

2 TIMOTHY

Introductory Issues

Authorship

The author of 2 Timothy was the Apostle Paul. This is the last of his three epistles known as the Pastoral Epistles (First and Second Timothy, and Titus). Both the external and internal evidence associated with 2 Timothy support Pauline authorship.

The *external evidence* is good in spite of the serious attacks on this book by critics.¹ The following church fathers accepted this epistle as canonical and as written by Paul, and alluded to it in their own works: Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian.²

The *internal evidence* sustains the external evidence that Paul was the author of this epistle. The writer identifies himself as Paul (1:1), and just like in 1 Timothy, he refers to Timothy as his son: “my dearly beloved son” (1:2), and “my son” (2:1). There are many New Testament references that show the intimate relationship that Timothy sustained with Paul as his helper and co-laborer in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus the spiritual father of Timothy could be none other than the Apostle Paul. The writer's style, vocabulary, and personality are clearly Pauline. Pauline authorship is easily authenticated.

Date and Place of Writing

That Paul was a prisoner in a Roman dungeon and anticipating his approaching death when he wrote this, his last letter, is seen in the tone of this intensely personal letter (1:8, 16; 4:6-8). Following his release from his first Roman imprisonment, it is believed that Paul traveled extensively throughout the Roman Empire, possibly visiting Spain in A.D. 66, and Crete in the summer of A.D. 66. According to Titus 3:12, he spent the winter in Nicopolis and arrived in Rome possibly in the summer of A.D. 67. He was re-arrested at this time and started his final Roman imprisonment, which would end with his martyrdom. It appears that Paul was awaiting trial when he wrote this epistle (4:16). He anticipated that the Roman authorities would find him guilty and execute him very soon (4:6). Most conservative scholars feel that Paul wrote this epistle, as nearly as can be established, right before his death, in approximately A.D. 67.³ He appears to have been anticipating winter (4:13), which means that he most likely wrote the letter from his Roman imprisonment in the fall of A.D. 67. According to early church tradition, Paul was executed shortly before Nero committed suicide in June of A.D. 68.

¹For more on this issue, see the section on the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles in 1 Timothy in the preceding book notes. Also, a full discussion is provided by Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev ed., 607-49, and Henry C. Thiessen *Introduction to the New Testament*, 253-60.

²For a full discussion see Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 254-55.

³A. Duane Lifton, *1 Timothy*, in BKC, 729.

Historical Setting

Destination of 2 Timothy. As with 1 Timothy, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy who was continuing his service as Paul's apostolic representative in charge of the work in Ephesus. Thiessen provides an alternative view in which he feels that Timothy had left Ephesus and was engaged in evangelistic work in Macedonia or in the provinces of Asia. However, Paul seems to have anticipated that he would return to Ephesus,⁴ but in any event, he asks Timothy to come to him as soon as possible.

Unique Characteristics

1. This is an extremely personal letter to a son in the faith.
2. Thiessen describes 2 Timothy as "an epistle of mingled gloom and glory."⁵
3. 2 Timothy is Paul's last letter, and is often called Paul's "swan song." Bengel refers to it as "the last will and testament of Paul."
4. Paul's fate is strikingly similar to that of His Lord Jesus Christ. Four distinct similarities may be noted: 1) Both were *alone* in death; 2) Both were *aware* that death was near at hand; 3) Both *appeal* to followers to exercise fidelity; 4) Both *alerted* their followers concerning their approaching death.
5. The book pictures a consistent close to a consistent life. Paul remained firm in the faith, not ashamed, and not regretting for one moment his sufferings for the Lord. His end was like the rest of his exemplary life: Paul had "learned . . . to be content in every situation."

Message

Paul wrote this letter to encourage and instruct timid Timothy to remain faithful to his calling and loyal to his father in the faith; and to request him to visit him in jail, as only Luke remained with him.

Outline

I. The Introduction 1:1-5

- A. The Salutation (1:1-2)
 1. The author: Paul (1:1)
 2. The addressee: Timothy (1:2a)
 3. The greeting (1:2b)
- B. The Thanksgiving (1:3-5)
 1. He remembered Timothy in his prayers (1:3)
 2. He desired to see Timothy (1:4)

⁴Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 268-69.

⁵*Ibid.*, 267.

3. He reflected upon Timothy's faith (1:5)

II. The Exhortation to Ecclesiastical Faithfulness and Endurance 1:6–2:26

A. The Exhortation to Ecclesiastical Faithfulness (1:6-18)

1. Timothy is to stir up his spiritual gift of God (1:6-7)
 - a. The appeal for zeal in service (1:6)
 - b. The incentive for zeal in service (1:7)
2. Timothy is to display courage and not be ashamed (1:8-12)
 - a. The appeal for courage in service (1:8)
 - b. The incentive for courage in service (1:9-12)
 - 1) The provision of Christ: life and immortality (1:9-10)
 - 2) The pattern of Paul: suffered but trusted fully in Christ (1:11-12)
3. Timothy is to display fidelity in guarding the truth entrusted to him (1:13-18)
 - a. The appeal for fidelity (1:13-14)
 - 1) Retain the standard of sound doctrine (1:13)
 - 2) Guard the source of sound doctrine: the gospel entrusted to you (1:14)
 - b. The incentive for fidelity (1:15-18)
 - 1) Examples of unfaithful service (1:15)
 - a) All who were in Asia had deserted Paul (1:15a)
 - b) Phygelus and Hermogenes were a special disappointment (1:15b)
 - 2) Example of faithful service: Onesiphorus (1:16-18)

B. The Exhortation to Ecclesiastical Endurance (2:1-26)

1. Timothy is exhorted to endure in the strength of Christ (2:1-2)
 - a. The strengthening grace of Christ Jesus (1:1)
 - b. The selection and teaching of faithful men: only gifted men to teach (1:2)
 - 1) To be trusted with the truth (1:2a)
 - 2) To be transmitters of the truth (1:2b)
2. Timothy is exhorted to endure as a good soldier of Christ: devotion (2:3-4)
 - a. Suffer hardship (2:3)
 - b. Stay un-entangled from the affairs of daily life (2:4a)
 - c. Seek to please the Commander and Chief, Jesus Christ (1:4b)
3. Timothy is exhorted to endure as an athlete: discipline (2:5)
4. Timothy is exhorted to endure as a farmer: diligence (2:6-7)
5. Timothy is exhorted to endure according to Paul's example: duty (2:8-13)
 - a. He is to remember the resurrection (endurance) of Jesus Christ (2:8)
 - b. He is to remember the sufferings and endurance of Paul (2:9-10)
 - c. He is to remember the future rewards promised for endurance (2:11-13)
6. Timothy is exhorted to endure as a workman of God (2:14-19)
 - a. Handling the Word of God accurately as a diligent workman (2:14-15)
 - b. Having nothing to do with worldly philosophies and teachings (2:16-18)
 - c. Having the seal of God abstain from wickedness (2:19)
7. Timothy is exhorted to endure as a sanctified servant of God (2:20-26)
 - a. Seek to be a sanctified vessel useful to the Master (2:20-23)
 - 1) Remove sin from your life: promote sanctification (2:20-21)
 - 2) Run from youthful lusts: pursue righteousness (2:22)

3) Refuse foolish and ignorant speculations: preach the Word (2:23)

b. Seek to be a servant of the Lord (2:24-26)

1) Be a patient teacher and do not be quarrelsome (2:24)

2) Be a gentle corrector of sinful brethren by helping them repent (2:25)

3) Be a liberator of brethren held captive by Satan (2:26)

III. The Exhortation to Expect Future Apostasy 3:1–17

A. The Peril of the Coming Apostasy (3:1-9)

1. The prediction of difficult times to come (3:1)

2. The description of the apostates (3:2-5)

3. The corruption of the apostates (3:6-9)

a. Their faithless practices exposed (3:6-7)

b. Their folly in opposing the truth (3:8-9)

B. The Protection from the Coming Apostasy (3:10-13)

1. Pursue the example of Paul (3:10-11)

2. Pursue a godly life in Christ Jesus (3:12-13)

a. The godly will be persecuted (3:12)

b. The godless will promote greater evil: from bad to worse (3:13)

C. The Promotion of the Word of God (3:14-17)

1. The efficacious potential of the sacred writings: Scriptures (1:14-15)

2. The equipping potential of the Scriptures (1:16-17)

a. Provided by God's inspiration (1:16a)

b. Profitable for God's man (1:16b)

1) For teaching and training in righteousness (1:16b, 16e)

2) For reproof and correction of sin (1:16c, 16d)

c. Prepares God's man for every good work (1:17)

IV. The Exhortation to Preach the Word as the Minister of Christ 4:1-8⁶

A. The Nature of the Charge: Delivered before God and Christ Jesus (4:1)

B. The Content of the Charge: Preach the Word (4:2)

C. The Reason for the Charge: Many Will Turn Away from the Truth (4:3-4)

1. A denial of sound doctrine (4:3a)

2. A desire for Satanic doctrine: heresies and myths (4:3b-4)

D. The Continuation of the Charge: Fulfill your Ministry (4:5)

E. The Motivation of the Charge: Future Rewards for the Faithful (4:6-8)

1. The testimony of Paul (4:6-7)

2. The treasures of the future (4:8)

⁶The outline for this section is adapted from Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, rev ed., 245.

V. Conclusion 4:9-22

- A. Paul's Personal Concerns: Requests and Information (4:9-13)
 - 1. Paul appeals to Timothy to come to him soon (4:9, 21a)
 - 2. Paul advises Timothy on his current situation (4:10-12)
 - a. Demas had deserted him going to Thessalonica (4:10a)
 - b. Crescens had gone to Galatia (4:10b)
 - c. Titus had gone to Dalmatia (4:10c)
 - d. Luke only was with him (4:11a)
 - e. Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark with him (4:11b)
 - f. Paul had sent Tychicus to Ephesus (4:12)
 - 3. Paul asks Timothy to bring his cloak, books, and parchments from Troas (4:13)
 - 4. Paul admonishes Timothy to watch out for Alexander the coppersmith (4:14-15)
- B. Paul's Personal Care During His First Trial (4:16-18)
 - 1. He was deserted by friends (4:16)
 - 2. He was delivered by the Lord (4:17-18)
 - a. The Lord stood with him (4:17a)
 - b. The Lord strengthened him (4:17b)
 - c. The Lord spoke through him that all the Gentiles might hear (4:17c)
 - d. The Lord set him free from his first Roman imprisonment (4:17d)
 - e. The Lord secured his deliverance from every evil deed (4:18a)
 - f. The Lord said he would be brought safely into His kingdom (4:18b)
- C. Paul's Personal Greetings (4:19-21)
- D. Paul's Personal Benediction (4:22)

Argument

Following the Introduction (1:1-5) in which Paul opens with a salutation identifying himself as the author, this epistle may be divided into four additional sections. The first section of the letter opens with Paul's Salutation (1:1-2). He identifies himself as the author of this epistle which he addresses to Timothy, his "beloved son" (1:2a). Paul concludes his salutation with a blessing (1:2b), and his introduction with thanksgiving (1:3-5).

The second section presents Paul's Exhortation to Timothy to Promote Ecclesiastical Faithfulness and Endurance (1:6-2:26). He first exhorts Timothy to faithfulness in the ministry (1:6-18): Timothy is to stir up the spiritual gift God had given him (1:6-8), to display courage and not be ashamed (1:8-12), and to display fidelity in guarding the truth entrusted to him (1:13-18). Second, Timothy is exhorted to endure in the ministry (2:1-26). Timothy is exhorted to endure: in the strength of Christ (2:1-2); as a good soldier of Christ, he is to be devoted (2:3-4); as an athlete, he must be disciplined (2:5); as a farmer, he must be diligent (2:6-7); as an example of suffering, he is to follow Paul and Jesus' examples (2:8-13); as a

workman of God, he is to be committed to teaching the Word of God to others (2:14-19), and as a sanctified servant of God, he is to live a holy and pure life (2:20-26).

In the third section, Paul issues an Exhortation to Expect Future Apostasy (3:1-17). He first discusses the peril of the coming apostasy (3:1-9). Paul issues a prediction of difficult times that would be brought about in the last days by apostates that are described as corrupt, faithless, lovers of pleasure and self, rather than lovers of God (3:1-5). These are men who oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith, and whose folly in opposing the truth of the gospel of Christ will be evident to all (3:6-9). Second, he discusses Timothy's protection from the coming apostasy (3:10-13). He is to pursue the example provided by Paul, and a godly life in Christ Jesus (3:10-13). Third, he must be actively involved in the promotion of the Word of God (3:14-17).

In the fourth section, Paul Exhorts Timothy to Preach the Word as the Minister of Christ (4:1-8). Timothy is reminded of the solemn nature of his charge/calling by God to preach the Word of the gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (4:1-2). Even though many will turn away from the truth to follow apostate teaching, Timothy is charged to fulfill his ministry with a view to the future rewards to be given to the faithful in Christ (4:3-8).

The fifth section presents the Conclusion (4:9-22), in which Paul discusses personal concerns by making requests and providing information (4:9-13). Paul appeals to Timothy to come to him soon (4:9, 21a), advises Timothy on his current situation concerning those who had deserted him, and those he had dispatched in ministry (4:10-12). He asks Timothy to pick up Mark, his cloak, books, and parchments on his way to see him (4:13). He next admonishes Timothy to watch out for Alexander the coppersmith (4:14-15). Second, he discusses the care and conditions surrounding his first trial, how he was deserted by friends, but delivered from the "lions mouth" by the Lord, Who set him free from his first Roman imprisonment and promised him that he would be brought safely into His kingdom (4:16-18). Paul concludes with Personal Greetings (4:19-21), and a Personal Benediction (4:22).