The Second Epistle of Paul to TIMOTHY

Greeting

1 [1]Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life[1] that is in Christ Jesus,[2] [2]to dear son Timothy: Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul addresses Timothy's spiritual crisis

Paul encourages Timothy

[3]I give thanks to God, whom I serve with a clear conscience like my forefathers did,[3] as I constantly remember you in my prayers, night and day, [4]longing to see you (recalling your tears),[4] that I may be filled with joy; [5]while I call to mind the unfeigned faith that is in you—it resided first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, in you also. [6]For this reason I am reminding you to rekindle[5] the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. [7]Because God did not give us a spirit of cowardice,[6] but of power and of love and of self-control.

Don't be ashamed to suffer for Christ

[8]So do not be ashamed to identify with our Lord or with me His prisoner, but join in suffering for the Gospel according to the power of God[7]—[9]the One who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,[8] [10]but has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who by means of the Gospel destroyed the death[9] and brought life and

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[1] The "life that is in Christ Jesus"—that is what it is all about. As He Himself said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

[2] The going back and forth between "Jesus Christ" and "Christ Jesus" appears to be merely a matter of style.

[3] So why does Paul bring his ancestors into the picture? I suppose to set up a parallel with Timothy and his ancestors (verse 5). One's heritage is important.

[4] From what follows I take it that Timothy was going through a spiritual crisis when Paul last saw him, hence the tears. Paul did what he could to help, but is anxious to know how Timothy is doing.

[5] Timothy had received a 'charisma' from God through Paul, but the verb "rekindle" indicates clearly that the use of the gift is up to him, and he has been neglecting it.

[6] Timothy must not retreat, must not give up; rather he should make use of the resources God has placed at his disposal—and so should we. Anytime we are attacked by fear, we may calculate that it is not from God.

[7] Living out the Gospel in this world has everything to do with the power of God.

[8] Really; the Lamb's blood was shed before this world was created (1 Peter 1:19-20).

[9] That is what the Text says, "the death"; I take it that the reference is to Satan's kingdom. Indeed, is that not what Hebrews 2:14-15 declares? "Since, then, the children have flesh and blood as their share, He Himself likewise partook of the same, in order that through His death He might abolish the one who had the power of death—that is, the devil—and set free these [the children] who during their whole lifetime were subject to slavery through fear of death." See also 1 John 3:8.

immortality to light; 11to this Gospel I was appointed as a proclaimer, an apostle and a teacher of nations.[1] 12That is why I am suffering these things, yet I am not ashamed because I know in whom I have believed and am certain that He is able to guard my deposit[2] until that Day.[3]

Be loyal—the example of Onesiphorus

13Hold fast the standard of sound teaching that you heard from me, through the faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14Guard the good deposit by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.[4]

15This you know, that all those in Asia have been turned away from me,[5] including Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain;[6] 17rather, when he arrived in Rome he searched diligently for me until he found me 18(may the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord in that Day); you also know very well in how many ways he served in Ephesus.

Be strengthened

2 1So you, my son, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2Also, the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men who will be competent to teach others also.[7]

3You therefore are to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.[8] 4No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in the affairs of *civilian* life; he wants to please the one who enlisted him. 5Further, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6In order to work, the farmer must first receive the seeds.[9] 7Ponder what I am saying; may the Lord indeed give you understanding in it all.[10]

Encouragement by example

8Keep thinking of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, of David's

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[1] About 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "of nations" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] That is right, "my deposit"; by dying to himself and living for Christ's kingdom he is building up a 'savings account' in Heaven.

[3] The Day when we face God's bar and give an accounting (see verse 18 below).

[4] "Hold fast the standard", "guard the good deposit"—again Paul is emphasizing our responsibility, but we must rely on the Holy Spirit's enabling.

[5] 'Turn away' is in the passive voice; someone was working against Paul, with success.

[6] Although Paul was granted the privilege of having his own house (Acts 28:16), he wore a chain.

[7] The future of the Church depends on this.

[8] When we complain about our circumstances, are we forgetting that we are soldiers?

[9] The point of this paragraph appears to be that all occupations have requirements: a soldier needs to endure hardship and please whoever enlisted him; an athlete needs to obey the rules; a farmer needs to have seeds to plant.

[10] To succeed requires commitment, dedication, whether you are a soldier, an athlete or a farmer.

seed; this is my gospel,[1] **9**for which I am suffering to the point of being in chains like a criminal, but the Word of God is not chained. **10**This is why I endure it all: for the sake of the chosen ones,[2] that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. **11**This is a trustworthy word: If, indeed, we died together,[3] we will also live together; **12**if we endure, we will also reign together; if we deny, He will also deny us;[4] **13**if we are faithless, He remains faithful[5]—He is incapable of denying Himself.[6]

14Keep reiterating these things, exhorting them[7] before the Lord[8] not to argue about words to no useful purpose[9]—it just ruins the hearers.

Approved and disapproved

15Make every effort to render yourself approved by God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, handling the Word of the Truth correctly. **16**But shun godless, empty chatter, because *those who do it* will become increasingly godless,[10] **17**and their word will spread like gangrene —among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, **18**who have wandered away from the Truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred; and they overturn the faith of some.[11]

19Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands firm, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His,"[12] and let everyone who claims the name of the Lord[13] keep away from unrighteousness.

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[1] This brief statement evokes much of the essence of the Gospel. "David's seed" recalls that the Creator really became human, with David's genes, and fulfills the prophecies about the Messiah. "Raised from the dead" recalls everything connected with His death and resurrection. Thinking about Jesus is a good antidote to discouragement.

[2] They are "chosen" but Paul has to suffer so that they may obtain. See 2 Corinthians 1:5-7, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:24 and 1 Peter 4:13.

[3] We must really identify with Christ's death, which involves commitment and a change of life, a change of worldview.

[4] Although most versions supply 'with Him' in verses 11-12, it is only in this last clause that the pronoun actually occurs, but because it does, the 'with Him' is correctly understood. Notice the heavy emphasis on human responsibility—**if** we endure (but only if) we will reign; if we deny Him, He will certainly deny us.

[5] Since He remains faithful, He picks us up when we stumble; but not if we deny Him.

[6] There are at least two things that God cannot do: deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13) and lie (Titus 1:2—which would be a form of denying His nature).

[7] I suppose that the antecedent of this pronoun is to be found in 2:2 above.

[8] Instead of "the Lord", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[9] This would not include a serious discussion of an important doctrinal point.

[10] Comparing this with what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 12:34-37, those who speak godlessly do so because their heart is godless; and the more they do it the worse they get, because they continually reinforce their godlessness.

[11] Surely; if the resurrection has already happened and you are still here, what hope have you?

[12] See Numbers 16:5.

[13] Instead of "the Lord", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Christ' (as in AV and NKJV).

20 Now in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver,
but also of wood and clay; some, to be sure, are for honor, but some are
for dishonor. 21 So if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a
vessel for honor,[1] sanctified and useful to the Master, prepared for every
good work.

The true source of opposition

22 Flee the lusts of youth;[2] but pursue righteousness, faith, love,
peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.[3]
23 Refuse foolish and ignorant arguments, knowing that they breed
quarrels. 24 Now a slave of the Lord should not quarrel but be gentle
towards all, skillful at teaching, forbearing,[4] 25 correcting courteously
those who oppose him, in hopes that God may grant them repentance
leading to a real knowledge of Truth, 26 and that they may retrieve their
senses[5] out of the devil's snare (having been taken captive by him to do
his will).[6]

Paul addresses Timothy's future ministry

What relativistic humanism produces

3 1 Now understand this: In the last days there will be grievous times;
2 because people will be self-lovers,[7] money lovers, boasters, arrogant,
blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without
family affection, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal,
despisers of good, 4 betrayers, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure

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1 The analogy here is not clear to me, but I take the point to be that the believer should avoid contamination from those who are dishonorable.

2 Do not play with it, to see if you are strong enough to resist—just run!

3 This requires fellowship with others of like mind.

4 I take the basic meaning of this term to be to handle opposition with maturity.

5 Without our help they almost certainly will not.

6 Verses 23-26 provide a perspective that is not generally understood. At least some (most?) [all?] of the time that people oppose Biblical values they do so because of satanic influence in their minds. Since Satan is the 'father of lying' (John 8:44), he is behind any and every lie. So whenever anyone embraces a lie (materialism, humanism, relativism, spiritism, animism, whatever) they invite Satan into their minds. Once there he goes about setting up strongholds. As Ephesians 2:2 says, he is actively at work in the 'sons of the disobedience'—when you embrace a lie you reject the Truth; but then you are taken captive by the lie and wind up doing Satan's will. This process goes area by area, which explains why people can be good in one area and bad in another (the reference is not to physical skills). So when someone opposes God's truth and His values, we need to understand and remember how the person got that way; actually, they are being used. To lash out at them will not help them. A gentle, courteous probing of their presuppositions just might. More to the point, we have access to spiritual authority whereby we can break Satan's strongholds, but that gets us into the area of biblical spiritual warfare (extremely important, but too extensive to expound here). At one time I did a lot of study and work in this area and have some material that is available from my site: www.prunch.org, also from my book, *ESSAYS*.

7 Recent studies indicate that the vast majority of young people in North America (and presumably also elsewhere) are now 'narcissists'—they are totally self-centered, with no concern for others. They have been 'programmed' through their portable access to TV and the Internet.

rather than lovers of God;[1] **5**wearing a form of godliness while having denied its power![2]

You must avoid such people; **6**because they are the sort that press[3] into households and 'capture' gullible women loaded down with sins, who are led along by various lusts, **7**always learning yet never being able to come to a real knowledge of truth.[4] **8**Just as Jannes and Jambres[5] opposed Moses, so also these oppose the truth—men of depraved mind, disqualified as regards the faith[6]—**9**but they will not advance any further because, as in the case of the former, their folly will become evident to all.

"Continue in the things you have learned"

10You, however, have carefully followed my doctrine, my lifestyle, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance; **11**the persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch,[7] at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured; yet the Lord delivered me out of them all. **12**In fact, anyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted;[8] **13**while malignant men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14But you, continue in the things you have learned and about which you have been assured, knowing from whom you learned, **15**and that from infancy you have known the Sacred Scriptures which are able to make you wise into salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. **16**All Scripture is God-breathed[9] and is valuable for teaching, for reproving, for correcting, for training in righteousness,[10] **17**so that the

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[1] Verses 2-4 give a terrifyingly accurate description of contemporary society; two thousand years ago Paul gave a prophetic description of what relativistic humanism produces.

[2] "Having denied" is in the perfect tense; they start out by not believing in true godliness and hence deny that it would have any power. But living in a culture that still has vestiges of a former godliness, they find it useful to pretend.

[3] The description of such persons, given in verses 2-5, does not agree with 'sneaking' or 'worming'—they enter openly, exuding confidence and competence. I follow the best line of transmission, albeit a minority reading (20% of the Greek manuscripts, here).

[4] Who are these 'little women'? Hardworking mothers and homemakers in families that are struggling to make ends meet have no leisure to indulge in a variety of lusts or to spend time listening to purveyors of high-sounding nonsense. Where do arrogant lovers of money, pleasure and self go? They go where the money and pleasure is, the high society. So the reference is probably to high society dames who have the money and leisure to indulge themselves, but enough conscience left to be bothered by it. But they don't really want to give up their lifestyle.

[5] Paul got these names from an extra-biblical source that was nonetheless accurate history.

[6] The reference is clearly to servants of the enemy.

[7] This would be Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14).

[8] If no one is persecuting you, why not?

[9] Paul coins an expression to describe the intimate connection between God and His written revelation; it is like His very breath.

[10] Notice the sequence: 1) the Scripture provides objectively true information; 2) then the Holy Spirit uses His Sword to convict of sin; 3) this leads to repentance and conversion;

man of God may be fully competent, thoroughly equipped for every good work.[1]

Proclaim the Word!

4 [1]Now then, in the presence of God and the Lord[2] Jesus Christ, who is about to judge both living and dead, with a view to His appearing and His Kingdom, I give you this charge:[3] [2]Proclaim the Word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and exhort, with lots of patience and teaching.[4] [3]Because the time will come when they will not tolerate the sound doctrine; rather, they will accumulate for themselves a great many teachers who will tickle their ears according to their lusts —[4]yes, they will turn their ears away from the Truth and be turned aside to fables.[5] [5]But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.[6]

Timothy will no longer have Paul to help him

[6]For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.[7] [7]I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8]Now the crown of the righteousness is reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that Day; and not only to me, but also to all those who have longed for His appearing.[8]

Concluding remarks

"Please come quickly"

[9]Do your best to come to me quickly; [10]for Demas, loving this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica—Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.[9] [11]Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.[10] [12]Tychicus I sent to Ephesus. [13]Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, when you

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4) then the Word is our food and water for spiritual growth. As we grow, we can help others move through the sequence.

1 Access to Scripture is necessary for spiritual growth and work.

2 Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "the Lord" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

3 The charge that Paul gives Timothy is "with a view to His appearing and His Kingdom".

4 If Timothy obeys this charge, he will at least slow down the process described in verses 3-4. And if we also obey this charge, we should produce at least some improvement in our own context.

5 Notice the progression: first they choose to turn away from the Truth, but after that someone else takes over and leads them into ever greater stupidities.

6 In view of his own impending death Paul urges Timothy to get, and stay, serious.

7 Evidently God told Paul he was about to die.

8 If we are afraid of what might happen, we will not "long" for that "appearing". The implication is that they also are fighting the good fight and keeping the faith.

9 I take it that what is said of Demas does not apply to Crescens or Titus, just that they traveled.

10 Comparing this statement with Acts 15:37-39, it appears that Barnabas was right in investing in Mark, and Paul here recognizes his success. It is possible that Paul wanted Mark to wait on him personally.

come—and the books, especially the parchments.[1] **14**Alexander the coppersmith did me a lot of harm; may the Lord repay him according to his deeds.[2] **15**You also guard against him, because he strongly opposed our words.

People will disappoint you

16At my first defense no one came to help me, but all deserted me. May it not be held against them.[3] **17**But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the nations might hear.[4] Also, I was delivered out of a lion's mouth;[5] **18**and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and save me into His heavenly Kingdom;[6] to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Farewell

19Greet Prisca[7] and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. **20**Erastus stayed in Corinth, while I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.[8] **21**Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.

22The Lord Jesus Christ[9] be with your spirit. The Grace[10] be with you.[11] Amen.

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[1] The parchments may have been a subset among the books, possibly being O.T. Scriptures; in that event the other books might have been N.T. Scriptures, but we can only speculate.

[2] He is not asking God to forgive the man.

[3] Note the difference in attitude toward these people and toward the coppersmith in verse 14.

[4] I suppose that Paul wrote some of his letters after this first trial, and thus "the nations" are still 'hearing'.

[5] I suppose this is literal; someone tried to have him condemned to face a lion in the arena, but the plan was foiled.

[6] To get **into** the "heavenly Kingdom" is the goal.

[7] It is generally considered that 'Prisca' is an alternate spelling, or shortened form, for 'Priscilla'.

[8] Evidently Paul was not able to heal him.

[9] Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Jesus Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[10] 'Grace' occurs with the definite article = 'the grace'; so I capitalized it.

[11] "Your spirit" is singular, referring to Timothy, but the "you" here is plural—I take it that Paul knew the letter would be read by others.