

# SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

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**Approximate date:** 66-67 C.E.

**Time period:** growth of Messianic community with rise of Paul's successors, in the midst of some false teachings and apostasy, as well as rising persecution

**Author:** the Apostle Paul with Luke (secretary)

**Location of author:** Rome

**Target audience and their location:** Timothy in Ephesus

The Epistle of **2 Timothy** is regarded by conservative interpreters as being the final letter composed by the Apostle Paul, who knows that he is soon to die and meet his Lord in Heaven (2 Timothy 4:6-8, 18). Unlike the Epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus, given the rather personal nature of 2 Timothy, there are liberals who will at least acknowledge the possibility of there being some genuine Pauline fragments existing in this letter.<sup>1</sup> The issues surrounding genuine Pauline authorship for 2 Timothy are the same as those for 1 Timothy (authorship issues of the **Pastoral Epistles** are summarized at the beginning of the entry for **1 Timothy**). Yet, while Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy is accepted by many conservatives, the strong likelihood of Luke serving as Paul's amanuensis for this letter has to be recognized, given his presence with the Apostle in his final days (2 Timothy 4:11). This would account for some of its advanced wording, and similarities with Luke-Acts.

The letter of 2 Timothy is generally agreed to have been written during Paul's second imprisonment, during the time of Nero in 66-67 C.E., from Rome, prior to the winter (2 Timothy 4:21), and after Paul's letter to Titus which would have been written during his time in either Macedonia or Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). While Paul's first imprisonment in Rome was in a rented house (Acts 28:30), this second imprisonment came from a dungeon (2 Timothy 4:13), where Paul was chained and he languished like a criminal (2 Timothy 1:16; 2:9). Conservative examiners are divided as to whether or not Paul was arrested when he was in Western Greece, possibly because of something to do with Alexander (2 Timothy 4:14), or if ministry

circumstances eventually brought him back to Rome.<sup>2</sup> Paul writes this letter with confidence (2 Timothy 1:12), reflecting on the fact that the work God had for him had been completed, and that his life was ending (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Paul probably wrote Timothy because of an extreme loneliness he was feeling, as only Luke, of Paul's inner circle, was still with him (2 Timothy 4:11). Others had either abandoned him, or were away accomplishing important work for the good news (2 Timothy 1:15; 4:10-12). Due to the close relationship that Paul and Timothy had, with Paul considering him to be a kind of "son" (2 Timothy 2:1, NASU), Paul desired Timothy to come visit him soon (2 Timothy 4:9, 21; cf. Hebrews 13:23). Paul writes Timothy because he was greatly concerned for the persecutions that were coming, presumably at the hands of Nero. Timothy is admonished by Paul to keep and persevere in the gospel (2 Timothy 1:14; 3:14), and if necessary suffer for it (2 Timothy 1:8; 2:3). Timothy was overseeing the Believers in Ephesus at the time, and by extension Paul is issuing some important instruction for them.

A significant personal tone is witnessed in 2 Timothy, not only as Timothy is considered dear to Paul, but in how the Apostle remembers Timothy's own mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5). "Timothy is urged to continue living out the faith he had received through Paul and through Timothy's mother and grandmother, a faith fully grounded in the Scriptures of Israel. With this heritage he has to prepare for the Lord's judgment by indefatigable proclamation of the Pauline word..." (ABD).<sup>3</sup> Paul requests that Timothy bring him personal items such as his heavy cloak, needed for the winter cold, and various parchments/documents (2 Timothy 4:13), lending strong support for 2 Timothy being a genuine letter from him. "The letter is throughout so personal that it is probably the hardest of the three

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<sup>2</sup> Ellis, "Pastoral Letters," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 662.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome D. Quinn, "Timothy and Titus, Epistles to," in *ABD*, 6:562.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pheme Perkins, "Pastoral Epistles," in *ECB*, 1428.

Pastorals to claim as pseudonymous” (Carson and Moo).<sup>4</sup>

Just like 1 Timothy, no scholar or academic has ever proposed a Hebrew or Aramaic origin for the composition of 2 Timothy. It is impossible given Paul’s circumstances as a chained criminal in a Roman dungeon. If Luke did not serve as Paul’s secretary, then a member of the Roman faith community composed it for him on his authority. This guarantees that the letter was composed in Greek, being sent to Timothy a native Greek speaker, and by extension to the Ephesians in Asia Minor.

2 Timothy is largely a personal letter from the Apostle Paul to Timothy. Paul urges Timothy not to give up in his faith, and not to be intimidated by any false teachings or apostasy around him—likely the same issues as in 1 Timothy. Paul stresses to Timothy that “all Scripture” is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16), and at the time that would certainly have included the canon of the Tanach, but was likely beginning to include any extant Apostolic texts (cf. 1 Timothy 5:18). Paul makes an interesting reference in his letter to Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8), who are not described in the Torah itself, but rather in Targum Jonathan on Exodus 7:11. When Paul instructs Timothy to bring him the parchments or scrolls, it is proposed to have included: copies of Tanach books, records and notes on Yeshua’s life and teachings, various workbooks or letters, and/or Paul’s legal papers, including his certificate of Roman citizenship.

Timothy is one of the Apostle Paul’s successors, who is admonished, “be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5, NASU). Will Timothy have the tenacity and dedication to continue in serving the Lord after Paul is gone? Any possible theme of martyrdom is not popular to consider in any time period (cf. 2 Timothy 4:6), ancient or modern. “Not the least of the letter’s values is that it shows us the way a Christian martyr should face death” (Carson and Moo).<sup>5</sup>

A clear emphasis in 2 Timothy is for Timothy to maintain “sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3) in the assembly of faith, as Timothy is directed to maintain order among those whom he oversees. An interesting clue about the false teaching more frequently spoken against in 1 Timothy is that in 2 Timothy 2:18 there were those who had claimed that the resurrection had already occurred. Apparently among the various Ephesian Believers, there was a great deal of confusion about this foundational doctrine, with perhaps many not realizing that there was indeed a future Messianic age involving the reanimation of deceased persons’ bodily remains.

Among all the passages in 2 Timothy that the Messianic movement has highly valued, 2 Timothy 3:16 astutely declares, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (NASU). Timothy, and by extension all Messiah followers, are to not only value the Tanach or Old Testament in how it prepares people for salvation in Yeshua (2 Timothy 2:15), but how it instructs people in holy living. We do encounter how too frequently in modern Christianity, the Tanach is overlooked as a part of the rubric of “all Scripture”—something most thankfully being rectified in our day! Yet contrary to this, too frequently in the Messianic movement, the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament is overlooked as being a part of Scripture too. There were surely various Apostolic works present at the time 2 Timothy was written which were employed for the instruction of Messiah followers, regarded as Scripture given Paul’s own quote of Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 together in 1 Timothy 5:18.

Today’s Messianic community would also do well once again to take Paul’s words about false teachers arising very seriously (2 Timothy 4:3-4). If there were false teachers present, plaguing the Body of Messiah in Paul and Timothy’s time—then not only will there be false teachers in our own time—but *Messianic* false teachers. Just like Timothy was told by Paul to endure in the sacred call of ministry, each of us, in whatever capacity the Lord has called us to serve, is to do so with all of our being to His glory!

Consult commentary *The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee for a more detailed examination of 2 Timothy.

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<sup>4</sup> Carson and Moo, 579.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 580.

# 1

## **Salutation**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yeshua through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Messiah Yeshua,

<sup>2</sup> to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Messiah Yeshua our Lord.

## **Loyalty to the Good News**

<sup>3</sup> I thank God, whom I serve from my ancestors in a clean conscience, as unceasing is my remembrance of you in my prayers, night and day,

<sup>4</sup> longing to see you, remembering your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

<sup>5</sup> having been reminded of the sincere faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, in you also.

<sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

<sup>7</sup> For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and discipline.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but suffer together with *me* for the good news according to the power of God,

<sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Messiah Yeshua from all eternity,

<sup>10</sup> but has now been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Messiah Yeshua, who rendered death inoperative, and brought life and immortality to light through the good news,

<sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

<sup>12</sup> For this reason I also suffer these things, yet I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

<sup>13</sup> Hold to the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>14</sup> That good thing which was entrusted to *you*, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

<sup>15</sup> This you know: that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

<sup>16</sup> The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains;

<sup>17</sup> but when he was in Rome, he diligently searched for me, and found me—

<sup>18</sup> the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well, in how many things he ministered at Ephesus.

# 2

## **A Good Soldier of Messiah Yeshua**

<sup>1</sup> You therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>2</sup> And the things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, these things commit to faithful people, who will be able to teach others also.

<sup>3</sup> Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>4</sup> No soldier on service entangles himself in the affairs of *this* life; so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

<sup>5</sup> And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned a *victor*, unless he has competed lawfully.

<sup>6</sup> The laboring farmer must be the first to partake of *his share* of the crops.

<sup>7</sup> Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

<sup>8</sup> Remember Yeshua the Messiah, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my good news,

<sup>9</sup> for which I suffer hardship to the point of chains as a criminal; but the word of God is not chained.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Messiah Yeshua, with eternal glory.

<sup>11</sup> Faithful is the saying: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

<sup>12</sup> if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us;

<sup>13</sup> if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

### **An Approved Worker**

<sup>14</sup> Remind them of these things, charging *them* in the sight of the Lord, that they not dispute about words, for nothing profitable, to the catastrophe of the hearers.

<sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling<sup>a</sup> the word of truth.

<sup>16</sup> But avoid profane, empty chatter, for it will lead to more ungodliness,

<sup>17</sup> and their word will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

<sup>18</sup> who have erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they are overturning the faith of some.

<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS" [Numbers 16:5]<sup>b</sup>, and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."<sup>c</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

<sup>22</sup> But flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

<sup>23</sup> But refuse foolish and ignorant questionings, knowing that they produce fights.

<sup>24</sup> And the Lord's servant must not fight, but be gentle toward all, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,

<sup>25</sup> in meekness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

<sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses, away from the snare of the Devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

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<sup>a</sup> Grk. verb *orthotomeō* (ὀρθοτομέω); "to cut in a straight line" or "to teach it aright, N.T." (LS, 567); the KJV has the rather unfortunate rendering, "rightly dividing," whereas more modern versions have the much more correct: "correctly handles" (NIV), "rightly explaining" (NRSV), "correctly teaching" (HCSB). This may also be paraphrased as something like, "who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage" (Phillips New Testament).

<sup>b</sup> "and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, 'Tomorrow morning YHWH will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring *him* near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself'" (Numbers 16:5, PME).

<sup>c</sup> The CJB has bolded "Let everyone who claims he belongs to the Lord stand apart from wrongdoing" noting a possible allusion to Numbers 16:26: "There he said to the assembly, 'Leave the tents of these wicked men! Don't touch anything that belongs to them, or you may be swept away in all their sins'" (CJB).

## 3

**The Character of People in the Last Days**

<sup>1</sup> But know this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

<sup>2</sup> For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

<sup>3</sup> unloving, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, haters of good,

<sup>4</sup> traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God;

<sup>5</sup> holding to a form of godliness, but having denied the power of it; and turn away from these people.

<sup>6</sup> For among them are those who creep into households and captivate silly women, loaded down with sins, led away by various passions,

<sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

<sup>8</sup> And even as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses,<sup>a</sup> so do these also oppose the truth, persons corrupted in mind, disqualified concerning the faith.

<sup>9</sup> But they will not advance further; for their folly will be evident to all, as theirs also came to be.

**Last Charge to Timothy**

<sup>10</sup> But you closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,

<sup>11</sup> persecutions, *and* sufferings, what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me!

<sup>12</sup> Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Messiah Yeshua will be persecuted.

<sup>13</sup> But evil people and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

<sup>14</sup> But you, *however*, continue in the things which you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned them;

<sup>15</sup> and that from infancy you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise, to salvation through faith, which is in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God<sup>b</sup> and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

<sup>17</sup> so that the person of God<sup>c</sup> may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

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<sup>a</sup> Jannes and Jambres are not known anywhere by name inside of the Tanach or Old Testament, but within ancient Jewish tradition they are the names of the Pharaoh's magicians who used their black arts to counter the Divine signs issued by Moses (cf. Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18-19; 9:11). They are mentioned by name in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and Targum Jonathan:

"Moses and Aaron stood in the Power of the Prince of Lights and Belial raised up Yannes and his brother in his cunning when seeking to do evil to Israel the first time" (CD 5.18-19; Wise, Abegg, and Cook, 56).

"But the anger of the Lord was provoked, because he would go (that he might) curse them; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way to be an adversary to him. But he sat upon his ass, and his two young men, Jannes and Jambres, were with him" (Targum Jonathan on Numbers 22:22; BibleWorks 8.0: Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch).

<sup>b</sup> Grk. adj. *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος); "adj. from *Theós* [θεός]...and *pnēō* [πνέω]...to breathe or blow. Prompted by God, divinely inspired" (Zodhiates, *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 729); also rendered as "God-breathed" (NIV) or "breathed out by God" (ESV).

<sup>c</sup> Grk. *ho tou Theou anthrōpos* (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνθρώπος); while more traditionally rendered as "man of God," note the usage of the generic *anthrōpos* (ἄνθρωπος) for humankind, and not *anēr* (ἄνῆρ) or man/male; "the person belonging to God" (TLV).

## 4

<sup>1</sup> I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Messiah Yeshua, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His Kingdom:

<sup>2</sup> proclaim the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own lusts;

<sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

<sup>5</sup> But you, be sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

<sup>8</sup> what remains is that there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

### **Personal Instructions**

<sup>9</sup> Be diligent to come to me soon;

<sup>10</sup> for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica; Crescens *went* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

<sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

<sup>12</sup> But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

<sup>13</sup> When you come bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander the coppersmith did much evil to me; the Lord will repay him according to his works;

<sup>15</sup> of whom you also must be on guard, for he greatly opposed our message.

<sup>16</sup> At my first defense no one supported me, but all forsook me; may it not be counted against them.

<sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the nations might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me into His Heavenly Kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **Final Greetings**

<sup>19</sup> Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus.

<sup>20</sup> Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

<sup>21</sup> Be diligent to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.

<sup>22</sup> The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

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<sup>a</sup> The CJB has bolded "rescued from the lion's mouth" noting a possible allusion to Psalm 22:22(21); Daniel 6:21, 23:

"Save me from the lion's mouth! You have answered me from the wild bulls' horns" (Psalm 22:22[21], CJB).

"On approaching the pit where Dani'el was, the king cried in a pained voice to Dani'el, 'Dani'el, servant of the living God! Has your God, whom you are always serving, been able to save you from the lions?'...My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths, so they haven't hurt me. This is because before him I was found innocent; and also I have done no harm to you, your majesty" (Daniel 6:21, 23, CJB).