, ministers of the gospel are to be "devout" (Titus 1:8; the Greek adjective is *hosion*, the antonym of the Greek adjective translated "unholy" here in 2 Timothy 3:2, *anosios*).

**"unloving"**—this vice is also found in the Romans 1:29-31 vice list (in verse 31). It means to be without familial love or affection. Sadly, the crimes of patricide (the murder of one's father), matricide (the murder of one's mother), fratricide (the murder of one's sibling), mariticide (the murder of one's spouse), and filicide (the murder of one's child, including abortion) are becoming increasingly common in today's society.

**"irreconcilable"**—the Greek word is *aspondos*. According to Kent (p. 274), "the word is derived from *sponde*, a libation [a drinking offering] which accompanied the making of a treaty, and the alpha privative [the *a*] which negates it" (cf. Hendriksen, p. 285 and Mounce, p. 546). It is refusing or rejecting any reconciliation (NIV: "unforgiving").

**“malicious gossips”**—the Greek word is *diabolos*, from which we get our English word, diabolic. It is also translated “malicious gossips” in 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3. The noun form is used in reference to Satan (in such passages as Ephesians 4:27, 6:11, 1 Timothy 3:6-7, and 2 Timothy 2:26<sup>129</sup>), the accuser of believers (Zechariah 3:1 and Revelation 12:10).

**“without self-control”**—the Greek word is *akrates* (the Greek alpha privative, *a* + the Greek verb, *krateo*, “hold back, restrain”). In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, who (presumably) were *akrates*, ministers of the gospel are to be *egkrates* (“self-controlled” in Titus 1:8).

**“brutal”**—the Greek word literally means “untamed” (*anemeros*, the Greek alpha privative, *a* + the Greek adjective, *emeros*, “tame”), like a savage, wild animal. In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, who (presumably) were this way, ministers of the gospel are not to be “pugnacious” (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7); rather, they are to be “gentle” (1 Timothy 3:3) and “kind” (2 Timothy 2:24).

**“haters of good”**—the Greek word is *aphilagathos* (the Greek alpha privative, *a* + the Greek verb, *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek adjective *agathos*, “good”). Rather than loving good, such individuals love evil (cf. Romans 1:32). In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, who (presumably) were *aphilagathos*, ministers of the gospel are to be *philagathos* (“loving what is good” in Titus 1:8).

**“treacherous”**—the same Greek word is used of Judas Iscariot in Luke 6:16 (“traitor”). It is also used in Acts 7:52 (“betrayers”). Hiebert (p. 85) speculates: “Perhaps the reference is to their betrayal of other Christians to the persecutors.”

**“reckless”**—according to Knight (p. 431; following J. N. D. Kelly), this word connotes “those who stop at nothing to gain their ends.”

**“conceited”**—commenting on this word, Kent (p. 275) states: “Puffed up persons (*tetuphomenoi*) have become so inflated with a sense of their own knowledge and importance, that they envelop themselves in a cloud of smoke (root is *tuphos*,

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<sup>129</sup>“This use of the word [*diabolos*] after the reference in 2:26 to those who are trapped by [the devil] may imply that such captives become like their captor” (Knight, p. 432).

smoke, mist, cloud) and are unable to recognize the truth.” In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus, who (presumably) were conceited (cf. the same word used in 1 Timothy 6:4), ministers of the gospel are not to be (1 Timothy 3:6).

**“lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”**—the Greek word translated “lovers of pleasure” is *philedonos* (the Greek verb, *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek noun, *hedone*, “pleasure,” from which we get our English word, hedonism). The Greek word translated “lovers of God” is *philotheos* (the Greek verb, *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek noun, *theos*, “God”). The greatest command is to love God with all one’s being (Matthew 22:36-37//Mark 12:28-30; cf. Luke 10:27; quoting Deuteronomy 6:5). Believers are those who love God (Romans 8:28, James 1:12, and 2:5). Unbelievers hate Him (Romans 1:30). One cannot be a hedonist and a theist. Much like interpreters who see the first vice (“lovers of self”) as being the root and all the other vices as being the fruit, so Mounce (p. 547) sees this last vice (not loving God) as being the root: “When God is removed as the priority in life [v. 4] and is replaced with self [v. 2/humanism], money [v. 2/materialism], and pleasure [v. 4/hedonism], all the other vices naturally follow.”

**holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. (3:5)**

Surprisingly, the vices Paul has been enumerating in verses 2-4 are not those of pagan people (as in Romans 1:29-31), but of religious people. Though outwardly religious (**“holding to a form of godliness”**), these people were without the inward reality (**“although they have denied its power”**). They had form without substance. See also Titus 1:16 in this regard. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and sanctification (2 Peter 1:3). By rejecting the truth of the gospel, the false teachers in Ephesus remained perpetually disconnected from its saving and sanctifying power. One can be religious, but not righteous (Fee, p. 270).

Paul concludes the sentence of 3:1-5 with a second command (the first being in verse 1). Not only is Timothy to realize that the last days in which he is living will be characterized by difficult times (verse 1), and that these difficult times will be characterized by the presence of men and women of corrupt character (verses 2-5a), but he is also to avoid such men and women (**“Avoid such men as these”**).

As the following verses strongly imply, Paul especially has the false teachers in Ephesus in mind; thus, this command to separate is consistent with what Paul has called for previously in 2:16a, 19b, 21a, 22a, and 23a (cf. other such calls in Romans 16:17, 1 Timothy 4:7, 6:20, Titus 3:9-10, and 2 John 10). While in the previous section (2:24-26) Paul implied that Timothy was to reach out to the false teachers in order to reach them with the gospel, here he commands Timothy to avoid them. Most likely, Paul has two different types of false teachers in mind, those who are teachable/reachable (2:24-26) and those who are not (3:5b).

**For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, (3:6)**

Timothy is to avoid any man or woman characterized by the vices of verses 2-5a (verse 5b) because (“**For**”) among such men and women of corrupt character were the false teachers in Ephesus (“**among them are**”). Paul describes such false teachers (presumably men) as “**those who enter into households and captivate weak women.**” The Greek verb translated “**enter**” has a crooked connotation. The NIV translates: “worm their way” (cf. ESV and the NASB marginal note: “creep”). They entered under false pretenses (Lea, n. p.). The same idea is found in such passages as Galatians 2:4, 2 Timothy 3:13, 2 Peter 2:1, and Jude 4. While Hughes (p. 224) may be correct in seeing “**households**” as a reference to house-churches, he was the only interpreter consulted who suggested so. The verb “**captivate**” is reminiscent of 2:26. “**Weak women**” is *gunaikarion*, a “diminutive” form of the Greek word for woman, *gune* (thus, literally “little women”). This is clearly a pejorative term, describing some, not all, women, and speaks of a moral (not mental, emotional, or physical) deficiency. Knight (p. 433) translates “childish women”; Kostenberger (n.p.) renders it: “frail.” Hendriksen (p. 287) uses the designation, “softies.” The second edition of the *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* by Gingrich and Danker (p. 41) suggests “vulnerable.” The NIV translates it: “gullible.”

At the end of verse 6 and in verse 7, Paul gives three characteristics of the women upon whom the false teachers in Ephesus were preying. First, they were “**weighed down with sins.**” Most likely, this means that they were guilt-ridden/burdened by a guilty conscience. Second, they were “**led on** (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:2) **by various impulses**” (cf. Titus 3:3), i.e., captivated and

controlled by their sinful nature. As a result of these realities, these women were especially susceptible/vulnerable to false teachers who offered an easy way out. “Perhaps the opponents proclaimed a release from their sins or a hedonistic indifference to them” (Mounce, p. 549). “This type of woman, perhaps neurotic and depressed by the guilt of sin, is easily led astray by religious quacks who may satisfy the desire for some sort of religion without demanding abandonment of sin” (Kent, p. 276).

### **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (3:7)**

A third characteristic of the women upon whom the false teachers in Ephesus were preying was that they were “**always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**” In what Hiebert (p. 88) calls a “restless quest for the new and novel” (cf. Acts 17:21), these women were soaking in everything the false teachers were teaching them (“**always learning**”). However, because what these false teachers were teaching them was false, it would never be able to (unlike the truth of God’s Word, which could—2 Timothy 3:15) lead them to salvation (“**and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth**”). The Greek adverb translated “**never**” is what Knight (p. 434) calls “an intensifying negative compound,” which he translates “never at all.” On the meaning of “**the knowledge of the truth**” (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4 and Titus 1:1), see comments on 2:25. Knight (p. 434) sadly and soberly surmises: “The terrible consequence of the false teaching is that these women, who are so burdened, never really learn the truth that can make them free [John 8:32].”

### **Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. (3:8)**

In verses 8 and 9, Paul turns his guns directly on the false teachers. Paul likens the truth-opposing false teachers in Ephesus to two men who opposed Moses, named Jannes and Jambres<sup>130</sup> (“**Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth**”; cf. the opposition of Elymas the magician to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:6-10). According to Jewish tradition, Jannes and Jambres

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<sup>130</sup>According to Hendriksen (p. 288), Jannes and Jambres are Aramaic for “he who seduces and he who makes rebellious.”

were two of the Egyptian magicians (possibly brothers) who opposed Moses (and Aaron) in the book of Exodus by duplicating some of the miracles associated with the plagues God brought upon the Egyptians (see Exodus 7:11-12a, 22, and 8:7). Like the false teachers in Ephesus, they were false imitators of the true.<sup>131</sup> The Greek verb translated “**opposed**”/”**oppose**” (cf. 4:15) literally means to stand against (*anhistemi*, the Greek preposition, *anti*, “against” + the Greek noun, *histemi*, “to stand”).

As Paul characterized the victims of these false teachers with three characteristics in verses 6b-7, so he characterizes the false teachers with two characteristics here in verse 8. First, the false teachers were “**men of depraved mind**” (cf. Romans 1:28, Ephesians 4:17-19, 1 Timothy 6:5, and Titus 1:15). While we, as westerners, view “**mind**” as more of a mental thing, the Jewish, eastern mindset viewed it as more of a moral thing. “**Depraved**” is actually a participle in the original, a participle in the passive voice, indicative of the fact that someone else is behind the corrupting of the mind, namely, Satan (see 1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 2:26, as well as 2 Timothy 3:13’s “being deceived”). Second, they were “**rejected in regard to the faith**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:19). In contrast to the teacher of the Truth (2:15), who is “approved” (*dokimos*; see comments on this Greek adjective in 2:15), the false teacher is “**rejected**” (*adokimos*; cf. “worthless,” a translation of the same Greek adjective, in Titus 1:16).

**But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’ and Jambres’ folly was also. (3:9)**

Much as he does in 2:19 (see comments on), Paul is quick to remind Timothy that the false teachers in Ephesus will not prevail (“**But they will not make further progress**”). As in 2:16 (see comments on), Paul’s use of the Greek verb translated “**progress**” is likely an ironical jab at the false teachers.

The reason why the false teachers in Ephesus would not make further progress is because (“**for**”) they would eventually be exposed for what they really were, as Jannes and Jambres were (“**their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’ and**

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<sup>131</sup>Based upon Paul’s comparison of the false teachers in Ephesus with these Egyptian magicians, it may be that the Ephesian heretics were into the occult (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1).

**Jambres' folly was also"). "Folly"** (in Jewish thought, more moral than mental) is most likely a reference to the false teaching of the false teachers (cf. 1 Timothy 1:7). The Greek adjective translated "**obvious**" (*ekdelos*) is an intensified form (intensified with the Greek preposition, *ek*) of the Greek adjective, *delos*, "clear, plain, evident" (2nd edition of the *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* by Gingrich and Danker, p. 44). Accordingly, Mounce (p. 551) states that Paul's use of this intensified adjective is "to emphasize the clarity of the visibility," emphasizing that "there will be no question that the opponents are foolish." In His own way and time, God would explicitly expose the error of the false teachers in Ephesus ("**their folly will be obvious to all**"), just as He exposed the error of Jannes and Jambres ("**just as Jannes' and Jambres' folly was also**"; see Exodus 7:12b, 8:18-19, and 9:11). "[Paul] is apparently referring to the failure of these opponents of Moses to repeat all the miracles that he brought about, which they sought to do to discount his message (e.g., Ex. 8:18-19 and especially 9:11). Thus it eventually became evident that their message was not true and was not to be followed. Paul says that the same will happen with regard to the false teachers at Ephesus" (Knight, pp. 436-437).

## 2 Timothy 3:1-9 Teaching Outline

Introduction: In introducing 2 Timothy, it was suggested that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy for 3 reasons. One of the reasons was to encourage Timothy to fight false teaching (the other two were: to encourage Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution and to encourage Timothy to come see his father in the faith, Paul). In this section of the letter, Paul continues (cf. 2:14-26) his focus on the fight with the false teachers at Ephesus.

- I. Know Their Characteristics (verses 1-5a and 6-9; cf. Matthew 7:15-23)
  - A. The confines of the last days (cf. Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20, and 1 John 2:18)
  - B. The characteristics of the last days (verses 1-5a and 6-9; cf. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and Jude 18-19)
    1. Perilous times (verse 1)
    2. Perverted teachers (verses 2-5a and 6-9)
      - “Lovers of self” (verse 2)
      - “Lovers of money” (verse 2)
      - “Boastful” (verse 2)
      - “Arrogant” (verse 2)
      - “Revilers” (verse 2)
      - “Disobedient to parents” (verse 2)
      - “Ungrateful” (verse 2)
      - “Unholy” (verse 2)
      - “Unloving” (verse 3)
      - “Irreconcilable” (verse 3)

- “Malicious gossips” (verse 3)
- “Without self-control” (verse 3)
- “Brutal” (verse 3)
- “Haters of good” (verse 3)
- “Traacherous” (verse 4)
- “Reckless” (verse 4)
- “Conceited” (verse 4)
- “Lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God” (verse 4)
- “Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power” (verse 5a)
- “Enter into ... [cf. Galatians 2:4, 2 Timothy 3:13, 2 Peter 2:1, Jude 4] and captivate” (verses 6-7)”
- “Oppose the truth” (verse 8)
- “Of depraved mind” (verse 8)
- “Rejected in regard to the faith” (verse 8)
- “Will not make further progress” (verse 9)
- “Folly will be obvious” (verse 9; cf. Exodus 7:12b, 8:18-19, and 9:11)

II. Say “No” to Their Company (verse 5b; cf. 2:16a, 19b, 21a, 22a, and 23a)

## 2 Timothy 3:10-17

In the previous section of the letter (3:1-9), Paul reminded Timothy not to be surprised about opposition in Ephesus. In this section (3:10-17), he exhorts Timothy to remain faithful in spite of such opposition. This Paul does by appealing to his own example of faithfulness in spite of opposition (verses 10-13) and by exhorting Timothy to remain faithful to God's Word (verses 14-17). "The two parts hold the keys to Timothy's abiding loyalty: first, to recall the past, especially Paul's teaching and example, learned through long association, and second, to give heed to the Scriptures, with which he has also had long association ...." (Fee, p. 275).

**Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, (3:10)**

In contrast to<sup>132</sup> the false teachers in Ephesus (3:1-9), who did not follow Paul's example, was Timothy, who did ("**Now you followed**").<sup>133</sup> The Greek verb translated "**followed**" connotes a close following. "The language behind the opening phrase, 'You, however, know all about ...' suggests deep intimacy. The literal meaning is 'to follow alongside, to accompany'—'You have followed alongside me.' According to J. N. D. Kelly, 'It is also a technical term defining the relation of a disciple to his master and can be paraphrased "study at close quarters," "follow in spirit," "carefully note with a view to reproducing," and so "take as an example"' (Hughes, p. 231).

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<sup>132</sup>The "you" at the beginning of this verse is emphatic. The Greek literally reads: "You but you followed of me the teaching ...." The emphasis is seen in two ways: 1) The Greek second person personal pronoun ("you") is the first word in the sentence, for emphasis and 2) this Greek second person personal pronoun is used, normally unnecessary since the person (second person) is already inherent in the Greek verb translated "you followed"; the result is a repetition of the "you," for emphasis. For similar contrasts in the Pastoral Epistles, see 1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 3:14, 4:5, and Titus 2:1.

<sup>133</sup>Paul often called upon others to follow his example. See 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, Philippians 4:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:7, and 9.

In verses 10 and 11, Paul lists nine things about himself that Timothy closely followed: **“my teaching** [cf. 2 Timothy 1:13 and 2:2], **conduct, purpose** [cf. 1 Corinthians 9:23, 2 Corinthians 5:9, and Philippians 1:20-21], **faith, patience, love, perseverance,** persecutions, *and* sufferings”). Unknown to the English reader is the fact that each of the nine is preceded by the Greek definite article (“the”); thus, one could translate: “my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, my faith ...” Most likely, the significance is that Paul is drawing attention to each of these in order to contrast his virtue with the vice of the false teachers (the virtue list here roughly corresponding to the vice list of 3:2-4). There is probably some significance to the fact that Paul lists **“teaching”** first and **“conduct”** second. Teaching is the root, conduct the fruit (bad belief leads to bad behavior, while good belief leads to good behavior). **“Faith”** likely includes both faith in God and faithfulness to God. **“Patience”** is putting up with problematic people (i.e., everyone), while **“perseverance”** is enduring difficult circumstances. Webster (cited in Barnes, p. 237) defines perseverance as “a calm temper, which suffers evils without murmuring or discontent.”

**persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! (3:11)**

With **“persecutions, *and* sufferings,”** Paul concludes the virtue list he began in verse 10. These final two items make the three previous items (patience, love, and perseverance) all the more remarkable. The **“sufferings”** Paul speaks of are most likely those that came as a result of his **“persecutions.”**

Paul particularly singles out his persecutions and sufferings in Antioch (of Pisidia, as opposed to Syria), Iconium, and Lystra (**“such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra”**).<sup>134</sup> Paul is undoubtedly referring to his visit to these three

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<sup>134</sup>Interpreters speculate as to why Paul drew Timothy’s attention to these persecutions in particular. Kent (p. 279) points out that Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra were “towns in Timothy’s native region where the young boy had opportunity to see for himself or at least hear others tell of the apostle’s physical sufferings.” Knight (p. 440) writes: “Paul mentions these earliest persecutions rather than later ones, probably because he wants to remind Timothy of his commitment to the apostle and his ministry from the very beginning and that from the very beginning that ministry has involved persecutions.” Mounce (p. 558) makes the point that “the

cities during his first missionary journey. His visit to Antioch (Acts 13:14-50) ended with his expulsion from the city (Acts 13:50). His visit to Iconium (Acts 13:51-14:6) ended with his fleeing for his life (Acts 14:5-6). His visit to Lystra (Acts 14:8-20) was marked by his stoning and being left for dead (Acts 14:19; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:25).

God enabling (1 Corinthians 10:13), Paul endured these persecutions (“**what persecutions I endured**”). The Greek verb translated “**endured**” literally means to “bear under” (*hupophero*, the Greek preposition, *hupo*, “under” + the Greek verb, *phero*, “to bear”; cf. the same Greek verb in 1 Corinthians 10:13). Incredibly, immediately after enduring these persecutions, Paul went right back to all three places (Acts 14:20-21)!

Paul gives the credit and glory ultimately to God, for it was He who rescued Paul from his persecutions (“**and out of them all the Lord rescued me!**”; cf. 4:18). The rescue is most likely the fact that, in spite of his persecutions, Paul persevered in his faith and did not apostatize. Several interpreters (so Hiebert, Knight, and Mounce) point out the fact that Paul says “**out of,**” not “from”; God does not promise to keep the believer from persecutions (see the next verse; cf. Psalm 23:4), but does promise to rescue the believer out of them (as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 4:9, the believer is “persecuted, but not forsaken”). These words are similar to those of the psalmist in Psalm 34:19 (cf. Psalm 34:6b and 17b) and of Paul later in this epistle (in 4:18, where the rescue is death). See also Paul’s words in 2 Thessalonians 3:2-3.

### **Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (3:12)**

Persecution was not peculiar to Paul. As a general rule, persecution is part and parcel of being a Christian.<sup>135</sup> This truth is taught elsewhere in such passages as John 15:20 (“If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you”), 16:33 (“In the world you have tribulation”), Acts 14:22 (“Through many tribulations we must

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first experience often carries the strongest memories.”

<sup>135</sup>“V 12 hammers the final nail into the coffin of any aberrant gospel that preaches an abundant life devoid of persecutions” (Mounce, p. 560).

enter the kingdom of God”), 1 Thessalonians 3:3 (“so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.”), 1 Peter 4:12 (“do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you ... as though some strange thing were happening to you”), and 1 John 3:13 (“Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you”). The form this persecution takes may vary (physical abuse, verbal abuse, social ostracism, etc.).<sup>136</sup>

Paul describes believers as those “**who desire to live godly.**” Is this our desire? The greater this desire, the greater the likelihood of persecution. One can live godly only by being connected to Christ (“**in Christ Jesus**”; cf. John 15:1-11).

**But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (3:13)**

In contrast to (“**But**”) those who desire to live godly lives (verse 12), are “**evil men and impostors.**” The presence of such individuals accounts for the persecution spoken of in the previous verses. In light of the overall context, the evil men and impostors of whom Paul speaks are the same individuals in view in 3:2-9, the false teachers in Ephesus. The Greek word translated “**impostors**” is literally “sorcerers,” potentially indicating that the Ephesian heretics were into the occult (cf. footnote 131).

Once again (cf. comments on 2:16 and 3:9), Paul throws an ironic jab at the false teachers by saying they “**will proceed from bad to worse**” (cf. 2:16). As Fee (p. 278) states: “Fine ‘progress’ these charlatans will make, as they go only deeper into their sins and ‘sorceries’ ....” While 3:9 indicates that the influence of the false teachers in Ephesus will be limited, this verse seems to indicate otherwise. However, Knight (p. 442) is probably correct in viewing this verse in terms of intensive, rather than extensive, influence. In other words, though the extent of their following will decrease, the intensity of their corrupting influence upon their followers will increase.

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<sup>136</sup>As Calvin (p. 245) states: “Moreover, as soon as zeal for God is manifested by a believer, it kindles the rage of all ungodly men; and, although they have not a drawn sword, yet they vomit out their venom, either by murmuring, or by slander, or by raising a disturbance, or by other methods.”

Not only were the followers of the false teachers in Ephesus being corrupted (“**deceiving**”), but also (“**and**”) the false teachers themselves (“**being deceived**”). Not only were the false teachers being used by Satan to deceive others, but they also were being deceived by Satan (see 1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 2:26).

**You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, (3:14)**

In contrast to (“**You, however**”<sup>137</sup>) the false teachers and those being corrupted by them (verse 13), Paul exhorts Timothy to remain faithful to God’s Word (“**continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of**”; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 1 Timothy 3:9, and 1 John 2:24). While the false teachers were “proceeding” (verse 13), Timothy was to stay put (the Greek verb translated “**continue**” has the idea of remaining or staying). As Donald Guthrie (quoted in Mounce, p. 561) states: “In contrast to the false teachers with their constant endeavor to advance to something new, Timothy may be satisfied with what he has already received.” The things Timothy had learned included the biblical instruction he had received from Paul (verse 10) and from his mother and grandmother (verse 15). Through the Holy Spirit’s work of illumination, Timothy had become “**convinced of**” the certainty and significance of what he had learned.

Adding to the impact of such teaching upon Timothy was his personal knowledge of those who taught him (“**knowing from whom you have learned *them***”). Truth taught by lip and life is always more influential than truth taught by lip alone.

**and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (3:15)**

Not only was Timothy’s knowledge of those who taught him God’s Word an

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<sup>137</sup>The “you” that begins this verse is emphatic. The Greek literally reads: “You but you continue ....” The emphasis is seen in two ways: 1) The Greek second person personal pronoun (“you”) is the first word in the sentence, for emphasis and 2) this Greek second person personal pronoun is used, normally unnecessary since the person (second person) is already inherent in the Greek verb translated “you continue”; the result is a repetition of the “you,” for emphasis.

incentive to his remaining faithful in It (verse 14), but also (“**and**”) his knowledge of God’s Word Itself (“**that from childhood you have known the sacred writings**”). “**Sacred writings**”<sup>138</sup> (cf. Romans 1:2), in contrast to the “worldly” teachings of the false teachers in Ephesus (see 1 Timothy 4:7 and 2 Timothy 2:16), is a reference to the Old Testament. Timothy knew the Old Testament “**from childhood**,” presumably being taught It by his mother and grandmother (1:5). The Greek word translated “**childhood**” is used elsewhere in the New Testament to describe unborn (Luke 1:41 and 44), newborn (Luke 2:12, 16, and 1 Peter 2:2), and other (Luke 18:15 and Acts 7:19) infants. Thus, Timothy was taught the Old Testament Scriptures at a very early age.<sup>139</sup>

In verses 16 and 17, Paul will make the point that God’s Word is sufficient for the maturing of disciples/sanctification. Here in verse 15, he makes the point that It is sufficient for the making of disciples/salvation (“**which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation**”).<sup>140</sup> Unlike the foolishness of the false teaching of

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<sup>138</sup>Wiersbe (pp. 148-149) sees added significance to the Greek word translated “writings” by the NASB: “‘The sacred letters’ is a literal translation. The suggestion is that young Timothy learned his Hebrew alphabet by spelling his way through the Old Testament Scriptures” (cf. Kent, p. 280).

<sup>139</sup>According to Fee (p. 279): “It was a Jewish parent’s sacred duty to instruct sons in the Law from their fifth year” (cf. Knight, p. 443; Mounce, p. 564; Robertson, p. 542; and Lea, n.p.).

<sup>140</sup>2 Timothy 3:15-17 is one of the two key passages in the Bible (the other being 2 Peter 1:3-4) concerning the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Bible, in and of Itself, is all that is needed to save and to sanctify sinners, to make and mature disciples. An excellent description of this doctrine is found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, article 1, section 6 (cited in Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, p. 83): “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture [e.g., the doctrine of the triunity of God]: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men ....” Henry (p. 847) writes: “There is no occasion for the writings of the philosopher, nor for rabbinical fables, nor popish legends, nor unwritten traditions, to make us perfect men of God, since the Scripture answers all these ends and purposes.” The opening stanza to the hymn, “How Firm a Foundation” reads: “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said ...?”

the false teachers in Ephesus (2:23 and 3:9), the Scriptures give wisdom (cf. Psalm 19:7 and 119:98). While this wisdom includes sanctification, Paul specifically has salvation in view here in verse fifteen (“**the wisdom that leads to salvation**”<sup>141</sup>).

As in the present, New Testament era, salvation in the Old Testament era was also based upon faith in Christ (“**through faith which is in Christ Jesus**”; cf. John 3:16, 36, Acts 16:31, Romans 3:22, 26, Galatians 2:16, 3:26, and Philippians 3:9). While the New Testament believer by faith looks backward to what Christ has already done, the Old Testament believer by faith in the Old Testament promises of a coming Redeemer looked forward to what Christ would do (in this regard, see Luke 24:25-27, 44-47, John 5:39, 46, Acts 3:18, 10:43, 26:22-23, and 28:23).

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (3:16)**

This verse is one of the two key passages in the Bible (the other being 2 Peter 1:20-21) concerning the doctrine of inspiration<sup>142</sup> (“**All Scripture is inspired by God**”). While “**Scripture**” here primarily refers to the Old Testament, by extension it also refers to the New Testament (cf. 1 Timothy 5:18, where Paul quotes from Deuteronomy and Luke, calling both “Scripture,” as well as 2 Peter 3:16, where Peter calls all of Paul’s epistles “Scriptures”). This verse affirms that inspiration is plenary, i.e., that it extends to the entirety of Scripture (“**All**”).<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>“These OT Scriptures were able to make [Timothy] ‘wise’ in preparation for salvation ....” (Earle, p. 409).

<sup>142</sup>Inspiration may be defined as that supernatural influence whereby the Holy Spirit caused men to compose and record (2 Peter 1:21) without error (Psalm 12:6 and John 17:17) the very words (1 Corinthians 2:13) of God’s choosing (2 Timothy 3:16) in the original manuscripts (1 Corinthians 14:37). The classic definition is that given by B. B. Warfield (*The Inspiration & Authority of the Bible*, p. 131), who defined inspiration as “a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness.”

<sup>143</sup>Some translations (ASV: “every scripture inspired of God is also profitable”; NEB: “every inspired scripture has its use”) improperly translate the start of this verse, giving the impression that inspiration is not plenary.

The Greek verbal adjective translated “**inspired by God**” (*theopneustos*, the Greek noun for God, *theos* + the Greek verb, *pneo*, “to breathe”) is literally “God-breathed” (so NIV; cf. NASB marginal note and ESV), a more accurate rendering (and less liable to being misunderstood) than “inspired by God.” Rather than *inspiration*, we should think in terms of *expiration* (or *exhalation* instead of *inhalation*). God did not breathe into an already existing text, but breathed out the text itself. Unlike the false teaching of the false teachers in Ephesus, the source of which was Satan (1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 2:26), the source of the Truth taught by Timothy was God.

Because the Bible is what It is, God’s Word (verse 16a), It is, therefore, not only sufficient for salvation (verse 15), but also for sanctification (verses 16b-17). In the latter half of verse sixteen, Paul calls the Bible profitable and specifies four areas for which It is so (“**and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**”): catechizing, convicting, correcting, and continuing. I like the way Wiersbe (pp. 150-151) summarizes the four: teaching (what is right), reproof (what isn’t right), correction<sup>144</sup> (how to get right), and training in righteousness (how to stay right). The first two (teaching and reproof; cf. 2 Timothy 4:2 and Titus 1:9) have to do with doctrine/belief/creed/learning/orthodoxy, while the last two (correction and training in righteousness) have to do with duty/behavior/conduct or deed/living/orthopraxy.<sup>145</sup> Robert Sheehan (*The Word of Truth*, p. 107) states in this regard: “There is no doctrine which needs to be believed, or duty which needs to be fulfilled, about which Scripture does not give us adequate information to enable us to believe and obey God.” In his fight with the false teachers at Ephesus, Timothy had the ultimate weapon, God’s Word (cf. Ephesians 6:17b), a weapon that enabled him to teach right belief (teaching), refute bad belief (reproof), correct bad behavior (correction), and reinforce right behavior (training in righteousness).

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<sup>144</sup>The Greek word translated “correction” is *epanorthosis*, the root of which is the Greek word, *orthos*, meaning “straight.” Accordingly, the NLT translates: “[Scripture] straightens us out.” It corrects what is crooked; It restores what is ruined; It repairs what is wrecked.

<sup>145</sup>There is also a chiasmic arrangement to the four: positive (teaching), negative (reproof), negative (correction), positive (training in righteousness). “Chiasmic” comes from the Greek letter, *chi*, which looks like an “x.”

**so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (3:17)**

The ultimate reason why (“so that”) God has given us His Word is not only that we might learn It (verses 14-15), but also that we might live It. While “**the man of God**” may be specifically referring to Timothy (cf. 1 Timothy 6:11) and to any other minister of the gospel, it can also refer to any believer in general. Because the Bible is what It is (verse 16a), it is not only able to save (verse 15), but also to sanctify, so that the believer “**may be adequate, equipped for every good work**” (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:8 and Ephesians 4:12a).

The Greek adjective translated “**adequate**” means “complete, capable, proficient=able to meet all demands” (BAGD<sup>146</sup>, p. 110). The sufficiency of Scripture for sanctification is the undeniable emphasis of this verse. This emphasis is seen 1) in the fact that Paul repeats the thought of the adjective (“adequate”; the Greek word is *artios*) with a related participle (“equipped”; the Greek word is *exartizo*). The man of God is “adequate” because (taking the participle as causal) he has been “**equipped for every good work.**” It is also seen 2) in the fact that *artios* (“adequate”) is first in the Greek sentence, for emphasis (literally it reads: “so that complete may be the of God man”). It is also seen 3) in the fact that *exartizo* (“equipped”) is “perfective,” the Greek preposition prefixed to it, *ex* giving the verbal idea (*artizo*) “perfective force.” Thus, one could translate “fully equipped.”<sup>147</sup> It is also seen 4) in the fact that *exartizo* (“equipped”) is in the perfect tense, indicating that by the Word of God the man of God has been and continues to be fully equipped. It is also seen 5) in the fact that it is “**for every good work**” that the believer by the Word of God has been fully equipped.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup>BAGD is an acronym for the leading Greek lexicon (≈ dictionary), the work of men named Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker.

<sup>147</sup>So KJV: “thoroughly furnished.” So also Hendriksen (p. 289): “thoroughly equipped.”

<sup>148</sup>“If there is any ‘good work’ that God wants a Christian to do, this passage indicates that God has made provision in his Word for training the Christian in it. Thus, there is no ‘good work’ that God wants us to do other than those that are taught somewhere in Scripture: it can equip us

Mounce (p. 571) gathers up reasons three through five: “The perfective form of this verb [*exartizo*], the fact that it is in the perfect tense, and its connection to [the Greek adjective, *pan*], ‘every,’ all emphasize the completeness of Scripture’s preparation.” In contrast to the false teachers, who were devoid of the Truth and, therefore, incapable of good works (the case with the false teachers in Crete, Titus 1:16), Timothy, by separating from the false teachers and their falsehood (2:21) and possessing the Truth of God’s Word (3:15), was capable of good works (3:17).

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for every good work” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 127-128; emphasis his).

## 2 Timothy 3:10-17 Teaching Outline

Introduction: In introducing 2 Timothy, it was suggested that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy for 3 reasons. Two of the reasons were: 1) to encourage Timothy to fight false teaching and 2) to encourage Timothy to be faithful in the face of persecution (the third was to encourage Timothy to come see his father in the faith, Paul). In this section of the letter, Paul touches on both of these reasons. In contrast to the false teachers (“but” in verses 10, 13, and 14), Timothy was to continue in the Truth, even though doing so would place him in the path of persecution.

- I. Continue in the Truth You Have Known (verses 14a and 15b-17; cf. verses 10a and 15a)
  - A. The Truth is special (verse 16a; cf. verse 15’s “sacred” and 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
  - B. The Truth is sufficient (verses 15b and 16b-17)
    - 1. Sufficient to save/make disciples (verse 15b)
    - 2. Sufficient to sanctify/mature disciples (verses 16b-17)
      - a. What is right
      - b. What isn’t right
      - c. How to get right
      - d. How to stay right
- II. Continue in the Truth You Have Come to Own (verse 14b)
- III. Continue in the Truth You Have Been Shown (verses 14c and 10-13)
  - A. Not by evil impostors (verse 13)
  - B. But by an exemplary apostle (verses 10-12)
    - 1. Paul’s doctrine (verse 10)
    - 2. Paul’s deeds (verse 10)
    - 3. Paul’s difficulties (verses 11-12)
      - a. Difficulties are to be expected (verse 12; cf. John 15:20, 16:33, Acts 14:22, 1 Peter 4:12, and 1 John 3:13)

- b. Difficulties are to be endured (verse 11a)
- c. Difficulties will come to an end (verse 11b; cf. Psalm 34:19, 1 Corinthians 10:13, and 2 Timothy 4:17b-18a)

## 2 Timothy 4:1-8

As mentioned in the lesson on the introduction to 2 Timothy (see under “Structure”), the body of the letter (1:6-4:8) is characterized by a series of commands from Paul to Timothy. In 4:1-8, Paul concludes the body of the letter with a flurry of them (five in verse 2 and four in verse 5).

This section can be divided into two subsections: 4:1-4 (with the commands of verse 2 as the focus) and 4:5-8 (with the commands of verse 5 as the focus).

**I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: (4:1)**

The commands Paul will give Timothy in verse two are of the utmost importance. To communicate just how important they are, Paul, as he does elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles (see 1 Timothy 5:21, 6:13, and 2 Timothy 2:14), appeals to the ultimate authority (“**I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus**”). Rightly does Litfin (p. 757) write: “It would be difficult to see how Paul could have made his charge to Timothy any more weighty.”

Paul reminds Timothy that Christ Jesus is the One “**who is to judge the living and the dead**” (cf. especially Acts 10:42 and 1 Peter 4:5; cf. also Matthew 16:27, 25:31-46, John 5:22, 27, Acts 17:31, Romans 2:16, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:8, and Revelation 22:12). This Christ will do at His return. Primarily, the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, and 2 Corinthians 5:10) and the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) are in view. The “**living**” refers to those physically alive at the return of Christ, while the “**dead**” refers to those already deceased at His return (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). The reminder that Christ Jesus will one day judge everyone (including Timothy) is intended to motivate Timothy to do what he is commanded to do in verse two. “The words ‘shall judge’ [KJV] more literally are ‘is about to be judging’; they point to the fact that Paul was living in the hope of

the imminent return of Christ” (Hiebert, p. 104; cf. Mounce, p. 572). Because the return of Christ was imminent (i.e., it could happen at any time), judgment was imminent (cf. James 5:9, 1 Peter 4:5, and Revelation 22:12). This increased the incentive for Timothy to heed Paul’s commands in verse two.

The final words of this verse, “**and by His appearing and His kingdom**” are in keeping with the eschatological (end times) perspective of Paul in this, the final chapter of his final epistle. Paul is about to enter eternity (verse 6), and his thoughts naturally move in this direction. Paul will once again make mention of Christ’s appearing in 4:8. He will once again make mention of Christ’s kingdom in 4:18. Knight (p. 453) nicely ties the two together: “Thus Timothy is to be encouraged to perform his task by the fact that Christ will appear and that Timothy himself will receive the crown of righteousness at Christ’s appearing [4:8] and be safely brought into Christ’s future heavenly kingdom [4:18].”

**preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (4:2)**

Having solemnly set the stage in verse one, Paul now gives the charge. There are five imperatives in this verse<sup>149</sup>, with the first one, “**preach the word**” being the preeminent one. The Greek verb translated “**preach**” is literally “herald” (hence, Hendriksen translates: “herald the Word”; cf. comments on the noun form of this verb in 1:11; cf. also a related noun, translated “proclamation,” in 4:17). Commenting on this verb, Wiersbe (p. 154) writes: “He [the herald] was not an ambassador with the privilege of negotiating; he was a messenger with a proclamation to be heard and heeded.” Preachers are to preach the Word, not about the Word. In other words, they are to let God set the agenda by preaching what God has said in His Word. This is to be done primarily through expository preaching. When ministers of the gospel (or anyone, for that matter) alter or adulterate the King’s message, they are no longer heralding the Word.

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<sup>149</sup>“By means of five brisk imperatives ... the duty of Timothy is set forth with the force of peremptory military commands” (Hiebert, p. 104). This force is reflected in the translation of Mounce (p. 553): “Preach the word! Be prepared when it is opportune or inopportune! Confront! Rebuke! Exhort!” Lea (n.p.) likewise describes these imperatives as being given “with machine-gun precision” and “with the crisp forcefulness of a military order.”

Paul's second command to Timothy is to **"be ready in season and out of season."** In other words, Timothy is to be ready to preach the Word at all times.<sup>150</sup> The phrase, **"in season and out of season"** is variously interpreted: "whether the opportunity seemed ripe or not" (Litfin, p. 758); "when it is favorable and even when it is not favorable" (Wiersbe, p. 154); "whether it is convenient or inconvenient" (Hughes, p. 245; cf. Knight, p. 453, Towner, pp. 600-601, and Wallis, p. 878); "whether the time is opportune or not" (Kent, p. 283; cf. Hiebert, p. 105 and Mounce, p. 553); "welcome or not welcome" (Hendriksen, p. 310). The Greek word translated **"in season"** is *eukairos*, the Greek adverb, *eu*, meaning "well" + the Greek noun, *kairos*, meaning "time." It is translated "opportune time" in Mark 14:11 (cf. Mark 6:21, Luke 22:6, and 1 Corinthians 16:12). The Greek word translated **"out of season"** is *akairos*, *kairos* with the alpha privative (*a*), literally meaning "not time." Paul makes a word play with these words and "time" (*kairos*) at the start of verse three.

Paul's remaining commands in this verse, **"reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction"** are also connected to the first one. Preaching the Word involves the "negative" tasks of reproof and rebuking, as well as the "positive" task of exhorting (see 1 Timothy 5:1 for a contrast between rebuking and exhorting; see Titus 1:9 and 2:15 for the dual tasks of reproof and exhorting).<sup>151</sup> According to Knight (p. 454; cf. Hughes, p. 246), reproof has the idea of showing where one is wrong, whereas rebuke has the idea of telling one who is doing wrong to stop (cf. Mark 4:39 and 10:48, same Greek word). Exhorting has the idea of urging (1 Timothy 5:1) or encouraging one to do right.

As in 2:24b and 25a, Paul speaks of the manner in which the minister of the gospel is to minister the Word, **"with great patience and instruction."** The Greek verb translated **"patience"** has the idea of people patience (see comments on this word in 3:10; see also 1 Thessalonians 5:14). According to Hendriksen (p. 311), it means "slowness to wrath<sup>152</sup>, gentle patience with people who have erred."

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<sup>150</sup>"God's Word is always ... in season. Since sinners are always in season also, God's servant must show a readiness to minister the Word, even outside of 'office hours'" (Kent, pp. 283-284).

<sup>151</sup>In commenting on these dual tasks, Wiersbe (p. 155) makes mention of the famous dictum that preachers should "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted."

<sup>152</sup>The Greek word is *makrothumia*, the Greek word, *makros*, meaning "long" + the Greek word,

**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, (4:3)**

Paul gives the reason for (“**for**”) the commands of verse two. Timothy is to preach the Word, etc. because it is so desperately needed. The need is seen by the specter of false teaching in Ephesus, which raises its head one last time in the letter in verses three and four. In verse two, Paul spoke of the need to preach the Word *akairos* (“out of season”). Paul speaks of just such a season (*kairos*, “**time**”) here in verse three.<sup>153</sup> Paul tells Timothy what some in the (professing) church in Ephesus (the “**they**,” “**their**,” and “**themselves**” in this verse) will not do (“**endure sound doctrine**”) and what they will do instead (“**accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires**”).

On the one hand, “**the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.**” The words, “**the time will come**” are reminiscent of Paul’s words earlier in 1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 3:1. Whereas in those two passages, Paul’s focus is on the false teachers, in this passage it is on their followers. The Greek verb translated “**will endure**” has the idea of “bear with” (as the NASB translates the verb in 2 Corinthians 11:1 and Hebrews 13:22), “put up with” (as the NASB translates the verb in Mark 9:19 and Acts 18:14), or “tolerate” (as the NASB translates the verb in 2 Corinthians 11:19 and 20). For the flavor of the Greek participle translated “**sound**,” see comments on 1:13.

On the other hand (“**but**”), “***wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.**” The

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*thumos*, meaning “anger.” It describes someone who has a long fuse, rather than a short one; someone who is long-tempered, rather than short-tempered.

<sup>153</sup>While Paul specifically has in mind the time in which he and Timothy lived, the reality of “false students” is unfortunately one that is characteristic of every age. As Hendriksen (p. 311) states: “In every period of history ... there will be a season during which men refuse to listen to sound doctrine.” Mounce (p. 574) likewise states: “Paul’s critique finds application during every stage of the church in the last days.”

“false students” in Ephesus sought out teachers who would give them what they wanted to hear (instead of what they needed to hear), teachers who would scratch their itch for falsehood or tickle their fancy. According to BAGD<sup>154</sup> (p. 437), “**wanting to have their ears tickled**” is a metaphor for “curiosity, that looks for interesting and spicy bits of information” (cf. Acts 17:21). Commenting on “**accumulate for themselves teachers**,” Mounce (p. 575) states: “The image is of hypocritical people thinking that if they can find enough teachers, somehow they will be right and able to oppose Paul and Timothy.” The self-centeredness of these false students is evident, as they accumulate teachers “**for themselves**” and “**in accordance to their own desires**” (cf. Isaiah 30:10 and Jeremiah 5:31). Knight (p. 455) comments: “... [T]hey have made themselves the measure of who should teach them and what teaching is acceptable.” Sadly, just as in our day, teachers willing to tickle the ears of their hearers did brisk business in Ephesus.<sup>155</sup>

#### **and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (4:4)**

The sad, but unsurprising, outcome of those who feast on false teaching is apostasy. Those who wanted to have their ears tickled by false teachers (verse 3) would consequently close those same ears to the Truth (“**and will turn away their ears from the truth**”; cf. Titus 1:14).

Those who turned from the Truth filled the void/vacuum by turning to falsehood (“**and will turn aside to myths**”; cf. 1 Timothy 1:6 and 5:15). According to Kent (p. 285; cf. Hiebert, p. 107), the Greek verb translated “**turn aside**” “has a medical usage referring to the dislocation of the limbs, a wrenching out of place. Hence Paul is stating that those who turn away from the truth leave themselves vulnerable to be wrenched out of joint spiritually by satanic influence.” According to Mounce (p. 576) “**myths**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7’s “fables,” same Greek word; Titus 1:14; and 2 Peter 1:16’s “tales,” same Greek word) were “speculative reinterpretations of the OT.” According to Hendriksen (p. 312), they were

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<sup>154</sup>BAGD is an acronym for the leading Greek lexicon (≈ dictionary), the work of men named Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker.

<sup>155</sup>“The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found” (Marvin Vincent, quoted in Kent, p. 285).

“fascinating stories and philosophical speculations.”

**But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (4:5)**

As in verse two, Paul fires off<sup>156</sup> a series of commands to Timothy here in verse five. This verse is a segue of sorts between the previous and following verses. In contrast to (“**But you**<sup>157</sup>”) the “false students” of verses three and four, Timothy is to “**be sober in all things**” (start of verse 5). Because Paul’s ministry is coming to an end (verses 6-8), Timothy is to fulfill his ministry (end of verse 5).

The Greek verb translated “**be sober**” is translated “be clear-minded” by Mounce (p. 553) and “keep your head” by the NIV (cf. 1 Peter 4:7, where the verb is used in conjunction with the verb, “be of sound judgment”). In other words, Timothy is to “steer clear of the heady wine of heretical teaching” (J. N. D. Kelly, quoted in Mounce, p. 576). “He must keep his mind and actions free from that mental and spiritual intoxication experienced by those with morbid cravings for that which is sensational and novel” (Hiebert, p. 108; cf. Hendriksen, p. 312).

Paul’s second command to Timothy here in verse five is “**endure hardship.**” This is the same verb translated “suffer hardship” in 2:9. A related verb is translated “join with in suffering” in 1:8 (see comments on) and “suffer hardship with” in 2:3.

Paul’s third command to Timothy here in verse five is “**do the work of an evangelist.**” The Greek noun translated “**evangelist**” is *euangelistes* (cf. Acts 21:8

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<sup>156</sup>Once again (cf. footnote 149), Mounce (p. 553) brings out the force through the use of exclamation points: “But you, be clear-minded in everything! Suffer evil! Do the work of an evangelist! Complete your ministry!”

<sup>157</sup>The “you” that begins this verse is emphatic. The Greek literally reads: “You but you be sober ....” The emphasis is seen in two ways: 1) The Greek second person personal pronoun (“you”) is the first word in the sentence, for emphasis and 2) this Greek second person personal pronoun is used, normally unnecessary since the person (second person) is already inherent in the Greek verb translated “you be sober”; the result is a repetition of the “you,” for emphasis.

and Ephesians 4:11), one who announces the good news of the gospel (*euangelistes* comes from the Greek adverb, *eu*, “good” + the Greek verb, *angello*, “to announce”; the Greek word for “gospel” is *euangelion*, which literally means “good news”). Kent (p. 286) describes this gift as “a special endowment for announcing the good news of salvation.” While not an evangelist per se, Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist, as is every minister of the gospel. Ministers are to be both obstetricians and pediatricians. In light of Paul’s imminent “departure” (verse 6), it was all the more critical that Timothy do this work.

Paul’s fourth and final command to Timothy here in verse five is “**fulfill your ministry**” (cf. Acts 12:25, where “mission” is literally “ministry,” and Colossians 4:17). Paul had fulfilled his ministry (see verses 6-7, especially verse 7’s “I have finished the course”). Now, he exhorts Timothy to fulfill his. To fulfill one’s ministry is to fill it full (Earle, p. 411), to “discharge all the duties of” it (NIV). The particular ministry Paul had in mind was Timothy’s current mission in Ephesus.

**For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. (4:6)**

Verses 6-8 are what Hiebert (p. 11) calls Paul’s “epitaph.” Commenting on these verses, Hendriksen (p. 313) writes: “In one of the most sublime and moving passages, which with respect to grandeur of thought and stateliness of rhythm is probably unsurpassed anywhere in Paul’s epistles, the apostle lifts this letter—and his apostolic career—to its wonderful finale.” In verse six, Paul’s perspective is the present, in verse seven it is the past, and in verse eight it is the future.

Timothy is to fulfill his ministry (verse 5) because (“**For**”) Paul has fulfilled his (verses 6-7).<sup>158</sup> In verses six and seven, Paul uses several images to communicate

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<sup>158</sup>The interrelationship between verses 5 and 6 is seen in the emphatic “you” (Timothy) at the start of verse 5 (see footnote 157) versus the emphatic “I” (Paul) at the start of verse 6. This latter emphasis is seen in two ways: 1) The Greek first person personal pronoun (“I”) is the first word in the sentence, for emphasis and 2) this Greek first person personal pronoun is used, normally unnecessary since the person (first person) is already inherent in the Greek verb translated “I am being poured out”; the result is a repetition of the “I,” for emphasis. Knight (p. 458; emphasis his) brings out the emphasis: “*You* Timothy must carry on the ministry because *I* Paul am about to depart.”

the thought that he has fulfilled his ministry, beginning with the image of a drink offering (“**I am already being poured out as a drink offering**”; cf. Philippians 2:17). The drink offering (or libation) was the wine that was poured upon or around the sacrificial animal (Exodus 29:38-42, Leviticus 23:9-14, Numbers 15:1-10, and 28:1-31). With this image, Paul is alluding to the fact that the sacrifice of his life (Romans 12:1) had reached its culmination.<sup>159</sup> The Greek verb translated “**being poured out**” is in the passive voice, signifying that Someone else is doing the pouring. Mounce (p. 577) captures the significance: “... [T]he passive voice [stresses] that God, not Rome, is still in control, despite appearances.”

Paul’s next image is seen in the words, “**and the time of my departure has come.**” The Greek noun translated “**departure**” (cf. Paul’s use of the verbal form of this noun in Philippians 1:23) was a euphemism for death. The word was used in Greek literature to describe the concept of loosing/releasing, such as pulling up tent stakes and breaking camp (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1f), loosing a ship from its moorings and setting sail<sup>160</sup>, etc. For the believer, death truly is a release, being set free from one’s bondage to depravity!

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; (4:7)**<sup>161</sup>

Here in verse seven, Paul continues his use of various images to communicate the concept that he has fulfilled his ministry. There is some divergence among interpreters as to the precise image Paul has in mind when he says, “**I have fought**

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<sup>159</sup>“Since this wine *was gradually poured out*, was *an offering*, and was *the final act* of the entire sacrificial ceremony, it pictured most adequately *the gradual ebbing away* of Paul’s life, the fact that he was presenting this life to God as *an offering*, and the idea that while he viewed his entire career of faith as ‘a living sacrifice’ (Rom. 12:1; cf. 15:16), he looked upon *the present* stage of this career as being *the final sacrificial act*” (Hendriksen, p. 313; emphasis his).

<sup>160</sup>Accordingly, Hendriksen (p. 306) paraphrases the end of verse 6: “I am about to set sail.”

<sup>161</sup>While the word order of this verse in our English translations potentially gives the impression that Paul is emphasizing himself (“I have ... I have ... I have ...”), the Greek word order does just the opposite, the original literally reading: “The fight the good I have fought, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept.” Both Hendriksen (pp. 314-315) and Mounce (p. 579) see the significance as Paul taking the spotlight off himself.

**the good fight**” (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:25, where “competes” is the same Greek verb translated “**fought**” here, and 1 Timothy 6:12, where the first “fight” is the same Greek verb translated “**fought**” here and the second “fight” is the same Greek noun translated “**fight**” here). While some see this as a military metaphor, others see it as an athletic one. While in the opinion of this writer, the second is the better option (based on the succeeding context; cf. 1 Corinthians 9:25 and its context, as well as 2 Timothy 2:5 and comments on), the difference is ultimately insignificant. As Knight (p. 459) states: “These words were used in both the athletic and the military realms, and one need not decide which Paul has in view, if indeed it is one and not the other, because he uses the terms for both elsewhere and because the emphasis in his figurative use is not on the particular image but on the basic idea of ‘struggle.’” Fee (p. 289), who views the image as an athletic one, commenting on the modifier, “**good**” states that Paul “has been running in the noblest, grandest run of them all—the ministry of the gospel.”

The next image Paul uses is clearly an athletic one, the image of a runner in a race (“**I have finished the course**”; cf. especially Acts 13:25 and 20:24, as well as 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Galatians 2:2, Philippians 2:16, 3:12-14, and Hebrews 12:1).<sup>162</sup> Paul had fulfilled his ministry (cf. 4:17). See also John 17:4.

In what Earle (pp. 412-413) views as yet another athletic image (in the sense of competing according to the rules, 2:5), Paul completes his perspective on the past by stating, “**I have kept the faith**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:19). Is this a reference to preserving the faith (cf. 1 Timothy 6:14 and 2 Timothy 1:13-14), persevering in the faith, or both? While preserving the faith is the most likely idea, persevering in the faith is certainly not far from view. As Knight (p. 460) states: “This sense of ‘keeping’ in terms of faithfully proclaiming and preserving the faith does not rule out the subjective sense, that Paul has ‘kept on believing,’ and even necessarily includes it: Paul perseveres in that which he preserves (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-2)” (cf. Mounce, p. 580).

**in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (4:8)**

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<sup>162</sup>Wemp (p. 628) rightly remarks that, for the Christian, the course can be described as an obstacle course.

Paul's perspective now turns to the future ("In the future"). What motivated Paul to fulfill his ministry (verses 6-7)? The answer, at least in part, is found here in verse eight. It was the prospect of future reward ("**there is laid up for me the crown<sup>163</sup> of righteousness**"). Paul wants to motivate Timothy to fulfill his ministry by reminding him of what awaits those who do. The Greek verb translated "**laid up**" (cf. Colossians 1:5) has the idea of "safely stored away" (Hiebert, p. 112; cf. Hendriksen, p. 307). The "**crown of righteousness**" is variously understood by interpreters. Hiebert (p. 112) understands it to be "the crown which belongs to or is the due reward of righteousness" (thus, a genitive of possession or of source; cf. Hendriksen, p. 316). Other interpreters (so Fee, Knight, and Kostenberger) understand it to be the crown which is righteousness (thus, a genitive of apposition, with the righteousness being the permanent and perfect righteous state of the believer in heaven; cf. Galatians 5:5 and Philippians 3:12-14). In support of the first option is God's remunerative justice spoken of in the remainder of the verse (cf. God's retributive justice, spoken of in 4:14). In support of the second option is the fact that the other crowns in Scripture, the crown of life in James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 and the crown of glory in 1 Peter 5:4, are best understood as genitives of apposition, the crown of life standing for eternal life in the full and final sense and the crown of glory standing for glorified existence in heaven. In the opinion of this writer, the first option seems preferable, being more in keeping with the immediate context.

The crown of righteousness awaiting Paul was one that the Lord Jesus Christ would award to him at the Judgment Seat ("**which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day**"; cf. comments on 4:1). Contrary to those unjustly judging Paul, the Lord is a "**righteous Judge**" (cf. Psalm 7:11, 9:4, 8, 119:137, 2 Thessalonians 1:5, 1 Peter 2:23, Revelation 16:5, 7, and 19:2).<sup>164</sup> The fact that God rewards righteousness theologians call His "remunerative justice" (in distinction

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<sup>163</sup>Hendriksen (p. 307) calls this the "wreath of righteousness," indicative of the fact that the "crown" is the victor's crown, the crown given to the victors in the Greek games. See comments on 2:5.

<sup>164</sup>"For all such people who, like Paul, are unjustly condemned, the idea of the coming judgment day when they will be vindicated by a *just* Judge is full of comfort" (Hendriksen, p. 317; emphasis his).

from His punishing of sin, His “retributive justice,” as in 4:14). For “**that day**,” see comments on 1:12.

The crown of righteousness would not only be the lot of Paul, but is also the lot of every believer (“**and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing**”). Believers are those who love (NIV: long for) the return of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:7, Philippians 3:20, Titus 2:13, and Hebrews 9:28; see also 1 Corinthians 16:22's “Maranatha<sup>165</sup>” and Revelation 22:20's “Come, Lord Jesus”).<sup>166</sup> Hendriksen (p. 317) writes in this regard: “Of all the indications that one loves the Lord, this earnest longing for his return is one of the best, for such a person is thinking not only of himself and of his own glory but also of his Lord and of the latter’s public vindication.”

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<sup>165</sup>“Maranatha” is Aramaic for “O [our] Lord come!” (NASB marginal note for 1 Corinthians 16:22).

<sup>166</sup>Hiebert (p. 113) asks a penetrating question at this point: “Do we merely give assent to the doctrinal truth of His imminent return, or do we show by our daily life that we love, yearn for, and await His appearing?”

## 2 Timothy 4:1-8 Teaching Outline

Introduction: In typical Pauline fashion, Paul concludes the body (1:6-4:8) of the book of 2 Timothy with some quick-hitting commands (several in verse 2 and several more in verse 5), in keeping with the primary, two-fold emphasis of the letter on fighting false teaching and being faithful in the face of persecution.

- I. Preach (verses 1-4)
  - A. What—the Word (verse 2)
  - B. When—in season, out of season (verse 2)
  - C. What way (verse 2)
    - 1. Painfully
    - 2. Pleadingly
    - 3. Patiently (cf. 2:24)
  - D. Why (verses 1 and 3-4)
    - 1. Because of a coming accountability (verse 1)
      - a. An accountability that is inescapable
      - b. An accountability that is imminent (cf. James 5:9b and 1 Peter 4:5)
    - 2. Because of a coming apostasy (verses 3-4)
- II. Possess All Your Faculties (verse 5a)
- III. Persevere (verse 5b; cf. 2:3 and 10)
- IV. Proselytize (verse 5c)
- V. Perfect Your Ministry (verses 5d-8; cf. Colossians 4:17)
  - A. Paul's preparedness (verse 6)
  - B. Paul's perseverance (verse 7)
    - 1. He fought
    - 2. He finished (cf. John 17:4, Acts 13:25, and 20:24)
    - 3. He was faithful

## 2 Timothy 4:9-22

The final fourteen verses of the letter of 2 Timothy can be considered its conclusion. It consists of a request for Timothy to join Paul in Rome along with accompanying instructions (4:9, 11b, 13, and 21a), the status of Paul's associates (4:10, 11a, 12, and 20), a warning regarding a man named Alexander (4:14-15), an update on Paul's case (4:16-18), some greetings (4:19 and 21b), and a benediction (4:22). In these verses (as in 1:15-18), we meet many of Paul's friends, as well as a few of his foes (Demas and Alexander).

### **Make every effort to come to me soon; (4:9)**

At the beginning of the letter (in 1:4), Paul expressed his deep desire to see Timothy. Here at the end of the letter, he seeks to fill that desire by asking Timothy to visit him in Rome (cf. 4:21). According to Hughes (p. 258), the journey from Ephesus, where Timothy was, to Rome (primarily by land and partly by sea) would take anywhere from four to six months. Paul wants Timothy to come "**soon**," seeing that 1) winter was approaching; thus, the shipping season was coming to an end (see 4:21 and comments on) and 2) Paul's days on earth were numbered (4:6b). Paul wants Timothy "**to make every effort**" (cf. 4:21 and Titus 3:12, which translate the same Greek verb the same way; cf. also 2:15, which translates the verb "be diligent"; see footnote 101 for the meaning of this verb) to visit him.

**for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (4:10)**

Deepening Paul's desire to see Timothy was the desertion of one of his associates, Demas ("**for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica**"). Not only was Demas with Paul during this, his second Roman imprisonment, but also during his first (see Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24).<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>For a biographical sketch on Demas, see pages 135-138 of *In Paul's Shadow* by Hiebert.

The Greek verb translated “**deserted**” (*egkataleipo*) “is from *en* (in), *kata* (down), *leipo* (leave), and suggests our expression, ‘left in the lurch.’ It depicts one who has left his companion down in the clutch of circumstances” (Kent, p. 289; cf. Hiebert, p. 115, Wemp, p. 628, and Hendriksen, p. 318). There is debate among interpreters as to whether or not Demas had apostatized (i.e., turned from the faith, thus proving himself to have been a false professor, not a true possessor, of Christianity). Among those who are of the opinion that Demas had indeed apostatized are Fee, Hendriksen, and Mounce. Among those who believe that Demas had not apostatized are Hughes, Towner, Ward, Lea, Calvin, and Hiebert. Hiebert (p. 116) writes in this regard: “Demas is not charged with forsaking Christ, and the words do not prove that Demas became an apostate from Christianity. But the sin was a grievous one, a self-interest which made him unwilling any longer to be associated with the apostle because of the dangers involved.”<sup>168</sup> That Paul, rather than the faith, is the stated object of Demas’s desertion, leads this writer to share Hiebert’s opinion. Why Demas headed to Thessalonica is a matter of speculation. Perhaps Thessalonica was his hometown.

The driving force behind Demas’s desertion (taking the Greek participle translated “**having loved**” as causal) was a love for the world (“**having loved this present world**”; cf. Galatians 1:4, 1 Timothy 6:17, Titus 2:12, and 1 John 2:15). The world is the organized system under the sway of Satan (John 12:31, 14:30, and 1 John 5:19) opposed to God (John 15:18 and James 4:4) and His people (John 15:18-19, 17:14, and 1 John 3:13). Worldliness is the mindset characteristic of the unbeliever, the mindset that views life without God at the center as normal. It is living for the “nasty now and now” rather than for the “sweet by and by.”<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Hiebert (p. 116) gives a hard-hitting homily at this point: “Unfortunately there are too many Christians today who seek to shirk the discomforts and dangers of an uncompromising stand for Christ and desire to enjoy the ease and pleasures of life instead.”

<sup>169</sup>Many interpreters have pointed out the contrast between Demas’s love for the world (4:10) and the believer’s love for Christ’s appearing (4:8). Commenting on the second, in 4:8, Mounce (p. 583) speaks of “the expectant attitude Christians are to have, an expectancy often lost through Christian apathy and identification with the world, as was the case with Demas, who fell in love with the world (v. 10).” Knight (p. 464), commenting on 4:10, similarly writes: “Paul seems to be contrasting Demas’s love with that which marks true Christians ..., who love and long for the future appearance of the Lord. Demas’s love for this world implies that he is one whose love for

Richard Trench (quoted in Kent, pp. 289-290) defines the Greek word translated “world” as “all that mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale ...” Perhaps Demas, in some way, had entangled himself in the affairs of everyday life (2:4)? Or perhaps he was unwilling to suffer with Paul for the sake of the gospel?

Adding to Paul’s loneliness was the fact that “**Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.**” Most likely, these men had been sent by Paul on special missions. Thus, Paul is not implying that they had deserted him as had Demas. This is the only mention in Scripture of Crescens. Titus is best known for the Pauline epistle written to him while he was serving as Paul’s apostolic representative on the island of Crete.

**Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. (4:11)**

That Paul was indeed lonely becomes crystal clear with the opening words of this verse (“**Only Luke is with me**”). More than just a “beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14) attending to Paul’s physical needs (2 Corinthians 12:7), Luke served alongside Paul, beginning with Paul’s second missionary journey.<sup>170</sup> Like Demas, not only was Luke with Paul during this, his second Roman imprisonment, but also during his first one (see Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24). As pointed out in the lesson on the introduction to 2 Timothy (under “Author”), Luke was likely Paul’s amanuensis for all three of the Pastoral Epistles.<sup>171</sup>

Not only was Paul desirous to enjoy the company of Timothy, but also that of

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something else has taken the place of love for God ....” In other words, those who are worldly are those who do not love or long for Christ’s appearing.

<sup>170</sup>It is likely that Luke joined the second missionary team (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) while the team passed through Troas (Acts 16:8). This is seen by the change in pronouns, from the third person (“they”) in Acts 16:8 to the first person (“we” and “us”) in Acts 16:10.

<sup>171</sup>For a biographical sketch on Luke, see pages 53-65 of *In Paul’s Shadow* by Hiebert.

Mark. Thus, Paul instructs Timothy to **“pick up Mark and bring him with you.”** Evidently, Mark was located somewhere along the route between Ephesus and Rome. Mark (also known as “John Mark”<sup>172</sup>) was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10) who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but quit the journey and returned home to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). When Barnabas wanted Mark to accompany Paul and him on the second journey, Paul balked, resulting in the formation of two separate teams: Barnabas & Mark and Paul & Silas (Acts 15:36-41). The rift between Paul and Mark, however, was eventually resolved, as Mark was with Paul during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (see Colossians 4:10, where Paul tells the Colossians to welcome Mark, and Philemon 24, where Paul calls Mark a “fellow worker”).

The reason Paul so greatly desired Mark’s company was because (“for”) **“he is useful to me for service”** (cf. Philemon 11). Commenting on this commendation, Harrington Lees (quoted in Hiebert, *In Paul’s Shadow*, p. 77) states: “No man could pray for a better testimonial from a dying friend than this.” Not only was Mark useful to Paul, but also to Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Most of all, he was useful to the Lord, being used of God to pen the gospel bearing his name.<sup>173</sup> There is some question as to the precise type of **“service”** Paul had in mind. Fee (p. 294) views it not only as referring to the work of the ministry, but also as referring to personal service to Paul (much like with Onesiphorus in 1:16-18), though Knight (p. 466) believes only the first is in view. Regardless, Mark is testimony to the fact that those who were once a disappointment can, by God’s grace, once again become a delight.

### **But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. (4:12)**

Tychicus was with Paul for a time on Paul’s third missionary journey (Acts 20:4). As with Crescens and Titus (verse 10), Paul had sent Tychicus on a special mission. As mentioned in the lesson on the introduction to 2 Timothy (under “Occasion”), Tychicus was not only the likely bearer of the epistle (i.e., the one who delivered it to Timothy), but also the one to take Timothy’s place while Timothy was away visiting Paul (cf. Titus 3:12 for the same). Due to the limits of shipping season (see

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<sup>172</sup>John was his Jewish name, Mark his Latin name.

<sup>173</sup>For a biographical sketch on Mark, see pages 67-78 of *In Paul’s Shadow* by Hiebert.

comments on 4:21), Tychicus's ministry in Ephesus would last for several months at least. Not only was Tychicus the bearer of 2 Timothy, but also of the epistle to the Ephesians (see Ephesians 6:21-22) and the epistle to the Colossians (see Colossians 4:7-9). Having been the bearer of the epistle to the Ephesians, Tychicus would have been familiar with the Ephesians, and vice versa.<sup>174</sup> While Paul might have written "I am sending" (present tense), rather than "**I have sent**" (past tense), most interpreters are of the opinion that Paul is employing the well-known "epistolary aorist," writing from the standpoint of the reader, rather than from the standpoint of the writer. By the time Timothy would have read these words, Tychicus would have already been sent.

**When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. (4:13)**

Paul gives Timothy a further instruction. Not only was Timothy to make a stopover to pick up Mark (verse 11b), but he was also to make a stopover at the home of a man named Carpus in Troas to pick up a cloak and some books.<sup>175</sup> Troas was located along the route from Ephesus to Rome, so Paul was not asking

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<sup>174</sup>For a biographical sketch on Tychicus, see pages 213-219 of *In Paul's Shadow* by Hiebert.

<sup>175</sup>Nearly 1,500 years later, William Tyndale made a similar request. While being held in the Vilvoorde Castle near Brussels (Belgium) prior to his execution in 1536, Tyndale wrote the following request (cited on p. 358 of vol. 2 of *An Introduction to the New Testament* by Hiebert) in 1535: "I believe, right worshipful, that you are not unaware of what may have been determined concerning me. Wherefore, I beg your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap, for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth, too, to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts also are worn out. He has a woollen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he has also warmer night-caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent to the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ; whose Spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen."

Timothy to go out of his way, though Timothy undoubtedly would have been willing to. As mentioned in the introductory lesson to 2 Timothy (in footnote 14), Troas was likely the place of Paul's arrest. An unexpected, swift arrest in Troas would account for Paul's (presumably) uncharacteristic leaving behind of his cloak and books at the home of Carpus.

Paul's need for a **cloak**, "the heavy woolen garment used by travelers in cold or rainy weather" (Fee, p. 295), "a long heavy cape with a hole in the middle to slip over one's head" (Wemp, p. 628), think poncho, was great, as winter was approaching (4:21a) and Paul found himself incarcerated in "the 'Well-Dungeon' at the foot of the Capitol, a damp and chilly vaulted pit" (Hiebert, p. 48).

Not only did Paul want Timothy to retrieve his cloak from the home of Carpus, but also "**the books**<sup>176</sup>, **especially the parchments.**"<sup>177</sup> The "**books**" were likely scrolls<sup>178</sup> made of papyrus (papyrus was a type of ancient paper), while the "**parchments**" were likely scrolls or codices (a codex was an ancient, bound book) made of animal (such as sheep or goat) skins. "The question as to the contents of these books and parchments has taxed the ingenuity of the commentators, and the conjectures have varied considerably" (Hiebert, p. 119). Were they, as many believe, Old Testament books?<sup>179</sup> No one knows for certain. As Litfin (p. 759) states: "Any attempts to suggest what the documents might have contained ... are purely speculative."

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<sup>176</sup>"He is inspired, yet he wants books. He has been preaching at least thirty years, yet he wants books. He's seen the Lord, yet he wants books. He's had a wider experience than most men, yet he wants books. He's been caught up to heaven and has heard things that are unlawful to utter, yet he wants books. He's written a major part of the New Testament, yet he wants books" (Charles Spurgeon).

<sup>177</sup>According to Fee (p. 295; cf. Lea, n.p.), Paul has one type of book in mind, the parchments, rather than two, the books and the parchments, translating: "the books—I mean by that the parchment notebooks."

<sup>178</sup>According to Baugh (p. 493), scrolls of that day were 4-9 inches wide and 7-15 feet long.

<sup>179</sup>Hughes (p. 263), believing at least some of them to have been so, states: "Can you imagine the theologizing that went on as these four heavyweights [Paul, Luke, Timothy, and Mark] pored over the parchments?"

**Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. (4:14)**

Once again (as with Demas in verse 10), Paul turns the focus to one of his foes, Alexander the coppersmith, a man who was clearly a thorn in Paul's side ("**Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm**"). It is unlikely that this Alexander was the same Alexander in Acts 19:33. More likely, he was the same Alexander whom Paul excommunicated from the Ephesian church in 1 Timothy 1:20. As mentioned in the introductory lesson on 2 Timothy (in footnote 14), the "**much harm**" that Alexander did to Paul may have included agitating for Paul's arrest, perhaps as a vendetta over his excommunication.<sup>180</sup> The "much harm" may have also included testifying against Paul at his preliminary hearing (so Hiebert and Hendriksen), an idea the succeeding context (4:16) would support.

Using the same verb as he used back in 4:8 ("award"), but with the opposite connotation (God's retributive justice, rather than His remunerative justice), Paul reminds Timothy of the truth that God judges a man according to his works ("**the Lord will repay him according to his deeds**"; cf. 2 Samuel 3:39, Psalm 28:4, 62:12, Proverbs 24:12, Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:6, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Peter 1:17, Revelation 2:23, 20:12-13, and 22:12). This did not bode well for Alexander, who did Paul much harm (verse 14) and vigorously opposed Paul (verse 15).

While certainly having an imprecatory-like feel to them (to imprecate is to invoke a curse upon another), Paul's words are not an imprecation, but a statement of fact (Kent, p. 292).<sup>181</sup> While the Greek verb translated "**will repay**" (by the NASB) in the Greek text behind the KJV is in the optative mood (the optative mood conveys the idea of a wish, i.e., may God repay; clearly imprecatory), in the Greek text

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<sup>180</sup>Fee (p. 296) supports this view by contending that the Greek verb translated "did harm" by the NASB "was often used with the legal sense of 'inform against.'"

<sup>181</sup>Earle (p. 416) calls them "not an imprecation but a prophecy." Henry (p. 851) calls them "a prophetic denunciation." The words of Paul at the end of 4:16 point in the direction of these words in 4:14 being non-imprecatory in spirit.

behind the NASB (generally deemed a superior text by nearly all textual scholars) it is in the indicative mood (hence, the NASB's "will repay"; not necessarily imprecatory). Thus, the NASB rendering rightly tones down (however much) Paul's words at this point.

**Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. (4:15)**

The reason Paul "airs Alexander's dirty laundry in public" is not to spite Alexander for harming (verse 14)/opposing (verse 15) him, but to warn Timothy about him ("**Be on guard against him yourself**"). Based upon these words, Alexander was likely located in one of three places: Ephesus (cf. 1 Timothy 1:20), Troas (assuming Paul was arrested in Troas, and Alexander was the one responsible for his arrest; so Fee), or Rome (assuming Alexander testified against Paul at Paul's preliminary hearing). Timothy was in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), would be making a stopover in Troas (4:13), and would eventually be arriving in Rome (4:9). Wherever Alexander was located, Timothy would be ready for him (to be forewarned is to be forearmed).

The reason Paul wants Timothy to be on guard against Alexander is because ("**for**") "**he vigorously opposed our teaching.**" The Greek adverb translated "**vigorously**" is first in the sentence, for emphasis, emphasizing the intensity with which Alexander opposed Paul. The Greek verb translated "**opposed**" literally means "to stand against" (see 3:8 and comments on). The Greek noun translated "**teaching**" is literally "words." According to Hendriksen (p. 325), these "words" were Paul's words of defense at his preliminary hearing, an idea the succeeding context (4:16) would support. The implication is that Alexander testified against Paul at Paul's preliminary hearing.

**At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. (4:16)**

Paul now gives an update on his case. In the Roman judicial system, the accused would face what was called a *prima actio* ("first action"), a preliminary hearing much like our modern grand jury hearing, in which the prosecution presented its case against the accused, and the accused was given an opportunity to make a

defense (see Acts 25:16). At this defense<sup>182</sup>, Paul found himself without a single human advocate (“**At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me**”; cf. 1:15 and comments on). It is hard to imagine that the likes of Timothy, Onesiphorus, and Luke were included among these deserters; therefore, it is assumed that they were providentially hindered from speaking in Paul’s defense, either having been unable to make it to Rome or, if in Rome, having been prohibited from testifying in Paul’s behalf. The Greek verb translated “**supported**” literally means to be beside (*paraginomai*, the Greek preposition, *para*, “beside” + the Greek verb, *ginomai*, “to be”). The Greek verb translated “**deserted**” is the same one used of Demas in 4:10 (for the flavor of this verb, see comments on that verse).

Following the example of Christ (see Luke 23:34a; cf. Stephen in Acts 7:60), Paul forgives those who deserted him, asking God not to charge them for it (“**may it not be counted against them**”). The Greek verb translated “**may it be counted**” is a financial term for crediting an amount to an account, so Paul is asking that their sin against him not be listed as a debt on their legal ledger. Paul is “practicing what he preached” back in 1 Corinthians 13:5, namely, that love “does not take into account a wrong *suffered*.”

**But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth. (4:17)**

Though Paul was without a single human advocate at his first defense (verse 16), he was not without the ultimate Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1) (“**But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me**”). The Greek verb translated “**stood with**” literally means to stand beside (*paristemi*, the Greek preposition, *para*, “beside” + the Greek verb, *histemi*, “to stand”). What a comfort to know that “when other helpers fail, and comforts flee,” the Lord Jesus Christ, “Help of the helpless,” abides with me.<sup>183</sup> At critical junctures throughout Paul’s Christian

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<sup>182</sup>Hendriksen is of the opinion that “first defense” is a reference to Paul’s first Roman imprisonment, rather than to this, his second. Of all the interpreters I consulted, he was the only one who suggested so.

<sup>183</sup>Excerpts from the first stanza of the hymn, “Abide With Me” by Henry Lyte.

life and ministry, the Lord Jesus stood with him (see Acts 18:9-10, 23:11, and 27:23-24; cf. Hebrews 13:5), and so He stood with Paul at this one. As Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 4:9 (where “forsaken” is the same Greek verb translated “deserted” in 2 Timothy 4:10 and 16), we are “persecuted, but not forsaken.” Not only did the Lord stand with Paul, but He also **strengthened** him (cf. Philippians 4:13 and 1 Timothy 1:12), which Robertson (p. 544) defines as “poured power into.”

The Lord’s standing with and strengthening of Paul was for the purpose of (“**so that**”) enabling Paul to complete his mission as a preacher of the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 22:21, 26:17, Romans 1:5, 11:13, 15:16, Galatians 1:16, 2:7-9, Ephesians 3:8, and 1 Timothy 2:7) (“**through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear**”). The Greek prepositional phrase translated “**through me**” is testament to the fact that we are the instruments through whom God reaches unbelievers with the gospel (cf. Romans 10:14’s “how will they hear without a preacher?”). The Greek noun translated “**proclamation**” is a noun form of the Greek verb translated “herald” in 4:2 (see comments on this verb in 4:2, as well as comments on the related noun translated “preacher” in 1:11).

In what sense was Paul able to fully accomplish his mission, such that all the Gentiles might hear the gospel? Based on the context, the most likely answer to this question is that Paul had opportunity to share the gospel at his “first defense” (verse 16), thereby enabling him to give the gospel to the crème de la crème of the Gentile world, the Roman authorities (cf. Paul’s giving of the gospel to Felix, governor of the Roman province of Judea, in Acts 24; his giving of the gospel to Festus, the successor of Felix, in Acts 25 and 26; and his giving of the gospel to Herod Agrippa II in Acts 26; cf. also Acts 27:24).<sup>184</sup> God had told Paul back in Acts 23:11 (cf. Acts 9:15’s “and kings”) that this would be his ultimate mission. “The occasion brought to completion the full representative complement of Gentiles to whom he was to preach the gospel” (Knight, p. 471). Mounce (p. 597) likewise

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<sup>184</sup>“The [proclamation] ... was indeed *fully performed*, when in the capital of the world, at the highest earthly tribunal, possibly in the Roman forum ... and certainly before a Roman multitude, Paul the prisoner of the Lord spoke for himself, and for the Gospel” (C. J. Ellicott, quoted in Mounce, p. 596; emphasis his).

states: “By proclaiming the gospel to the authorities in Rome, Paul has now preached to all groups and all types of Gentiles and therefore has fulfilled his ministry.” Paul had, indeed, finished his course (4:7).

In a somewhat mysterious statement, Paul ends verse 17 with the words, “**and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth.**” The key interpretive question is, Who is the lion? One suggestion is that Paul meant the Roman emperor at the time, Nero. However, Paul had not been set free. Another suggestion is that Paul meant that he had escaped the fate of being fed to the lions in the Roman Coliseum. However, Paul says “**lion**” (singular), not “**lions**” (plural). Furthermore, as Wiersbe (p. 161) states: “It cannot mean a literal lion because Paul was a Roman citizen and, if convicted, he could not be thrown to the lions. Instead, he would be executed by being beheaded” (cf. Kent, p. 294, Baugh, p. 495, and Ward, p. 221). A better suggestion is that Paul means Satan (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Perhaps Paul is saying that Satan’s attempt to devour Paul (by getting him to deny Christ at his preliminary hearing) was thwarted by the presence and provision of Christ. In the opinion of most interpreters, “**the lion’s mouth**” is metaphorical for extreme danger (so Kent, Hiebert, Calvin, and Wiersbe) and, in this case, death in particular (so Hughes, Fee, Hendriksen, Knight, and Mounce). See especially Psalm 22:20-21 in this regard (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:10, which speaks of being “delivered” from death, “delivered” being a translation of the same Greek verb translated “**rescued**” here in 2 Timothy 4:17). In other words, God delivered Paul from the jaws of death. While Paul could have been executed at this time, he was given a temporary reprieve. According to tradition, and according to Paul’s expectation (4:6), he remained a prisoner the rest of his days, ultimately dying a martyr’s death by being beheaded a short time later.

**The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (4:18)**

What a precious verse! Not only did the Lord temporarily rescue Paul from the jaws of death (verse 17), but, more importantly, He would also rescue him from any threat to his ultimate spiritual well-being<sup>185</sup> (“**The Lord will rescue me from**

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<sup>185</sup>According to Knight (p. 472), Paul is speaking of “the power of evil to destroy him finally.” According to Mounce (p. 598), Paul is speaking of “any danger that would destroy Paul or his

**every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom**"). If Paul had a specific "**evil deed**" (or deeds) in mind, perhaps it was that (or those) of Alexander (agitating for Paul's arrest?; testifying against Paul at his first defense?; both?). Or perhaps it was the gross injustice being perpetrated on Paul by the Roman government. Regardless, the rescue Paul has in mind is not physical, but spiritual. While God would choose not to rescue Paul from a martyr's death, He would rescue him through death. In other words, Paul's death would be the means whereby God would rescue him from "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4) with all its evil deeds and bring him safely to heaven. This verse is a strong witness to the doctrine of eternal security. Preserving the believer's soul is God's doing ("**The Lord will ... and will**"); thus, the outcome is incontrovertible. Believers can confidently pray, "deliver [same Greek verb translated "**rescue**" here] us from evil" (Matthew 6:13), knowing that God has promised to do just that (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Thessalonians 3:3).<sup>186</sup>

In light of what Paul says in the first half of the verse, he cannot help but burst into a doxology in the second half<sup>187</sup> ("**to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen**"; cf. other such Pauline doxologies in Romans 9:5, 11:36, 16:27, Galatians 1:5, Ephesians 3:20-21, Philippians 4:20, 1 Timothy 1:17, and 6:16; cf. also other such non-Pauline doxologies in Hebrews 13:21, 1 Peter 4:11, 2 Peter 3:18, and Jude 24-25). Notice that the word, "**be**" is in italics in the NASB, indicative of the fact that it has been supplied by the translators. There is some debate as to whether the verb to be supplied should be "be" (thus, a desire) or "is" (thus, a declaration). Slightly tipping the scales in favor of the second option is the similarly-constructed doxology of 1 Peter 4:11, which has the verb in the original, a verb that is rightly translated by the NASB in terms of a declaration, rather than a desire ("to whom belongs the glory ...."). Commenting on the word, "**glory**," Knight (p. 473) states that it "signifies the luminous manifestation of God's person, his glorious revelation of himself .... Used in a doxology, it expresses either the desire for that

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faith." See 3:11 and comments on.

<sup>186</sup>God does not do so, however, without the believer's necessary, active, and responsible participation called perseverance.

<sup>187</sup>"So grateful is Paul for such a Lord in the midst of such difficult circumstances that he breaks out into a doxology ...." (Knight, p. 474).

radiance to continue to be seen in its splendor and glory, or, in an echoing or mirror effect, asks that appropriate praise be given in response to it (see 1 Tim. 1:17).” Mounce (pp. 598-599) similarly states: “Paul is calling for God’s glory, glory that is his own, to be eternally seen and given back to him through the praise of those who agree with the communal ‘Amen.’” Because God is infinitely glorious and, thus, worthy of being glorified to an infinite degree, only the infinite duration of eternity will be adequate enough “time” for all creation to give God His due (Revelation 5:13 and 7:9-12).

### **Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. (4:19)**

As Paul does at the end of many of his epistles (see especially Romans 16:3-16), so he does here at the end of this letter, sending greetings to various individuals in Ephesus through Timothy. Paul directs Timothy to “**greet Prisca** [also known as Priscilla] **and Aquila**<sup>188</sup>.” Paul first met this couple in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3) while on his second missionary journey. Aquila & Priscilla had come to Corinth from Rome (Acts 18:2). Aquila & Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus, then remained there (Acts 18:18-19). While in Ephesus, they edified a promising young preacher named Apollos (Acts 18:24-28). When Paul wrote the epistle of 1 Corinthians (from Ephesus), Aquila & Priscilla were evidently still residing in Ephesus (see 1 Corinthians 16:19). By the time Paul wrote the epistle of Romans, however, Aquila & Priscilla were evidently back in Rome (see Romans 16:3-5). Now, they are back in Ephesus (perhaps having fled the Neronian persecution).<sup>189</sup>

Paul also (“**and**”) directs Timothy to greet “**the household of Onesiphorus**” (cf.

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<sup>188</sup>Much is made by some of the fact that four of the six times Aquila & Priscilla are mentioned together in Scripture, Priscilla’s name is mentioned first (as here). Hendriksen (p. 330), Knight (pp. 475-476), and Mounce (p. 599) give some possible reasons why. Mounce (p. 599) concludes: “The fact of the matter is that it is not clear why she is listed first four times, and no theory should be based on the order.” Knight (p. 476) concludes: “These various theories are nothing more than that, and no conclusions should be drawn from them, particularly none that would contradict Paul’s direct statements regarding the role of women in the church (especially 1 Tim. 2:10-15; also 1 Cor. 14:34ff.)”

<sup>189</sup>For a biographical sketch on Aquila & Priscilla, see pages 23-35 of *In Paul’s Shadow* by Hiebert.

1:16). As mentioned in the comments on 1:16, there is some debate as to whether or not one should surmise from the fact that Paul greets the household of Onesiphorus, without directly greeting Onesiphorus, that Onesiphorus had died (as Fee believes). In the opinion of this writer, this is likely not the case. By greeting the household of Onesiphorus Paul may also be indirectly greeting Onesiphorus, the head of the household. More likely, Onesiphorus had not yet made it back to Ephesus after having ministered to Paul (1:16-18).<sup>190</sup>

#### **Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. (4:20)**

Earlier in the conclusion, Paul gave Timothy the status of five of his associates: Demas (verse 10), Crescens (verse 10), Titus (verse 10), Luke (verse 11), and Tychicus (verse 12). Here in verse 20, he gives the status of two more: Erastus and Trophimus. **Erastus** may be the same Erastus who served as the city treasurer of Corinth (Romans 16:23). More likely, he is the same Erastus, who along with Timothy, was sent by Paul to Macedonia during the third missionary journey (Acts 19:22). This association with Timothy undoubtedly made Erastus's whereabouts of particular interest to Timothy; hence, Erastus's inclusion here.<sup>191</sup>

**Trophimus** was also an associate of Timothy on the third missionary journey, having accompanied him, along with Paul and several others (Acts 20:4), in taking the famine relief love offering from the Gentile churches to Jerusalem. Thus, his whereabouts would also have been of particular interest to Timothy; hence, his inclusion here. Adding to Timothy's interest in Trophimus was the fact that Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21:29).<sup>192</sup>

Interestingly, Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus. Why didn't Paul heal him (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, where Paul does not heal himself; Philippians 2:25-27, where Paul apparently does not heal Epaphroditus; and 1 Timothy 5:23, where Paul does not heal Timothy)? After all, Paul did possess the ability to heal (see Acts 14:8-11, 19:11-12, 20:7-12, and 28:7-9). H. Harvey (quoted in Hiebert, p. 124) correctly

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<sup>190</sup>For a biographical sketch on Onesiphorus, see pages 181-186 of *In Paul's Shadow* by Hiebert.

<sup>191</sup>For a biographical sketch on Erastus, see pages 155-157 of *In Paul's Shadow* by Hiebert.

<sup>192</sup>For a biographical sketch on Trophimus, see pages 207-211 of *In Paul's Shadow* by Hiebert.

notes “that miracles of healing were not wrought at the mere will, even of an apostle, they were doubtless exceptional manifestations of divine power, made only as the Holy Spirit directed and empowered him who performed them.” Thus, though Paul undoubtedly desired to heal Trophimus, he could not do so at will. This may be part of the larger theological debate over the continuance of the miraculous sign gifts (miracles, healings, speaking in tongues, etc.). The fact that we find Paul healing in the book of Acts, but not in the epistles, appears to support the “cessationist” argument that miraculous sign gifts ceased with the completion of the canon of Scripture at the end of the first century A. D. Accordingly, the miraculous sign gift of healing was already passing away as the final books of the New Testament (the epistles) were being penned.

**Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. (4:21)**

As in verse 9, Paul urges Timothy to come to him in Rome ASAP, here adding the fact that the window of travel opportunity would soon be closing (“**Make every effort to come before winter**”). As mentioned in the comments on verse 9, the journey from Ephesus to Rome would partly involve sea travel. Shipping season in that part of the world would normally close from November 10 to March 10 (Hughes, p. 270) because winter sailing was too dangerous (as Paul found out firsthand in Acts 27). Thus, Paul wants Timothy to leave Ephesus as soon as possible, lest their reunion be delayed an extra four months or more.

As Paul does at the end of many of his letters, so he does here at the end of this letter, sending greetings from various individuals with him, in this case various individuals in Rome (“**Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren**”). Because Timothy had been with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (see Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, and Philemon 1), it is quite possible that Timothy personally knew these individuals, and vice versa; hence, their inclusion here.

**The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (4:22)**

As Paul does at the end of every one of his letters, so he ends the epistle of Second Timothy with a benediction. These are the final, inspired words Paul ever

wrote.

The first part of the benediction is a wish for the Lord to be with Timothy (“**The Lord be with your spirit**”). I say Timothy because the second person personal pronoun translated “**your**” is a singular. To say, “**The Lord be with your spirit**” is the same as saying, “The Lord be with you” (compare Galatians 6:18, Philippians 4:23, and Philemon 25 with Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 16:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:28, and 2 Thessalonians 3:18). Paul wants the Lord to be with Timothy, as He had been with Paul (verse 17).

The second part of the benediction is a wish for (God’s) grace to be with Timothy and the Ephesians (“**Grace be with you**”). I say Timothy and the Ephesians because the second person personal pronoun translated “**you**” is a plural.<sup>193</sup> In every one of Paul’s benedictions, he wishes God’s grace to be with his recipients (so also the benedictions in Hebrews and Revelation).

As he usually does in his epistles, so Paul does here in Second Timothy, beginning (in the salutation, 1:2) and ending (in the benediction, 4:22) the letter with God’s grace. By God’s grace and for His glory, may this study of the epistle of Second Timothy, Paul’s final words, enrich the soul of every one who studies it, as it has mine. Sola Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory)!

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<sup>193</sup>As pointed out in the lesson on the introduction to 2 Timothy (under “Recipient(s)”), this fact implies that the church at Ephesus was a secondary recipient of the epistle (Timothy being the primary recipient).

## **Conclusion of 2 Timothy (4:9-22)**

### **Teaching Outline**

Introduction: In typical Pauline fashion, the epistle of 2 Timothy concludes with final instructions (verses 9, 11b, 13, 15, 19, and 21a), greetings (verses 19 and 21b), and a benediction (verse 22). Noteworthy, however, are the many individuals that are mentioned, some of whom were Paul's foes, but most of whom were his friends.

#### I. Foes

- A. One who fought against Paul—Alexander (verses 14-15; cf. 1 Timothy 1:20)
  - 1. His resistance (verses 14a and 15b)
  - 2. His repayment (verse 14b)
- B. Some who forsook Paul (cf. Mark 14:50)
  - 1. Demas (verse 10a; cf. Philemon 24 and 1 John 2:15)
  - 2. Other deserters (verse 16; cf. 1:15)

#### II. Friends

- A. Some fellow believers
  - 1. In Troas (verse 13)
  - 2. In Ephesus (verse 19)
  - 3. In Rome (verse 21b)
- B. Some who fought alongside Paul: “fellow soldiers” (Philippians 2:25 and Philemon 2)
  - 1. Timothy from Ephesus to Rome (verses 9 and 21a)

- a. Because shipping season was ending (verse 21a)
    - b. Because Paul's life was ending (verse 9; cf. 4:6b)
  - 2. Crescens in Galatia and Titus in Dalmatia (verse 10b)
  - 3. Luke in Rome (verse 11a)
  - 4. Tychicus from Rome to Ephesus (verse 12)
  - 5. Erastus in Corinth and Trophimus in Miletus (verse 20)
- C. One who once forsook Paul: Mark (verse 11b; cf. Acts 13:13)
- D. One who would not forsake Paul: the Lord (verses 17-18)
  - 1. His purpose (verse 17c)
  - 2. His presence (verse 17a; cf. Matthew 28:20b, Acts 18:9-10, 23:11, 2 Corinthians 4:9, and Hebrews 13:5b; cf. also verse 22a)
  - 3. His provision (verses 17b, d, and 18)
    - a. Strength (verse 17b)
    - b. Salvation
      - (1) From death (verse 17d)
      - (2) Until death
      - (3) Through death
  - 4. His praise (verse 18c)