



A Summary of 2 Timothy

Introduction

By the mid-60's AD, the apostle Paul was once again incarcerated in a Roman prison, this time with his death looming. His faithful co-worker, son in the faith and good friend Timothy was probably still ministering in Ephesus and Paul took this final opportunity to write to Timothy, wanting him to come to Rome for one last visit.

The letter includes some very personal and moving elements but it also allows Paul to hold up his own life of service as a good model for Timothy to follow, exhorting him continually to remain rock steady in his faith and hope in Jesus, no matter what trials and testing may come; in fact, he goes so far to say that Timothy should rejoice and persevere in his suffering for Christ for it is the mark of a faithful disciple.

Paul used the occasion to once again address his concerns over the false teachers in Ephesus, who were causing so much harm to the disciples there, especially those who were not so well grounded in their faith. Although few details are given concerning their false doctrine, it appears that it included a misrepresentation of the resurrection of all believers, for they said it had already occurred, causing many to become confused as it did not match their own personal circumstances.

Apart from Luke, all the others who had served Paul in Rome had left him. Therefore, he wanted Timothy to come and to bring Mark as he also needed some practical support in addition to their fellowship. He also requested some personal items such as his cloak, for winter in prison could be very cold, as well as some of his parchments and scrolls, for Paul intended to continue to write and study to the very end.

Chapter One

Paul wrote this final letter to Timothy from his prison cell in Rome as he awaited death. Once again, the greeting is genuinely warm and affectionate,

demonstrating the sincere love and friendship that clearly existed between the two men, a true spiritual father and son relationship.

The personal note continues as Paul indicates his sincere thanks to God for the provision of Timothy in his life, acknowledging the role of Timothy's mother and grandmother in their faithful service of guiding Timothy to faith too.

Paul moves on to exhorting Timothy to remain strong and bold in his faith that is based on the true Gospel of Christ. Paul acknowledged that it was this Gospel that had brought him to the place he was now in but that he was not ashamed of that and nor should Timothy be, for it was an honour to suffer for God.

Paul concluded the chapter by giving examples of those that had deserted him in his hour of need and those that had remained faithful, one of them who even made a determined effort to seek Paul out in Rome, in order to be of assistance. This indicates the right way to live a Gospel life as opposed to those who had cut and run when persecution came upon their leader.

Chapter Two

In faithful obedience to his calling, Paul had always proclaimed the authentic Gospel of Christ, including his suffering and resurrection from the dead. Because of the boldness of his teaching and the wondrous works that accompanied it, Paul had made many enemies, both Jew and Gentile, and had suffered much for doing so, yet he accepted it as part of his calling, exhorting Timothy as well to remain just as faithful and accepting of it when he was called to suffer.

Paul then gave instructions on the way servants of God should conduct themselves in public, giving good instruction in the faith through the Gospel of truth. At the same time, Paul issued a warning of the pitfalls of listening to the propaganda of the false teachers or of entering into pointless debates with them. God knows whom he has called and he will protect them.

Chapter Three

Paul starts with a graphic and disturbing account of just how depraved and degenerate mankind will become during the church age. Although people have always had the capacity to do real harm and damage to themselves and others, there will be a marked decline in community relationships, with a parallel increase of those who are selfish and self-centred, seeking to gain wealth and power for themselves at any cost. Paul cites the case of the Egyptian magicians who tried to oppose the power of God that was being displayed through Moses in Pharaoh's court, to show there is only ever going to be one winner - God!

Paul then turns to command Timothy to hold firm against such people as these, referring to the sound teaching that Timothy had received since his childhood and especially that from Paul himself. Paul reminded Timothy of his own experiences and the qualities he had displayed to remain faithful to his calling from God, yet clearly acknowledging that it was always God that was there to help him in all his hardship, saving him on numerous occasions from the life threatening situations he had frequently faced.

Chapter Four

Paul commences this final chapter with one of the strongest exhortations given in Scripture, calling on Timothy and probably the church in general, to proclaim the truth of the Gospel in all seasons to all people, no matter what situation may prevail at the time. He acknowledges that there will be times when many people do not want to hear the message but disciples are charged to persist with it no matter what they encounter.

Turning to his own personal situation of languishing in prison under sentence of death, Paul remains upbeat that he has fulfilled his duty before God and that God will honour that on the Day of Judgement, for it is based on the promises that he has given to his people.

Paul is alone with Luke in Rome, as everyone else has departed for various reasons; some genuine, some not! Paul calls on Timothy to pay one last visit to him before death, asking him to bring Mark along, as well as some personal possessions as well.

He speaks of a trial before the Emperor Nero, in which he had been deserted by his supporters but not by his Lord, who stood beside him in Spirit, producing a favourable outcome for Paul at the time. Paul notes that whatever his situation, the Lord is there for him, right on into eternity.

Paul sends his personal greetings to those he knows in Ephesus and informs Timothy of the location of some other fellow servants in the Lord, ending this, the most poignant of letters, with an upbeat blessing and benediction for his beloved son in the faith, Timothy.

Epilogue

Thus the writings and the life of a truly great man and faithful servant is ended but not lost to history thanks to those who preserved his words and ensured that his legacy would be timeless.

He is one of whom it can be truly said that he ran the good race and fought the good fight, enduring to the very end. Had he received a proper burial with a headstone, perhaps it would have read: <<*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us*>> (Romans 8:37).