

## **THE SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY**

### **Background to the Letter**

The authorship and date of this letter, as one of the Pastoral Epistles, has already been discussed in the Introduction to the Letter to Titus and the First Letter to Timothy.

Second Timothy appears to be the last of the three Pastoral Epistles. The biblical scholars who argue that the Pastorals are products of the Pauline school often incline toward Second Timothy as the earliest of the three and the one most likely to have actual fragments of material from Paul himself.

Paul wrote this letter when he was in prison in Rome for the second time. Unlike his first imprisonment, Paul did not expect to be released from this second Roman imprisonment. The date of the composition of 2 Timothy was therefore during Nero's persecution of the Christians and precisely around 64-68 AD.

### **Introduction to the Letter**

The tone of this letter is more personal than in the first. Timothy is addressed personally in warm terms (2 Tim 1:6-14; 2:1-13) and witnesses Paul's courage and hope in the face of discouragements in the course of his apostolic ministry (2 Tim 1:15-18; 3:10-17; 4:9-18).

Paul urges Timothy to come to him before winter, and to bring Mark with him. He was sure that the time of his departure was at hand and with all the solemnity of one who was about to appear before the Judge, Paul exhorts his "son Timothy" not to have a "spirit of timidity" and "not to be ashamed to testify about our Lord" (1:7-8) but to persevere in his task with diligence and steadfastness in the face of false teachings, and to be patient under persecution.

### **The Main division of the Letter:**

1. Address (2 Tim 1:1-5)
2. Exhortations to Timothy (2 Tim 1:6-2:13)
3. Instructions Concerning False Teaching (2 Tim 2:14-4:8)
4. Personal Requests and Final Greetings (2 Tim 4:9-22)

### **Content of the Letter**

The letter takes on the character of a final exhortation and testament from Paul to the younger Timothy. He knows that he faces death in the near future and that this may be his last letter.

### **Thanksgiving Prayer: 1:3-5**

Paul gives thanks for Timothy, whom he remembers constantly in his prayers. Paul is reminded of his faith, one that was imparted by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

### **Exhortations to Be Faithful: 1:9-18**

It points to his preaching of the gospel as the reason for his imprisonment and offers Timothy, as a motive for steadfastness, his own example of firmness in faith despite adverse circumstances. For this reason Paul encourages Timothy to rekindle the gift of God within, and exhorts him not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord or of him as a prisoner, but to join with him in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved them and called them according to His purpose and grace. This grace was given before the ages of time and has now been revealed in the appearance of the saviour Jesus Christ, who has destroyed death and brought immortality through the gospel.

### **To Endure Hardships as Communicator of the Gospel: 2:1-13**

Paul urges Timothy to be strong and not to desist out of fear from preserving and spreading the Christian message, to entrust his teaching to reliable men and to endure hardship in order to share in the victory of the risen Christ. This is Paul's gospel, and he presents the resurrection of Jesus and his messianic role as the heart of the gospel for which he is now in chains and is ready

to lay down his life and thus not only to express his own conviction fully but to strengthen the conviction of others.

### **Life of Service: 2:14-26**

Paul gives directions to Timothy on how to deal with false teachers, who are probably the ones in Ephesus with whom Paul dealt in First Timothy (see 1 Tim 1:3-7). He encourages Timothy to do his best to present himself as a workman who knows how to handle the word of truth and has no reason to be ashamed, unlike the false teachers. He is to avoid godless chatter, because it leads to ungodliness. Finally he gives Timothy a series of practical exhortations.

### **The Value of the Scriptures: 3:1-17**

Paul refers again to false teachers who brought division in the Christian Churches. Paul warns Timothy that false teachers would rise and turn people away from faith. These men will exploit weak-willed persons, but they will not make much progress since their folly will be plain to everyone.

Paul warns that everyone who wants to live an authentic life in Christ will be persecuted, as he has been. He encourages Timothy to continue in what he has learned, in particular the scriptures. Paul then describes the scriptures as useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

### **To Proclaim the Word of God: 4:1-8**

In a solemn way Paul commissions Timothy to preach the word, correct, rebuke and encourage. The time is coming when men will no longer tolerate sound doctrine, but will turn aside to myths. Paul again tells Timothy to be sober, endure hardship and to fulfil his ministry. These verses describe Paul as fully aware of what impends, looking to God, not to human beings, for his deliverance. Paul is convinced of being rewarded with a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award him on that day.

### **Personal Requests and Greetings: 4:9-22**

Paul advises Timothy to visit him soon and describes to him the events connected with his trial and how he was deserted by all, and how the Lord stood by his side, and rescued him. This brings Paul to a confession of faith in the Lord. He is confident that the Lord will protect him from every evil attack and bring him into His heavenly kingdom. The letter concludes with the greetings to prominent Christians who stood by him in his life.

---

### **Paul in his own words**

#### **Crown of Righteousness**

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tm 4:6-8