



Overview for 2 Timothy

Purpose: In anticipation of his coming martyrdom, Paul wrote this message of farewell to Timothy, charging him to keep the faith.

Author: The Apostle Paul

Time Period Covered: Paul's second letter to Timothy was written two to four years after the first letter. It is believed to have been written toward the end of Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome, which began in A.D. 64 and lasted until A.D. 68.

Date Written: A.D. 66 to 67

History: Paul had been released from his first imprisonment and had actively ministered for about two additional years before his arrest and second imprisonment in Rome under Nero. The second letter to Timothy, penned shortly before his martyrdom, is generally considered to be the last recorded words of Paul.

Key People: Paul and Timothy

Setting: This letter was written from Rome while Paul was imprisoned. As a leader of the harshly persecuted Christian faith, his treatment and living conditions had become that of a public enemy. Incarcerated and facing a death sentence, Paul was cut off from the world except for a visitor or two and his writing materials. Knowing that he would soon be executed, Paul wrote this letter to his son in the faith, giving him a last charge. With many emotional overtones, he conveyed his priorities and the burden of his heart—that Timothy maintain sound doctrine, steadfast faith, and confident endurance to the end.

Summary: It is evident that Paul understood this was likely to be his last communication to Timothy. In chapter 1, he encouraged the younger man to remain passionate for the cause of Christ and firm on sound doctrine. In chapter 2, he offered instructions regarding endurance, pointing to Christ as our example. Paul went on to remind Timothy to avoid ungodly beliefs and practices, and to flee from everything immoral.

In chapter 3, Paul warned Timothy about “perilous times” and opposition that would face true believers in the last days due to self-centeredness. Paul then instructed him regarding the impending apostasy and its evil perpetrators, who would only increase in their deception. He again directed Timothy to the inspiration and strength of the Holy Scriptures.

Paul began the conclusion of his final letter with an intense plea for Timothy, and all believers, to remain steadfast in the faith. Before several personal notes, he gave one last testimony of victory, stating, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). Paul then encouraged all to do the same, so they, too, would receive a “crown of righteousness.”

Even though Paul felt forsaken by man in his last few days, He knew that the Lord stood with him, giving him strength. Paul mentioned that he had been “delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” This may have been literal, since Nero often had Christians thrown to the lions in the arena.

This final letter from Paul could be considered the “passing of the Gospel torch” to the next generation of church leadership.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ slightly.

Jesus crucified; Pentecost; Church begun A.D. 30	Stephen martyred; Paul's conversion 35			Peter's ministry in Asia Minor 47	Jerusalem council 50	PAUL IMPRISONED (CAESAREA) 57-59	PAUL'S HOUSE ARREST 60-62	James (Jesus' brother) martyred 62	Peter & Paul martyred 67/68?	Jude martyred 72					
	PAUL IN CILICIA & SYRIA 35-46			PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS 46-48 50-52 53-57			Paul's trip to Rome 59			Rome destroys Jerusalem 70					
			Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles 41	James (the apostle) martyred; Peter imprisoned 44											
				Galatians; James 49	1 & 2 Thessalonians 51/52	1 & 2 Corinthians 55	Romans 57	St. Mark 58/60	Ephesians; Colossians; Philemon 60	Philippians 61	St. Matthew; St. Luke 61/64	1 Timothy; Titus; 1 Peter 64	Jude 65	Acts; 2 Peter; 2 Timothy 66/68	Hebrews 68

Outline

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- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
 - A. The author (1:1)
 - B. The recipient and blessing (1:2)
- II. Exhortation to faithfulness in service (1:3—2:13)
 - A. Exhortation to loyalty (1:3-18)
 - B. Exhortation to endurance (2:1-13)
- III. Expectation of faithfulness in service (2:14—3:17)
 - A. In the Word (2:14-19)
 - B. In walk (2:20-26)
 - C. In the midst of apostasy (3:1-17)
- IV. Expression of faithfulness in service (4:1-8)
 - A. The charge (4:1-2)
 - B. The reason (4:3-4)
 - C. The contrast (4:5)
 - D. The example (4:6-8)
- V. Conclusion (4:9-22)
 - A. Paul's requests (4:9-13)
 - B. Paul's reflections (4:14-18)
 - C. Greetings, some information, and further requests (4:19-21)
 - D. Benediction (4:22)