An Overview Of The Book Of 2 Timothy

The Historical Background To The Second Letter To Timothy:

In the order of the books of the New Testament Paul's Second Letter to Timothy follows his First Letter to Timothy and precedes his letter to Titus. Historically, however, Paul's Second Letter to Timothy was written after his letter to Titus. Second Timothy was Paul's third pastoral letter. It was also Paul's last letter before his death.

When Paul wrote his Second Letter to Timothy, he was again a prisoner in Rome. He was imprisoned in a dungeon in chains for his preaching the gospel (see 2 Timothy 2:9). Because of Paul's imprisonment, a number of individuals had deserted him when he needed them most. All in Asia in the area of Ephesus, where Timothy was serving as pastor, had turned away from Paul (see 2 Timothy 1:15). At Paul's first trial no one had supported him. Everyone had deserted him (see 2 Timothy 4:16). A certain Alexander, identified as a metal worker, may have even testified against Paul at his trial (see 2 Timothy 4:14, 15). Only the Lord himself had stood by Paul and had strengthened him that he might be delivered on that occasion from the lion's mouth (see 2 Timothy 4:17). One Christian who did not desert Paul was Onesiphorus. He had come to Rome and searched for Paul until he had found him (see 2 Timothy 1:16-18).

At the time Paul wrote his Second Letter to Timothy only Luke, the physician and Paul's co-worker, was with him. Paul had sent Tychicus to Ephesus, who seems to have again served as Paul's mail carrier who delivered this second letter to Timothy. Paul appears to also have sent Tychicus to Ephesus to relieve Timothy, so Timothy could travel to Rome to be with him. Paul may possibly have written this second letter out of fear that Timothy might not be able to arrive in Rome before his death. By means of this letter Paul wanted to tell Timothy what he hoped to tell him in person.

The Writer Of The Second Letter To Timothy:

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus," 2 Timothy 1:1.

The Recipient Of The Second Letter To Timothy:

"To Timothy *my* beloved son," 2 Timothy 1:2.

For information about Timothy, see the Overview Of The Book Of 1 Timothy in The Book of 1 Timothy.

Date Of The Second Letter To Timothy:

A.D. 67

Where The Second Letter To Timothy Was Written:

Rome. See 2 Timothy 1:15-17 and 2 Timothy 2:9

Content Of The Second Letter To Timothy:

At the time Paul wrote his Second Letter to Timothy he was anticipating that the time of his martyrdom was near. Unlike his situation during his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul on this occasion saw no chance of his being acquitted and released (see 2 Timothy 4:6-8). He wrote this letter to say farewell. He desired to write one final word of encouragement to his dear son in the faith, Timothy, an encouragement that would also benefit the church.

This Second Letter to Timothy is more personal in nature than Paul's other pastoral letters. He expresses his desire for Timothy's companionship (see 2 Timothy 1:4; 4:9, 21). Winter was coming. Paul needed Timothy to bring him his warm cloak that he had left in Troas (see 2 Timothy 4:13). He also desired to have his books and parchments, which probably contained the Old Testament Scriptures he needed for his comfort and strengthening for the ordeal that lay before him.

Purpose Of The Second Letter To Timothy:

1. To request Timothy to come to him as soon as possible that he might see his dear son in the faith one last time (see 2 Timothy 1:4; 4:9, 21).

2. To request Timothy to bring his warm cloak and books (see 2 Timothy 4:13).

3. To encourage Timothy in his faith and ministry to guard and to preach the pure Word of God and the gospel that had been entrusted to him (see 2 Timothy 1:13, 14; 3:14, 15; 4:1, 2).

Theme Of The Second Letter To Timothy:

Encouragement for Timothy's faith and ministry in the face of terrible times.

2 Timothy

Part 1: Greeting 2 Timothy 1:1,2

1 ¶ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus;
¶ 2 To Timothy *my* beloved son:
¶ Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Part 2: Paul Encourages Timothy to Be Faithful 2 Timothy 1:3-18

¶ 3 I give thanks to God, whom I worship from *my* forefathers with a clean conscience, as I constantly remember you[1] in my prayers night and day,
4 longing to see you, while recalling your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.
5 I remember the genuine faith in you, which lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am convinced that *lives* in you also.
6 For this reason I remind you to be rekindling the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and self-discipline.
8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me his prisoner; rather suffer hardship together with *me* for the gospel according to the power of God,
9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not on the basis of our works but on the basis of his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,
10 but has now been made known by means of the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who surely brought death to an end, but who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,
11 for which I myself was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher.
12 For this reason I indeed suffer these things, but I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted *to him* for that day.
13 Continue to hold fast as a prototype the sound words that you heard from me in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus.
14 Guard the excellent deposit that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who lives in us.
¶ 15 You know this, that all who are in Asia[2] rejected me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.
16 May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;[3]
17 on the contrary, when he was in Rome, he zealously searched for me and found *me*
18 – may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord in that day – and you yourself know very well from experience[4] in how many ways he served in Ephesus.

Part 3: Paul Encourages Timothy to Be Strong 2 Timothy 2:1-26

2 ¶ Therefore you, my son, continue to be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
2 And the teachings[5] that you heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, such ones as will be competent to also teach others.
3 Suffer hardship together with *me* as an excellent soldier of Christ Jesus.

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[1] Lit. I have constant remembrance concerning you

[2] Referring to the west coast province of what was Asia Minor

[3] Lit. chain

[4] The words "from experience" are included because the Greek verb means to know from experience

[5] Lit. things

4 No one who serves as a soldier becomes entangled in the affairs of everyday life, in order that he may strive to please the one who enlisted him;
5 And if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned *the victor* if he does not compete according to the rules.
6 The farmer who works hard should be the first to receive a share of the crop.
7 Continue to think over what I am saying; for the Lord will give you insight in everything.
¶ 8 Keep remembering Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, a descendant of David,[6] according to my gospel,
9 on account of which I am suffering hardship to the point of imprisonment as a criminal, but the word of God is not imprisoned.
10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of the elect,[7] in order that they also may attain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
11 This[8] statement is trustworthy:
For if we died with *him*, we will also live with *him*;
12 If we endure, we will also reign with *him*;
If we will disown *him*, he will also disown us;
13 If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful,
For he cannot disown himself.
¶ 14 Always remind *them* of these things, warning *them* in the presence of God not to dispute about words, for no useful result, *but* for the destruction of those who hear.
15 Make every effort to present yourself to God as one approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, who holds the word of truth on a straight course.
16 And shun godless chatter; for they promote further ungodliness,
17 and their teaching will spread like gangrene, among whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus,
18 such ones who with regard to the truth have missed the mark, by saying the resurrection has already taken place, and they overturn the faith of some.
19 Nevertheless the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: "THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS,"[9] and "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."
20 Now in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also *vessels of* wood and clay, and some for honor, but others for dishonor.
21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter,[10] he will be a vessel for honor, having been sanctified,[11] useful to the Master, having been prepared for every good work.
22 And always flee from the lusts of youth, but continue pursing righteousness, faith, love, *and* peace with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.
23 And always shun the foolish and stupid controversial questions, knowing that they breed quarrels.
24 Now a bondservant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but must be gentle to all, able to teach, bear evil without resentment,
25 gently correcting those who oppose *him*, if, perhaps, God may *possibly* grant them a change of mind *leading* to a precise knowledge of the truth,
26 and they may come to their senses,[12] *delivered* out of the trap of the devil, having been captured alive by him to *do* his will.

Part 4: Paul Forewarns Timothy about the Terrible Times Ahead
2 Timothy 3:1-13

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[6] Lit. from the seed of David
[7] Or, chosen
[8] Lit. the
[9] Num.16:5
[10] Lit. from these
[11] Meaning, set aside by the Lord as holy for himself
[12] Lit. return to soberness

3 ¶ Now always realize this, that in the last days there will be times that are hard to bear.[13]
2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked,
3 without natural affection, irreconcilable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, opposed to what is good,
4 betrayers, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
5 having an appearance of godliness but denying its power. And so time and again turn away from these *people*.
6 For some of these are those who work their way[14] into households and captivate silly women who are heaped up with sins, being led along by various kinds of evil desires,
7 always learning and yet never being able to come to a knowledge of the truth.
8 And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, in the same way these men also oppose the truth, men having a corrupted mind, who, with regard to the faith, do not prove themselves to be what they ought to be.
9 But they shall not proceed further, for their foolishness will be quite evident to everyone, just as the foolishness of those *two* men also came to be.
¶ 10 Now as for you, you have followed faithfully my teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,
11 persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, *and* in Lystra, such persecutions as I endured. And yet the Lord delivered me out of *them* all!
12 And indeed, all who wish to live in a godly manner in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
13 and wicked people and deceivers will proceed *from bad* to worse[15], deceiving and being deceived.

Part 5: Paul Encourages Timothy to Continue in the Teachings of Scripture 2 Timothy 3:14-4:8

¶ 14 Now you, keep continuing in the things that you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know from whom you have learned *them*,
15 namely that from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.
16 All Scripture is inspired by God[16] and is useful for the purpose of teaching, for reproof, for correcting, for training in righteousness,[17]
17 so that the man of God may be in fit condition, having been fully equipped for every good work.

4 ¶ I charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, the One who will judge the living and the dead, in relation to his appearing and his kingdom;
2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, encourage, with utmost patience and painstaking instruction.[18]
3 For the time will come when people[19] will not put up with correct doctrine, but because of having an itch to have their ears tickled,[20] they will heap up teachers according to their own desires,
4 and on the one hand they will turn their ears away from of the truth, and on the other hand they will turn aside to myths.
5 But you, always be calm and collected in all circumstances,[21] suffer hardship patiently, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
¶ 6 For I myself am already being poured out as a drink-offering, and the time for my departure[22] has come.

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[13] Lit. times hard to bear will be present
[14] Lit. who creep in
[15] Lit. toward the worse
[16] Lit. God-breathed
[17] Lit. for training which is in righteousness
[18] Lit. in all patience and instruction (or teaching)
[19] Lit. they
[20] Lit. having an itch as to the hearing or the ear
[21] Lit. in all things
[22] Referring to Paul's death

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;
8 from now on a crown of righteousness is reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, moreover not to me only but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Part 6: Personal Matters 2 Timothy 4:9-18

¶ 9 Make every effort to come to me quickly;
10 for Demas, because he loved this present world, has deserted me, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus *has gone* to Dalmatia;
11 Luke is the only one with me. Pick up Mark[23] and bring him along with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.
12 But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.
13 When you come, bring along the cloak that I left behind in Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.
14 Alexander the coppersmith did a great deal of harm to me; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.
15 You yourself also continue to be on your guard against him, for he rigorously opposed our teachings.
¶ 16 During my first defense no one came to my aid, rather everyone deserted me; may it not be counted against them.
17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that the message might be fully proclaimed through me and all the Gentiles might hear it; and I was delivered from the lion's mouth.
18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Part 7: Closing Greeting and Benediction 2 Timothy 4:19-22

¶ 19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.
20 Erastus remained in Corinth, and Trophimus I left behind in Miletus because he was sick.
21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.
22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.[24]

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[23] Lit. take Mark to yourself

[24] The word "all" is included because the Greek word for "you" is plural.