

Introduction

For the Church in the first century and today, the Book of 2 Timothy is instrumental in the government and function of local assemblies. The Book of 2 Timothy stands as a timeless blueprint for doctrine, life, and leadership.

Building on our study of 1 Timothy, which addresses false teaching in Ephesus, establishes proper assembly function, and provides guidance on doctrine, prayer, and roles in God's household, 2 Timothy equips the reader to persevere in that order amid trials. This is the Church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Written to address ongoing false teaching threats and empower Timothy's leadership in his final charge, this epistle provides authoritative guidance on perseverance, doctrinal fidelity, and passing the baton of faith.

Who Wrote This Book and to Whom Is It Addressed?

The Apostle Paul wrote this book, as stated in 1:1, late in his life. The form and content are consistent with Paul's other letters. The end of the book mentions current and previous fellow workers, such as Demas, Crescens, Tychicus, and others in 4:9-21. These details align with figures from undisputed Pauline letters, like Demas in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24. The personal tone and historical fit support genuine authorship. We reject pseudographic arguments, as internal evidence outweighs linguistic or stylistic differences. Those can be explained by Paul's age, the personal nature of the letter to Timothy, and the unique context.

The book is directly addressed to Timothy, Paul's protégé and spiritual son, in 1:2. It addresses similar issues from previous letters, such as false teachers. It speaks to Timothy with fondness, addresses his timidity and faithfulness, and encourages him to remain steadfast. The personal notes at the end, like requests for items in 4:13, are compelling. While intended for Timothy, the content on false teachers, perseverance, and leadership suggests broader application for the Ephesian assembly and us today.

Where and When Was It Written?

Paul is in prison, probably in Rome. In 1:17, Paul indicates that Onesiphorus went to him in Rome while in prison. At the end of this letter, Timothy is encouraged to go to Paul in 4:9. Paul does not tell Timothy a different location, so the location is concluded to be Rome.

This is probably Paul's last letter. Paul expected his execution soon in 4:6. We know from Acts 28:30-31 that Paul's first imprisonment was around 58-60 AD. The earliest this letter could have been written is 61 AD. Extrabiblical information has Paul executed in 67-68 AD. If Paul understands his execution is soon, the date would be

before this time. If 2 Timothy was written with an unfounded anticipation of his execution, the date could be earlier, but it is unlikely. The best fit is 65-68 AD, with his imminent departure taken literally as Paul's final letter.

What Was the Occasion and Purpose of the Writing?

The occasion for writing is multifaceted but unified around Paul's impending death in 4:6-8 as the primary trigger. This compels him to write for three interconnected reasons:

First, to pass on faithful doctrine and prepare successors in 2:2 and 3:14-17

Second, to encourage Timothy's steadfastness amid personal and doctrinal challenges in 1:6-8 and 4:1-5

Third, to address immediate isolation by requesting presence and items in 4:9-13, 21. Paul's imprisonment exacerbates threats, prompting a preemptive safeguard.

The purpose aligns with this occasion. It is to encourage Timothy's strength and steadfastness in faith and mission through personal empowerment amid pressure. This includes stirring up his gift, replacing timidity with power, love, and sound mind, and enduring as a good soldier, athlete, and farmer in 1:6-8, 2:1-7, 15, and 4:5. It models perseverance through Paul's example of suffering, yet unashamed, with confidence in God's guarding in 1:12, 2:8-13, 3:10-13, and 4:7-8, 17-18.

It urges unwavering commitment despite Paul's chains, viewing imprisonment as no barrier to the Gospel's advancement in 1:8, 16, and 2:9-10. The purpose also instructs on guarding and transmitting sound doctrine against false teachers. This challenges and avoids false teachers and their errors, handling truth accurately in 2:14-26 and 4:1-4.

It warns of present and future perils in these last days, which began at the ascension, and equips with Scripture's sufficiency for maturity in 3:1-9, 14-17. It entrusts Apostolic doctrine to faithful men for generational spread, ensuring the mission endures beyond Paul in 2:2 and 1:13-14.

Finally, the purpose addresses personal loneliness and requests support through relational and practical appeals. This informs of abandonment and isolation, with only Luke remaining, to evoke urgency in 4:9-12, 16. It asks Timothy to come quickly before winter, bring Mark, and fetch the cloak, books, and parchments for comfort, preservation of material, and communication in 4:11-13, 21.

What Were the Circumstances of the Author and the Recipient?

Paul is in prison, in worse conditions than those in Acts 28. Extrabiblical information indicates Paul was kept in the Mamertine Prison. If this were so, Paul was held in a cold, wet, and miserable condition in 4:13. Paul would have been stripped of basic necessities. He evidently did not have the books that he loved.

Timothy is anticipated to be under pressure from false teachers. These false teachers may use the imprisonment as ammunition against Paul, his work, the doctrines, and against Timothy himself. This is based on Paul's intimate knowledge of his protege. In this letter, Timothy is not being corrected as much as he is being encouraged to continue.

What Glimpses Does the Book Give into the Life and Character of the Author?

In the most difficult time of Paul's life, and that is saying a lot, Paul is first and foremost concerned about Timothy and believers. His confidence is unwavering. He looks forward to his death because he understands that he gains from that graduation in Philippians 1:21. Paul definitely has an eternal perspective. He does not count anything in this world as important but looks forward to the promise of God. He will do anything for the spiritual benefit of others. Paul shows humility and dependence on the promises of God.

What Are the Leading Ideas of the Book?

Paul may have had reason to fear that Timothy was in danger of weakening spiritually. This would have been a grave concern for Paul since Timothy needed to carry on Paul's work, as stated in 2:2. This concern is evident in Paul's exhortation to stir up his gift in 1:6, to replace fear with power, love, and a sound mind in 1:7, to not be ashamed of Paul and the Lord but be willingly to suffer with Paul for the Gospel in 1:8, and to hold on to the truth in 1:13-14.

Summing up the potential problem of Timothy, who might be weakening under the pressure of the Church and the persecution of the world, Paul calls him to be strong in 2:1 and to continue to preach the word in 4:2.

This letter is less commending but is more instructive, with over 20 imperatives. The emphasis on perseverance amid trials calls for enduring hardship like a soldier, athlete, and farmer in 2:3-7, which indicates sustained effort. It remembers Christ's resurrection and example in 2:8-10. It holds to the faithful hymn in 2:11-13. Paul models this through his own deliverances and sufferings in 3:10-13 and 4:16-18.

Paul refers to several important doctrines. These include salvation by grace in 1:9-10 and 2:10, the character and person of Jesus in 2:8 and 4:1, 8, and

encouragement in perseverance in 2:11-13. Plus, Paul wrote one of the crucial texts of the NT on the inspiration of Scripture in 3:16-17.

What Is the Central Truth of the Book?

2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

What Are the Characteristics of the Book?

Strength, assurance, and Apostolic instruction are the basic characteristics of this book. This is given with love and personal care. Paul is the example in 3:10-11. He challenges the reader to understand that all who live godly should anticipate persecution. According to Hebrews 13:23, Timothy either has already experienced this or soon will.

Conclusion

2 Timothy serves as Paul's final charge to Timothy. It encourages strength in grace, instructs on guarding doctrine against error, and appeals for personal support amid hardship.

Theologically, for the original readers in Ephesus, it fortified them against false teachers and pressures, reminding them of salvation by grace through belief in Jesus. No works earn favor, as forgiveness is already secured in Christ.

2 Timothy – Lesson 1

Introduction

Aspect	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Notes/Similarities
Authorship & Recipient	Paul to Timothy as "true child in the faith" (1:2); addresses timidity/youth	Paul to Timothy as "beloved child" (1:2); addresses timidity/gift	Similar personal mentorship tone
Historical Context	Post-Acts (c. AD 62-67); combats Ephesian false doctrines/myths (1:3-7)	Post-Acts (c. AD 65-68); combats Ephesian false doctrines/myths (2:16-18)	Shared Ephesian setting with false teachers
Doctrinal Emphases	Salvation by grace (1:15); law's use (1:8-11); church as pillar of truth (3:15)	Salvation by grace (1:9-10; 2:10); perseverance (2:11-13); Scripture's inspiration (3:16-17)	Both affirm grace salvation without works for favor
Purpose Elements	Corrective: Charge against error (1:3-7); instruct on conduct/roles (ch. 2-3, 5)	Encouraging: Endure/transmit doctrine (2:1-7, 15, 3:14-17); personal appeals (4:9-13)	Both guard sound doctrine (1:10-11; 1:13-14)
Tone & Style	Corrective/organizational; ~25 imperatives; systematic (doctrine to conduct)	Encouraging/reflective; ~20-22 imperatives; urgent/mentoring (charge to farewell)	Instructive imperatives rooted in grace (1:14; 2:1)
Timing & Occasion	Mid-ministry, post-first imprisonment; Ephesian turmoil needing order (1:3)	Final letter, second imprisonment; imminent death/isolation (4:6-8, 9-18)	Differ in urgency due to Paul's situation
Focus/Key Themes	Church structure (elders/deacons 3:1-13; widows 5:3-16); prayer/conduct (ch. 2); counters legalism	Perseverance amid "last days" perils (3:1-9); endurance metaphors (2:3-7); Scripture's role	1 Tim: Organizational; 2 Tim: Sustaining through trials
Length/Structure	Longer; systematic sections on assembly function	Shorter; progressive from charge to warnings to farewell	Both personal yet applicable to the assembly
Theological Nuances	Counters elitism/arrogance (2:4-7); universal Gospel call	Highlights hope amid suffering (1:12, 4:18); generational handover (2:2)	Both emphasize grace-empowered living for rewards