



# 2 Timothy



THRU**the**BIBLE

NOTES & OUTLINES WITH

*J. Vernon McGee*

EPISTLES



# 2 Timothy

**WRITER:** Paul

**DATE:** A.D. 67. The following is a probable calendar of the events of Paul's life during his last years:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| A.D. 58    | Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.   |
| A.D. 61    | His arrival in Rome.  |
| A.D. 61-63 | His first Roman imprisonment.   |
| A.D. 64-67 | His release. He writes 1 Timothy and Titus, probably from Macedonia   |
| A.D. 67-68 | His arrest and death. He writes 2 Timothy prior to his death in Rome. |

## KEY VERSES:

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*  
(2 Timothy 2:15)

*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:2)*

Key words are “ashamed” (1:8, 12) and “endure” (2:3).

**THEME:** Loyalty in days of apostasy.

1 - Loyalty in suffering (Chapter 1)

2 - Loyalty in service (Chapter 2)

3 - Loyalty in apostasy (Chapters 3:1–4:5)

4 - Loyalty of the Lord to His servants in desertion (Chapter 4:6-22)

**REMARKS:** Webster’s definition of apostasy is: total desertion of principles of faith. Apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error; it is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truth of the gospel (doctrines of the faith).

In 2 Timothy, Paul speaks of the ultimate outcome of gospel preaching. The final fruition will not be the total conversion of mankind, nor will it usher in the Millennium. On the contrary, there will come about an apostasy which will well-nigh blot out “the faith” from the earth. This is in complete harmony with the startling word of Christ, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). This is not in keeping, of course, with a social gospel which expects to transform the world by tinkering with the social system. These vain optimists have no patience with the doleful words of 2 Timothy. Nevertheless, the cold and hard facts of history and the events of the present hour demonstrate the accuracy of Paul. We are now in the midst of an apostasy which is cut to the pattern of Paul’s words in remarkable detail.

Although the visible church has entered the orbit of awful apostasy, the invisible church is on its way to the epiphany of glory.

**SPECIAL FEATURE:** “Swan Song” of the Apostle. The deathbed statement of any individual has an importance that is not attached to other remarks. This is what lends significance to 2 Timothy. It is the deathbed communication of Paul; it is his final message. It has a note of sadness that is not detected in his other epistles. Nevertheless, there is the overtone of triumph, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course ....” Paul writes his own epitaph in 4:6-8. The epistle is very personal—there are 25 references to individuals.

## **OUTLINE:**

### **I. Afflictions of the gospel, Chapter 1**

- A. Introduction, vv. 1-7
- B. Not ashamed, but a partaker of affliction, vv. 8-11
- C. Not ashamed, but assured, vv. 12-18

### **II. Active in service, Chapter 2**

- A. A son, vv. 1, 2
- B. A good soldier, vv. 3, 4
- C. An athlete, v. 5
- D. A farmer, vv. 6-14
- E. A workman, vv. 15-19
- F. A vessel, vv. 20-23
- G. A servant, vv. 24-26

### **III. Apostasy coming; authority of the Scriptures, Chapters 3:1–4:5**

- A. Conditions in the last days, Chapter 3:1-9
- B. Authority of Scriptures in the last days, Chapter 3:10-17
- C. Instructions for the last days, Chapter 4:1-5

### **IV. Allegiance to the Lord and of the Lord, Chapter 4:6-22**

- A. Deathbed testimony of Paul, vv. 6-8
- B. Last words, vv. 9-22

*("The Lord stood with me.")*

## COMMENT:

### I. Afflictions of the gospel, Chapter 1

#### A. Introduction, vv. 1-7

V. 1, 2—See notes on 1 Timothy 1:1, 2.

V. 3—This is another name to add to the prayer list of the apostle Paul.

V. 4—“Greatly desiring” is longing. Paul had a deep affection for Timothy, his son in the faith.

V. 5—Timothy had a godly grandmother, Lois, and a godly mother, Eunice. His father was a Greek, and it is not known whether or not he was in the faith.

V. 6—See 1 Timothy 4:14.

V. 7—“Fear” is cowardice. “Power” is strength to overcome in the believer’s life. “Sound mind” is discipline. God does not intend that defeat should be the norm in Christian living.

#### B. Not ashamed, but a partaker of affliction, vv. 8-11

V. 8—It takes courage to stand for Christ. Paul speaks of himself as a prisoner of Christ in reality—not of the Roman government.

V. 10—“Who hath abolished death” is “since He has made of none effect death.” “Immortality” is incorruption.

V. 11—Paul was a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher. “Of the Gentiles” does not appear in the better manuscripts.

#### C. Not ashamed, but assured, vv. 12-18

V. 12—Paul was not ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16), and he urges Timothy not to be ashamed of it (v. 8). “That which I have committed unto him” should be “that which has been committed unto me.” Paul’s salvation and apostleship was a sacred trust that God could keep though He had committed it to Paul.

V. 13—“Form” is example or type—content of sound words.

V. 14—“Good thing” means honorable trust.

V. 15—These two, Phygelus and Hermogenes, probably apostates, were evidently ashamed of Paul.

V. 16—Onesiphorus was the opposite (4:19).

V. 17—He was not ashamed of the bonds of Paul.

V. 18—Onesiphorus was a special saint who receives special mention in the Word of God.

## II. Active in service, Chapter 2

In seven figures of speech, Paul describes the duty and activity of a believer.

### A. A son, w. 1, 2

V. 1—As a believer, he is called “my son”—because he is born from above.

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. (1 Peter 1:23)*

As a son, he is to be strong.

V. 2—As a son he is to instruct others so that they in turn may pass the gospel on to others.

### B. A good soldier, w. 3, 4

V. 3—“Endure hardness” is to suffer hardness with him.

V. 4—This verse has been used as an argument for clerical celibacy. However, Paul’s argument is that the emphasis should not be upon this life but on the life to come.

### C. An athlete, v. 5

“A man” means an athlete. “Strive” refers to contending in the games.

### D. A farmer, w. 6-14

V. 8—“Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead” is more accurate.

V. 9—“Evildoer” is a malefactor. While Paul is bound, the gospel is not.

V. 10—Paul travailed that others might be born into the family of God.

V. 11—“It is a faithful saying” is “faithful is the saying.”

V. 12—This is strong language, but it reveals that Paul also believed that faith without works is dead.

V. 13—According to the nature of Christ, He cannot accept as true one who is false. That would be tantamount to denying Himself.

V. 14—“Strive not about words” is disputes. “To no profit” is, literally, to “nothing useful.” “Subverting” (Greek *katastrophe*) is a catastrophe for the hearers.

**E. A workman, vv. 15-19**

V. 15—"To show thyself" is to present thyself. "A workman" evidently means a teacher (see 1 Timothy 5:18). "Not to be ashamed"—a worker should know the Word. "Rightly dividing" is to handle rightly.

V. 17—Here are the names of two more apostates: Hymenaeus and Philetus.

**F. A vessel, vv. 20-23**

V. 20, 21—There are different types of vessels for different uses (see Jeremiah 18). The clay can decide if it will be a vessel of honor. A vessel must be clean to be usable.

V. 22—"Follow" is to pursue.

V. 23—"Foolish" means stupid. "Unlearned" is ignorant. "Avoid" is better translated as "refuse."

**G. A servant, vv. 24-26**

V. 24—The believer is also called a servant (bondslave). "Must not" is a moral obligation, a spiritual necessity. "Strive"—see verse 5.

V. 25—Attempting to teach those who oppose or are antagonistic to him. "The acknowledging" is more correctly "the knowledge."

V. 26—"Who are taken captive" have been held captive.

**III. Apostasy coming; authority of the Scriptures, Chapters 3:1–4:5**

**A. Conditions in the last days, Chapter 3:1-9**

V. 1—"In the last days" means the last days of the church (see 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:3; Jude 18; James 5:3). "Perilous times" means grievous or hard times.

W. 2-5—There are 19 words or phrases used to describe the last days:

1 - "Lovers of their own selves" are lovers of self

2 - "Covetous" is better "lovers of money"

3 - "Boasters" are swaggerers

4 - "Proud" is haughty

5 - "Blasphemers" is better "railers"

6 - "Disobedient"

7 - "Unthankful"

8 - "Unholy" is profane or common

9 - "Without natural affection" means abnormal relationships

10 - "Trucebreakers" means irreconcilable

11 - "False accusers"

12 - "Incontinent" means without self-control

13 - "Fierce" is savage

14 - "Despisers of those that are good" is better "haters of good"

15 - "Traitors" are betrayers

16 - "Heady" means reckless

17 - "High-minded" means blinded by or drunk with pride

18 - "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" means pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers

19 - These go through the rituals of religion but lack life and reality. "From such turn away" means to avoid them.

W. 6, 7—Some folk have been going to Bible classes (so-called) for years, listening to everyone who will teach them, but they never reach the age of maturation. Their lives are not changed.

V. 8—Jannes and Jambres are the traditional names of the chief magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses. They duplicated the first three miracles of Moses. "Reprobate" is castaway. They have discarded the faith.

V. 9—"Folly" means that their teaching is senseless and immoral.

**B. Authority of Scriptures in the last days, Chapter 3:10-17**

V. 10—"Fully known" is better "thou didst follow." "Manner of life" is conduct. Paul's life is an open book.

V. 11—This is the area where Timothy was reared and where Paul stopped on three of his missionary journeys. Here is where he was stoned to death.

V. 12—"Godly" is according to godliness. That godliness and persecution go together is an axiom of the Christian life. There is no escaping.

V. 13—"Seducers" is better "sorcerers" or "impostors." "Deceiving" is leading astray.

W. 14, 15—Over against this dark background the believer has recourse to a knowledge of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the only source of help for believers in days of apostasy.

“Unto salvation” does not mean particularly “getting saved” or the moment of salvation. Timothy is saved. This has a wider meaning and includes the life that issues from being saved. This is Christian living. The Scriptures give the *modus operandi* and the *modus vivendi* for Christian living.

V. 16—“All scripture” means every passage of Scripture is given by inspiration of God—it is *God-breathed*. Not only is Scripture God-breathed, it is profitable. “Doctrine” is teaching. “Reproof” is conviction. “Correction” is setting right. “Instruction” is discipline.

V. 17—“Perfect” is complete, full maturation. “Thoroughly furnished” is fitted out for a life of every good work.

### C. Instructions for the last days, Chapter 4:1-5

V. 1—“At his appearing” is by His appearing (epiphany), the Rapture of the church. “His kingdom” is the revelation, the return of Christ to the earth to establish His kingdom.

V. 2—“Preach the word” is the rallying cry for believers in the last days of the church. The church is to give out the Word of God. “Be diligent” is to be ready. “Reprove” is, rather, convict. “Rebuke” carries the thought of threaten. “Exhort” is comfort. “Doctrine” is teaching.

V. 3—“Shall they heap to themselves teachers”:

Shall invite teachers *en masse*. In periods of unsettled faith, scepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found.\*

“Having itching ears”:

Clement of Alexandria describes certain teachers as “scratching and tickling, in no human way, the ears of those who eagerly desire to be scratched.” Seneca says, “Some come to hear, not to learn, just as we go to the theatre, for pleasure, to delight our ears with the speaking or the voice or the plays.”\*

\*Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, William B. Erdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1946 (pp. 320, 321).

V. 4—Church members will turn from the truth to fables (cults, isms, and sensational showmanship).

V. 5—“Afflictions” are hardships. It will cost something to preach the Word of God in the last days. “Evangelist” is a traveling teacher, a missionary. “Make full proof of thy ministry” means to fulfill or fully perform your service.

#### **IV. Allegiance to the Lord and of the Lord, Chapter 4:6-22**

##### **A. Deathbed testimony of Paul, vv. 6-8**

Paul writes his own epitaph.

V. 6—“Ready to be offered” means poured out as a libation, a drink offering. “Departure” is the Greek *analuseos*, a nautical term used of a ship ready to put out of the harbor for a sea voyage.

V. 7—“A good fight” is rather *the* good fight, as a soldier. “Finished my course” (race course) as an athlete. “I have kept the faith” as a steward.

V. 8—“Crown of righteousness” is the reward of a righteous life. (For crowns, see 1 Corinthians 9:25; Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; James 1:12; Revelation 3:11). To “love his appearing” is different from holding the doctrine of the coming of Christ. This verse refers to the Rapture.

##### **B. Last words, vv. 9-22**

*(“The Lord stood with me.”)*

Here follows a list of believers in the first century.

V. 9—Paul urges Timothy to make every effort to come to him in Rome.

V. 10—“Demas” is a short form of “Demetrius.” His name appears with Luke, the beloved physician, in Colossians 4:14, but only his name is there. He probably showed early in his profession the signs of an apostate.

V. 11—Luke is faithful to the end. Mark made good, and Paul acknowledges it.

V. 12—Tychicus is evidently the minister at Ephesus.

V. 13—The cloak was to keep his body warm in the damp Mamertine prison; the books and parchments were for his mind.

W. 14, 15—I would hate to be Alexander the coppersmith! (See 1 Timothy 1:20; Acts 19:33.)

W. 16-18—"At my first defense" means his first trial. "The Lord stood with me"—something for the spirit of Paul.

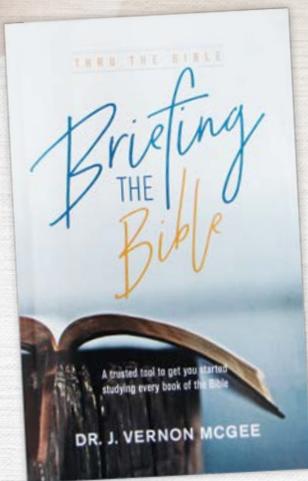
Present purpose: "That all the Gentiles might hear."

Future goal: "The Lord . . . will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."

W. 19-21—This is an exchange of personal greetings and news.

V. 22—This is Paul's final benediction.

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