

Introduction to 2nd Timothy¹

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Introductory Matters

Authorship

External evidence favors Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy. The writings of Polycarp, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Tertullian, and Justin Martyr all testify to Pauline authorship. *Internal* evidence also favors Pauline authorship. Paul is identified as the author (1:1). The author also depicts Timothy as his “dear son (1:2).” This same phrase is found in Paul’s other writings (Titus 1:4). Moreover, the style and vocabulary of 2 Timothy is similar to that exhibited by Paul in his other writings. Also, the biographical details are consistent with what is said of Paul elsewhere.²

Destination

Timothy³ was in Ephesus when he received Paul’s first letter (1 Tim 1:3) and during Paul’s presumed visit (1 Tim 3:14). It is probable that Timothy was also in Ephesus when he received Paul’s second letter. Paul tells Timothy to greet Onesiphorus (4:19b) who was most likely in Ephesus (1:18). Paul also tells Timothy to greet Priscilla and Aquila (4:19a), who at one time had ministered in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-28; 1 Cor 16:19). It is likely that they returned from Rome (Rom

¹ The material from this section was compiled from various sources, including Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 432-36; Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 302-07; Duane Liftin, “2 Timothy,” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor, 1983), 749; *Nelson's Complete Book of Charts and Maps*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 430-37; Daniel Wallace, “2 Timothy: Introduction, Outline, and Argument,” online: www.bible.org, accessed 27 October 2005, 1-4; Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 2 Timothy,” online: www.soniclight.com, accessed 27 October 2005, 1-3; Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 254-55.

² For a fuller discussion of the issues surrounding authorship of the pastoral letters, see the authorship section of my 1 Timothy argument.

³ For a discussion of Timothy’s biography, see my 1 Timothy argument.

16:3) to Ephesus when the Neronian persecution began. Paul also makes a reference to Alexander the Coppersmith (4:14) who may have been a resident of Ephesus (1 Tim 1:20; Acts 19:33).

Date

After spending the winter with Titus in Nicapolis (Titus 3:12), Paul went to Spain (Rom 15:24, 28). According to tradition, Paul was in Spain from A.D. 64-66. Paul then returned to Greece and Asia. He visited Corinth, Miletus, and Troas (4:13, 20). Paul was probably arrested in Troas and then imprisoned in Rome. Paul wrote 2 Timothy during his second Roman imprisonment about A.D. 67.⁴ Because tradition indicates that Paul was executed in June of A.D. 68 and because Paul indicated that his death was imminent when he wrote the letter (4:6-8), it is safe to conclude that the letter was written in A.D. 67. Because Paul was anticipating the winter (4:21), his execution probably took place in the late summer or early fall of A.D. 67.

Place of Writing

Numerous internal clues indicate that 2 Timothy was written while Paul was in prison (1:8, 16; 2:9; 4:6-8, 13). However, this imprisonment was Paul's second Roman imprisonment rather than his first Roman imprisonment. This point becomes clear upon noting the following differences between the imprisonments.⁵

First Imprisonment	Second Imprisonment
Wrote prison epistles	2 Timothy
Accused by Jews of heresy and sedition	Persecuted by Rome and arrested as a criminal against the empire
Local and sporadic persecutions (A.D. 60-63)	Neronian persecution (A.D. 64-68)
Decent living conditions in a rented house (Acts 28:30, 31)	Poor conditions; in a cold, dark dungeon
Many friends visited him	Virtually alone (only Luke with him)

⁴ For a complete summation of Paul's journeys between imprisonments, see Wilkinson and Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible*, 428; *Nelson's Complete Book of Charts and Maps*, 432-33.

⁵ This chart was taken from *Nelson's Complete Book of Charts and Maps*, 433. Ephesus (Acts 19:22) is an unlikely location for the imprisonment mentioned in 2 Timothy since there is no indication that Paul was ever imprisoned in Ephesus. Caesarea is also an unlikely location since Paul did not experience imminent martyrdom there (Acts 23-24).

First Imprisonment	Second Imprisonment
Many opportunities for Christian witness were available	Opportunities for witness were restricted
Was optimistic for release and freedom (Phil 1:24-26)	Anticipated his execution (2 Tim 4:6)

Occasion for Writing and Purpose

Several factors prompted Paul to write 2 Timothy. First, Timothy's core makeup made him naturally non assertive in the ministry. He was youthful (1 Tim 4:12), sickly (1 Tim 5:23), and timid (2 Tim 1:7). Second, Timothy's non-assertiveness was compounded by the Neronian persecution. After Nero destroyed one half of Rome by fire (A.D. 64), he blamed the situation on the already unpopular Christians. Consequently, Christianity became a *religio illicito* thus ushering in the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64–68). In an attempt to avoid persecution, Christian ministers began to pursue a lower profile (4:9-11). Timothy most probably followed this pattern as well.

Third, Timothy was negatively impacted by Paul's arrest. The exact cause of the arrest is unknown. Some speculate that Nero blamed the believers for the burning of Rome since they taught that the world would be destroyed by fire (2 Pet 3:1-14). Because Paul was a visible leader of the Christian movement, he was arrested. Others theorize that Alexander the Coppersmith (4:14; 1 Tim 1:20; Acts 19:33) brought charges of treason against Paul at either Ephesus or Rome. According to this theory, Alexander was a disgruntled Judaizer who Paul had disciplined. He retaliated against Paul by bringing against him the charge of insurrection. Although some speculate that the place of the arrest was Nicapolis, it is more likely that Paul was arrested in Troas since that is where Paul left his cloak, books, and parchments (4:13). Perhaps his arrest was so sudden that he left these items behind and consequently requested that Timothy bring them to him in Rome. At the time that Paul wrote the letter, he already had his first hearing (4:16a), most of his associates had left him (4:9-11, 16b), and he anticipated his imminent martyrdom (4:6-8). Perhaps Timothy thought that he could also be persecuted if Paul had been persecuted (1:8). The threat of such persecution added to his timidity.

Fourth, Timothy had also become less assertive due to increasing apostasy and persecution within the church (2:18; 3:1-9, 12-13; 4:3-4). Timothy's non-assertiveness concerned Paul since his own death was imminent (4:6-8, 18). Paul needed someone to carry the gospel forward to the next

generation. Thus, Paul wrote 2 Timothy for the *purpose* of encouraging Timothy not to shrink back from ministry duties but rather to be faithful and endure in the ministry. Tychicus may have been the bearer of the letter (4:12).

Message

The *message* of 2 Timothy is faithful endurance in the ministry, even in the midst of encroaching persecution and apostasy, so that the Christian message will be preserved for the next generation.

Sub purposes

In addition to the above-described main purpose for writing, Paul had several auxiliary purposes in mind when writing the letter. First, Paul wanted Timothy to come to Rome from Ephesus (4:9, 21).⁶ Second, he wanted Mark to come with Timothy to Rome as well (4:11). Third, he wanted Timothy to bring along with him the items he left behind in Troas (4:13). Fourth, Paul wanted to remedy divisiveness within the Ephesian congregation (2:14-26). Fifth, Paul wanted to describe the character of the coming apostates (3:1-5). Sixth, he wanted to issue a warning concerning Alexander the Coppersmith (4:14-15). Seventh, he wanted to urge maturity based upon the proclamation of Scripture (3:17). Eighth, he wanted to inform Timothy of his imminent martyrdom (4:6-8). Ninth, he wanted to inform Timothy of the results of his first trial (4:16-18). Tenth, he wanted to greet those who he knew in Ephesus (4:19). Eleventh, he wanted to extend a greeting from the brethren in Rome (4:21-22).

Unique Characteristics

2 Timothy boasts several outstanding characteristics. First, the letter is personal. Second, because Paul wrote the letter to a friend who knew his theology, it is not a theological treatise but rather a personal letter. Third, the letter is known for the numerous metaphors it uses in chapter two to depict the Christian life. Fourth, the letter contains one of the clearest statements in the entire Bible on the inspiration of the Scripture (3:15-17). Fifth, the phrase “in Christ Jesus” is used in

⁶ It remains unclear whether Timothy ever made the journey to Rome.

seven distinct contexts (1:1, 9, 13; 2:1, 10; 3:12, 15). Sixth, the letter represents Paul's last will and testament. Seventh, the letter shows that just as Paul offered his body to the Lord for service in life (Rom 12:2), he was willing to make a similar offering of his body in death (4:6).

Eighth, the letter contains an evaluation of Paul's ministry (4:6-8). Ninth, the letter predicts Paul's imminent martyrdom (4:6-8). Tenth, the letter contains various prophecies concerning the coming apostasy (3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4). Eleventh, the letter is full of various names that were personal friends of both Paul and Timothy. Twelfth, the letter is filled with numerous sharp imperatives (1:6, 8, 13-14; 2:1, 3, 15, 22, 23; 4:15). Thirteenth, the letter represents Paul's final days in a way that is similar to the final days of Christ. For example, both Paul and Christ were alone, both predicted their imminent death to their disciples, both anticipated death, and both encouraged their disciples to faithfulness in view of imminent death.

Outline

- I. Call to faithful endurance in the ministry (1:1-18)
 - A. Salutation (1:1-2)
 - 1. Sender: Paul (1:1)
 - 2. Recipient: Timothy (1:2a)
 - 3. Benediction (1:2b)
 - B. Thanksgiving (1:3-5)
 - 1. Paul's prayers for Timothy (1:3)
 - 2. Paul's longing for Timothy (1:4)
 - 3. Paul's reminder of Timothy's heritage (1:5)
 - C. Call to faithfulness in use of gift (1:6)
 - D. Call to courage (1:7)
 - E. Call to be unashamed (1:8-12)
 - 1. Unashamed of evangelism (1:8a)
 - 2. Unashamed of Paul (1:8b)
 - 3. Unashamed of the gospel (1:9-12)
 - a) Because of its saving power (1:9a)
 - b) Because of its grace (1:9b)
 - c) Because of its eternality (1:9c)
 - d) Because it conquers death (1:10)
 - e) Because of Paul's connection to the gospel (1:11-12)
 - i) Paul's role in disseminating the gospel (1:11a-c)
 - (a) Paul as a herald of the gospel (1:11a)
 - (b) Paul as an apostle of the gospel (1:11b)
 - (c) Paul as a teacher of the gospel (1:11c)

- ii) Paul's confidence in the gospel (1:12)
 - F. Call to faithfulness in guarding the gospel (1:13-14)
 - G. Negative examples of faithfulness (1:15a-c)
 - 1. Province of Asia (1:15a)
 - 2. Phygelus (1:15b)
 - 3. Hermogenes (1:15c)
 - H. Positive example of faithfulness: Onesiphorus (1:16-18)
 - 1. Onesiphorus refreshed Paul (1:16a)
 - 2. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul (1:16b)
 - 3. Onesiphorus searched for Paul in Rome (1:17)
 - 4. Onesiphorus earned his reward (1:18a)
 - 5. Onesiphorus helped Paul in Ephesus (1:18b)
- II. Illustrations of faithful endurance (2:1-26)
 - A. Key to endurance (2:1)
 - B. Illustrations of endurance (2:2-26)
 - 1. Teacher (2:2)
 - 2. Soldier (2:3-4)
 - 3. Athlete (2:5)
 - 4. Farmer (2:6)
 - 5. Christ (2:7-8)
 - a) Christ's illumination (2:7)
 - b) Christ's resurrection (2:8)
 - 6. Paul (2:9-10)
 - 7. Trustworthy saying (2:11-13)
 - a) All believers will live with Christ (2:11)
 - b) Enduring believers will reign with Christ (2:12)
 - c) God will not renege on his promise of eternal life to disobedient believers (2:13)
 - 8. Workman (2:14-18)
 - a) Avoid trivial arguments leading to false doctrine (2:14)
 - b) Embrace true doctrine (2:15)
 - c) Avoid trivial arguments leading to false doctrine (2:16-18)
 - 9. Clean vessel illustration (2:19-23)
 - a) General admonition toward sanctification (2:19)
 - b) Vessels described (2:20-21)
 - c) Applications (2:22-23)
 - i) Avoid sexual impurity (2:22)
 - ii) Avoid quarrelsomeness (2:23)
 - 10. Servant (2:24-26)
- III. Faithful endurance in the midst of coming apostasy (3:1-4:8)
 - A. Characteristics of the apostasy (3:1-9)
 - 1. General description of the apostasy (3:1)
 - 2. Characteristics of the apostates (3:2-7)
 - 3. Illustration of Jannes and Jambres (3:8)

4. Conclusion: apostates are known by their works (3:9)
- B. Proper conduct in the midst of the apostasy (3:10-4:8)
 1. Imitate Paul's example in nine ways (3:10-13)
 2. Reasons for continuing in and preaching the word (3:14-4:8)
 - a) The effect of the word on Paul (3:14)
 - b) The effect of the word on salvation (3:15)
 - c) The divine origin of the word (3:16a)
 - d) The effect of the word on sanctification (3:16b)
 - e) The equipping function of the word (3:17)
 - f) Evaluation of ministry at the Bema (4:1b)
 - g) Paul's charge to Timothy (4:1a, 2)
 - h) The preference of men to avoid the word (4:3-4)
 - i) The need for Timothy to complete his ministry (4:5-8)
 - i) The charge (4:5)
 - ii) The reason: Paul's coming absence (4:6-8)
- IV. Conclusion (4:9-22)
 - A. Paul's fellow workers (4:9-13)
 1. Timothy is to come to Paul (4:9)
 2. Demas abandoned Paul (4:10a)
 3. Those Paul sent elsewhere (4:10a-b, 12)
 - a) Crescens (4:10b)
 - b) Titus (4:10c)
 - c) Tychicus (4:12)
 4. Only Luke remains with Paul (4:11a)
 5. What Timothy is to bring (4:11b, 13)
 - a) Mark (4:11b)
 - b) Cloak (4:13a)
 - c) Scrolls (4:13b)
 - d) Parchments (4:13c)
 - B. Paul's opponent (4:14-15)
 - C. Results of first trial (4:16-18)
 1. Paul's friends deserted him (4:16)
 2. God's faithfulness to Paul (4:17-18)
 - D. Additional information, greetings, instruction (4:19-21)
 1. Greetings to Priscilla, Aquila, Onesiphorus (4:19)
 2. Information regarding Erastus and Trophimus (4:20)
 3. Instruction to come before winter (4:21a)
 4. Greetings from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, brothers (4:21b)
 - E. Benediction (4:22)

Argument

In the first chapter, Paul calls Timothy to faithful endurance in the fulfillment of his ministry calling (1:1-18). Even the salutation (1:1-2) seems to hint at this theme. Paul endured in the ministry because he was an apostle by the will of God (1:1a) and was sustained by the promise of eternal life (1:1b). Because Timothy had a similar spiritual relationship with God (1:2a), he too could be sustained in the ministry. Paul also hints at endurance when he prays for the bestowal of grace, mercy, and peace upon Timothy (1:2b). Typically Paul's opening prayers consist merely of the bestowal of "grace and peace." Here, however, Paul adds "mercy" to the mix, presumably because Timothy would need this added benefit in order to persevere in the ministry.

Paul's thanksgiving on Timothy's behalf (1:3-5) also alludes to the theme of perseverance. Paul's constant prayers on Timothy's behalf would cause his young associate to endure (1:3). Paul's longing to see Timothy and to experience joy in his presence expresses his confidence that Timothy would endure (1:4). Also, Paul appeals to Timothy's heritage as a basis for his exhortation to endure (1:5). Timothy was the recipient of the godly heritage from both his mother and grandmother. Reminder of this heritage would give him an incentive to endure just as Paul's mindfulness of his own heritage (1:3) gave him an incentive to endure.

Paul begins his call for Timothy's faithful endurance by reminding him to continue to use his spiritual gift of teaching (1:6).⁷ The threat of persecution as well as Timothy's natural timidity had tempted him to be less assertive in the use of his spiritual gifts (1:7). Here, Paul admonishes Timothy to resist this temptation. In order to counter Timothy's timidity, Paul reminds him that the Holy Spirit does not produce anxiety but rather stability. Thus, any anxious feelings that Timothy was experiencing did not emanate from God's Spirit. Rather, they emanated from Satan or Timothy's own fallen nature. Paul's arrest no doubt played a role in Timothy's timidity. Perhaps Timothy reasoned that if Paul could be persecuted, then he could be persecuted as well. Thus, Paul admonishes him not to be deterred from evangelism (1:8a). Paul also admonishes Timothy not to

⁷ The present tense of the verb indicates that Timothy is to continue using his gift and does not imply that Timothy's use of his gifts had somehow stopped. Also, "apostles had divine authority and ability to confer spiritual gifts upon whomever they willed. This was one sign of the divine authentication of their ministry (Rom 1:11; Heb 2:3-4)." See Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, 306.

allow his own arrest to deter him but rather to aggressively promote the gospel thereby joining Paul in suffering for the gospel. Paul reminds Timothy that a reservoir of divine power is available that will allow Timothy to endure such suffering (1:8b).

Paul continues this theme of being unashamed of the gospel by enumerating for Timothy the gospel's benefits (1:9-12). First, the gospel contains saving power (1:9a). Second, the gospel manifests God's grace (1:9b). Third, the gospel is eternal (1:9c). Fourth, the gospel conquers the ancient enemy death (1:10). Perhaps Paul mentions the gospel's transcendence over death at this juncture due to Timothy's fear of martyrdom brought about not only by Paul's arrest but also the Neronian persecution. Fifth, the gospel is to be honored because Timothy's mentor Paul is affiliated with it (1:11-12). Paul's role was the gospel's disseminator. He was its herald (1:11a), apostle (1:11b), and teacher (1:11c). Paul's connection to the gospel is also seen in his confidence in it (1:12).⁸

Paul continues the theme of faithful endurance by exhorting Timothy to exhibit faithfulness in guarding the gospel. In other words, he is to keep the good thing that the Spirit has entrusted to him. If Timothy does not persevere in this task, then the transference of the gospel to the next generation is at stake (1:13-14). Paul closes this chapter on faithful endurance by providing Timothy with some positive and negative examples of endurance (1:15-18). Paul begins with the negative examples (1:15-16). Because Phygelus, Hermogenes, and those in the province of Asia had abandoned Paul, Timothy should not follow their negative example. Perhaps Paul draws his examples from Asia because that is where Timothy was located. Thus Paul is concerned that Timothy might imitate this negative pattern (1:15). On the other hand, Paul holds out the positive case of Onesiphorus as an example of an Ephesian who Timothy should emulate. Onesiphorus refreshed Paul by not being ashamed of him. Because he searched for Paul both in Rome and Ephesus, he will be rewarded by God (1:16-18).

⁸ Some interpret this verse in terms of what Paul entrusted to God. Such items would include his life, destiny, and faith. However, it seems better to interpret the verse in terms of what God entrusted to Paul. This view best harmonizes with the immediate context (1:13-14). Furthermore, the notion of God's entrustment to Paul dominates the Timothy letters (1 Tim 1:11, 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14).

Paul's enumeration of the various examples of perseverance (1:15-18) leads him to set forth ten metaphors depicting Christian faithfulness and perseverance (2:1-26). However, before giving these metaphors, Paul first provides Timothy with the key to endurance. Timothy can only endure in the ministry to the extent that he routinely draws upon God's grace (2:1). Having stated this general principle, Paul now furnishes the ten metaphors that will help Timothy conceptualize ministerial faithfulness and perseverance (2:2-26).

The first metaphor is that of a discipling teacher (2:2). Timothy is to be faithful in taking the truths that Paul has given him and to entrust them to others.⁹ The second metaphor is that of a soldier (2:3-4). Paul uses the example of a soldier because he is someone who not only endures hardship but also does not entangle himself in trivial affairs. Rather, he remains focused upon pleasing the one who enlisted him. Timothy must similarly endure hardship and remain focused upon pleasing God. The third metaphor is an athlete (2:5). Just as an athlete can only succeed by competing according to the rules, Timothy can only succeed by following the rules that Paul has specified in this letter. The fourth metaphor is that of a farmer (2:6). Just as a farmer must sow to reap, Timothy must be faithful in preaching and teaching God's Word in order to reap a harvest of justification and sanctification in the lives of his hearers.

After promising that the Lord will give Timothy understanding of these matters (2:7), Paul is reminded of the Lord as a fifth and ultimate illustration of endurance (2:8). Christ was persecuted and yet endured through His resurrection. Timothy must similarly endure for the sake of God's people by being faithful in the ministry. Perhaps Paul emphasizes Christ's true identity as the Davidic descendant at this point in order to show Timothy the reality of the gospel that he was in danger of neglecting. An emphasis upon Paul's gospel leads him to point to himself as a sixth example of endurance. Just as Paul suffered yet endured for the sake of the elect, Timothy must similarly endure for the sake of God's people by being faithful in the ministry (2:9-10).

⁹ Interestingly, the following four generations seem to be in view: from Paul, to Timothy, to faithful men, to others. Unfortunately, many use this verse to undermine the validity of the lecture method by arguing that "real ministry" only takes place in a one on one or small group context. However, the phrases "many witnesses" and "faithful men" are in the plural. Thus, "what you have heard from me" can encompass a preaching situation or pulpit ministry. Stanley Toussaint, class notes of Andy Woods in BE2050A Seminar in Pauline Literature, Dallas Theological Seminary, Spring 2004.

The seventh illustration of endurance is found in the “trustworthy statement” (2:11-13). While all believers will live with Christ (2:11), only enduring believers will reign with Christ (2:12). Although only some believers will not endure and thus not be rewarded through reigning with Him, Christ will never renege on his initial promise of granting eternal life to all believers (2:13). Paul’s point in rehearsing this statement is that if Timothy wants to be fully rewarded, he should endure in his ministry.¹⁰ Paul uses a workman as his eighth metaphor (2:14-18). Rather than becoming embroiled in trivial arguments that only lead to false doctrine (2:14, 16-18),¹¹ Timothy should embrace the truth by becoming a diligent worker or student of Scripture. Just as a worker does not become involved in trivialities but focuses on the task at hand, Timothy should imitate this pattern by avoiding trivial arguments and by focusing on truth (2:15).

Paul uses the illustration of a vessel as his ninth metaphor (2:19-23). Paul explains that there are two kinds of vessels in a person’s house. First, there are vessels of honor comprised of gold and silver. Second, there are vessels of dishonor comprised of wood and clay (20:20-21). When a believer cleanses himself from sin, he transforms himself from a vessel of dishonor to a vessel of honor fit for the master’s use. Timothy can transform himself into a vessel of honor by enduring in

¹⁰ In addition to the rewards view presented above, other interpretations of these verses have been advanced. The Arminian interprets “if we deny Him” as a loss of salvation. However, this view contradicts plain statements made elsewhere regarding the security of the believer (John 10:28-29; Rom 8:28-38). The Calvinist interprets “if we deny Him” as a reference to a non-believer (Matt 10:33). However, this view is out of harmony with the argument of the book, which is calling on an already converted Timothy to endure in his ministry. Others interpret the phrase as a mere hypothetical. However, what would be the rhetorical impact of interjecting a mere hypothetical into this context? In sum, it seems that the rewards view posits the fewest problems. For this enumeration of options, I am indebted to J. Carl Laney, *Answers to Tough Questions: A Survey of Problem Passages and Issues from Every Book of the Bible* (Kregel: Grand Rapids, 1997), 297.

¹¹ The danger of false doctrine can be seen in Paul’s choice of phraseology, such as “ruin of the hearers” (2:14), “spread like gangrene” (2:17), and “upset the faith of some” (2:18). The danger of false doctrine can also be seen in what was being taught by Hymanaeus and Philetus (2:17-18). Because of the unpalatability of the notion of resurrection to the Greek mind (Acts 17:32), these men were teaching that the resurrection would not happen in the future but had already taken place in a spiritual sense. In other words, they were advocating over-realized eschatology. Interestingly, their view is similar to the way amillennialists interpret the first resurrection (Rev 20:5).

the ministry. Timothy can endure in the ministry by cleansing himself from sin (2:19),¹² sexual impurity (2:22), and quarrelsomeness (2:23). Paul's emphasis upon avoiding quarrelsomeness in verse 23 leads him to a tenth and final metaphor, which is that of a servant (2:24-26). A servant is to be humble and not overly argumentative in teaching God's Word and confronting error (2:24-25). Paul promises that God will use this humble approach in ministry to bring people to their senses and out of the devil's snare (2:26).

Now that Paul has exhorted Timothy to faithful endurance in the ministry (1:1-18) and illustrated such endurance through the use of ten metaphors (2:1-26), he now urges Timothy to endure even in the midst of the coming apostasy (3:1-4:8). Before describing how Timothy is to conduct himself in the midst of apostasy (3:10-4:8), Paul first furnishes a description of the coming apostasy (3:1-9). First, Paul offers a generic description of the coming apostasy as a terrible time that will come in the last days (3:1). Second, Paul enumerates more than twenty characteristics of the coming apostates (3:2-7). This apostasy will go from bad to worse (3:13) and result in persecution upon the godly (3:12). Because this apostasy will negatively impact Timothy's ministry in this manner, Paul is obviously describing an apostasy within the church as opposed to outside of the church. Third, Paul illustrates the character of the coming apostates by comparing them to Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses (Exod 7:11; 9:11). The coming apostates will similarly reject the truth and oppose God's spokesmen (3:8).¹³ Paul concludes the paragraph by noting that because these apostates will be known by their works, their folly will be obvious to all (3:9).¹⁴

¹² The issue in these verses is not saved versus unsaved but rather a sanctified believer versus an unsanctified believer. To argue that these verses are speaking of unbelievers is to violate the argument of the book where an already converted and believing Timothy is being exhorted to endure in the ministry. 2:19a uses Numbers 16:5 to differentiate between a faithful and an unfaithful believer. 2:19b uses Numbers 16:26 and Isaiah 52:11 to call upon those who have already identified with the Lord to abstain from wicked behavior.

¹³ Although the names of the Egyptian magicians are not preserved in the Old Testament, they are preserved by Jewish tradition (*Jannes* is found in the Qumran scroll known as the Covenant of Damascus 5. 17-19. *Tg. Ps-J* to Exodus 1:15 contains both names). Although Paul is not offering here a blanket endorsement of all Jewish tradition, he does indicate that it is accurate on some points.

¹⁴ Because the power of Jannes and Jambres paled in comparison to that exhibited by Moses, the lack of divine authentication in their activities was self-evident. This same absence of divine authentication will be evident in the activities of the coming apostates (3:5).

Now that Paul has described the coming apostasy (3:1-9), he shares with Timothy how he is to conduct himself so as to remain faithful and endure in the midst of it (3:10-4:8). First, because of the apostasy's nature of becoming increasingly worse (3:13) and persecuting the godly (3:12), Timothy can only endure in the midst of it to the extent that he imitates Paul's pattern of endurance. Thus, Paul furnishes Timothy with nine characteristics from his own life that he should imitate (3:10-11). The most important of these characteristics is Paul's perseverance as exemplified by the persecutions he endured at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra on his first missionary journey (Acts 13–14). Second, Timothy is to preoccupy himself with the public proclamation of Scripture. Paul then proceeds to furnish nine reasons why Timothy must endure in preaching and teaching God's Word as the apostasy comes (2 Tim 3:14-4:8).

First, the Scripture should be proclaimed because of the impact that it has had on Paul's life. Timothy was familiar with Paul's life and character. Paul became that man that he was because of the influence of God's Word in his life (3:14). Second, the Scripture should be proclaimed because it is the source of power that God uses to bring the elect to salvation (3:15). Third, the Scripture should be proclaimed because it is inspired of God and therefore represents God's opinion rather than man's (3:16a).¹⁵ Fourth, the Scripture should be proclaimed because it produces sanctification in the believer's life (3:16b). Fifth, the Scripture should be proclaimed because it equips the believer to live the Christian life (3:17b). Sixth, the Scripture should be proclaimed because God will evaluate Timothy at the Bema Seat Judgment based upon his faithfulness in dispensing divine truth (4:1b).

¹⁵ Some argue that the copula "is" should be placed after the word "God" in the sentence. Thus, the sentence would read, "all Scripture inspired by God is..." This view raises the possibility that some Scripture is not inspired. Others place the copula "is" after the word Scripture. According to this view, the sentence would read, "All Scripture is inspired by God..." This view indicates that all Scripture is inspired. The latter reading is preferred for three reasons. First, the most natural place for the copula is between the subject and the first word. Second, similar Greek constructions exist elsewhere where it is assumed that the copula is between the subject and the first word (Rom 7:12; 2 Cor 10:10; 1 Tim 2:3; 4:9). Third, if some Scripture is inspired while other Scripture is not, then how does one determine which is which? Stanley Toussaint, class notes of Andy Woods in BE2050A Seminar in Pauline Literature, Dallas Theological Seminary, Spring 2004.

Seventh, the Scripture should be proclaimed because Paul has charged Timothy with the task of dispensing divine truth (4:1a, 2).¹⁶ Eighth, the Scripture should be proclaimed because men have a natural tendency to avoid divine truth. They would much rather hear what they want to hear rather than hear what they need to hear (4:3-4). Thus, Timothy must counter this trend through the faithful proclamation of Scripture. Ninth, the Scripture must be proclaimed so that Timothy will fulfill his ministry (4:5-8). Paul charges Timothy to fulfill his ministry (4:5) because, in view of the apostle's approaching death (4:6-8), there would be no witnesses left to transfer the gospel to the next generation should Timothy become unfaithful in proclaiming Scripture. Interestingly, Paul dwells upon the two rewards he will receive as a result of his own perseverance.¹⁷ They include the satisfaction of a life well spent (4:7) as well as the reception of the crown of righteousness (4:8). Paul probably lists these blessings to motivate Timothy to endure by reminding him that he too will be similarly rewarded if he follows Paul's example of endurance.

In the final section of the letter (4:9-22), Paul explains the five basic needs of the minister (4:9-18). Paul skillfully arranges information about his personal life so that he explains his five basic needs and how God met these needs. Such information would encourage Timothy to persevere in the ministry by reminding him that just as God met these needs in Paul's own life, God would meet them in Timothy's life as well. Paul's first need was for fellowship in the midst of loneliness. Paul expresses this need when he laments that Demas left him (4:10a), that Crescens, Titus, and

¹⁶ Some believe that the admonition to "preach the word" (4:2) is simply an injunction to share the gospel. This view is based upon the notion that "word" (logos) simply means "Christ" rather than "Scripture" in some contexts (1 Pet 1:23; Heb 4:12). Also, every other biblical admonition regarding the Scripture is to teach it rather than to preach it. Thus, the emphasis here upon preaching rather than teaching means that the exhortation of 4:2 pertains to the dissemination of the gospel rather than preaching Scripture. Stanley Toussaint, class notes of Andy Woods in BE2050A Seminar in Pauline Literature, Dallas Theological Seminary, Spring 2004. However, this argument should not be pushed too far since logos can refer to Scripture in some contexts (Gal 6:6). Since the immediate context involves the Scripture or graphē (3:15-16) rather than Christ, the idea in 4:2 probably has more to do with preaching Scripture rather than merely sharing the gospel.

¹⁷ Paul describes his own ministry as a sacrifice to God (4:6). He describes himself as a "drink offering." This concept is rich with Old Testament meaning. After the priest offered the sacrificial animal, he poured wine beside the altar (Num 15:1-10; 28:4-7). This last act in the ceremony symbolized the offering's dedication to God. Paul's application of the phrase to himself symbolized how his life was similarly dedicated to God. Constable, "Notes on 2 Timothy," 27.

Tychicus had to be sent elsewhere (4:10b-c, 12), that all forsook him (4:16),¹⁸ that only Luke was with him (4:11a), and that both Timothy (4:9) and Mark (4:11b) should come to him. However, the Lord ministered to Paul even in the midst of this loneliness by standing with Paul and strengthening him so that he could fulfill his ministry (4:17a).

Paul's second need was to be delivered from impossible situations. Although Paul faced such a situation, the Lord ministered to him in the midst of it. This is what Paul means when he says that the Lord delivered him from the mouth of the lion (4:17b). Paul expresses confidence that the Lord will continue to perform miraculous deliverances on his behalf (4:18).

Paul's third need was to be ministered to in the midst of persecution. Paul experienced persecution at the hands of Alexander the coppersmith who rejected his teaching and did him much harm. However, Paul expressed confidence that the Lord would minister to him even in the midst of this difficult situation. One day God will repay Alexander the coppersmith according to all his evil deeds (4:14-15).

Paul's fourth need was to be spiritually fed. Although Paul fed others, he himself needed to be nourished in the midst of his confinement. God would meet this need when Timothy would bring the scrolls and parchments to Paul while he was in prison (4:13b-c).¹⁹ Paul's fifth need was to have his physical needs met. God would meet Paul's physical need for warmth when Timothy came from Troas with Paul's cloak (4:13a). In sum, if God was so faithful in meeting Paul's basic needs, then Timothy could also trust God to meet his needs as well. This information would encourage Timothy to persevere in the ministry knowing that God would meet his every need.

Paul concludes the letter (4:19-22) by extending greetings to Priscilla, Aquila, and Onesiphorus (4:19) and by relaying greetings from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and various brethren (4:21b). Paul also relays some information regarding Erastus and Trophimus (4:20)²⁰ and

¹⁸ At Paul's preliminary trial witnesses could testify on his behalf and yet none did. Apparently, Luke (4:11) and Onesiphorus (1:18) had not yet arrived in Rome at the time of this initial trial.

¹⁹ The reference to the scrolls and parchments probably pertains to copies of the Old Testament Scripture.

²⁰ The fact that Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus demonstrates that gift of healing was merely confirmatory of the apostolic message (Heb 2:3-4) and consequently died out as the apostolic era came to a close. Paul leaving Trophimus sick also disproves the notion that healing is guaranteed in the atonement as taught by prosperity theology.

instructs Timothy to join him before winter (4:21a). Paul closes the letter with his typical Pauline benediction (4:22).

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²¹ Locke and Dibelius are examples of critical commentaries. Mounce, Marshall, Hiebert, and Guthrie are examples of exegetical commentaries. Kent and Earles are examples of expositional commentaries. Getz is an example of a devotional commentary.