

Introduction to 2 Timothy

NIV Study Bible

AUTHOR, DATE AND SETTING

See essay, p. 2481. After Paul's release from prison in Rome in a.d. 62 (Ac 28) and after his fourth missionary journey (see map, pp. 2486–2487), during which he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul was again imprisoned under Emperor Nero c. 66–67. It was during this time that he wrote 2 Timothy (see chart, p. 2261). In contrast to his first imprisonment, when he lived in a “rented house” (Ac 28:30; see note there), he now languished in a cold dungeon (see 4:13 and note), chained like a common criminal (1:16; 2:9). His friends even had a hard time finding out where he was being kept (1:17). Paul knew that his work was done and that his life was nearly at an end (4:6–8).

REASONS FOR WRITING

Paul had three reasons for writing to Timothy at this time:

1. Paul was lonely. Phygelus and Hermogenes, “everyone in the province of Asia” (1:15), and Demas (4:10) had deserted him. Crescens, Titus and Tychicus were away (4:10–12), and only Luke was with him (4:11). Paul wanted very much for Timothy to join him also. Timothy was his “fellow worker” (Ro 16:21), who “as a son with his father” (Php 2:22 ; see note there) had served closely with Paul (see 1Co 4:17). Of him Paul could say, “I have no one else like him” (Php 2:20). Paul longed for Timothy (1:4) and twice asked him to come soon (4:9,21). For more information on Timothy see Introduction to 1 Timothy: Recipient.
2. Paul was concerned about the welfare of the churches during this time of persecution under Nero, and he admonishes Timothy to guard the gospel (1:14), to persevere in it (3:14), to keep on preaching it (4:2) and, if necessary, to suffer for it (1:8; 2:3).
3. Paul wanted to write to the Ephesian church through his letter to Timothy (see note on 4:22).

OUTLINE

- Introduction (1:1–4)
- Paul's Concern for Timothy (1:5–14)
- Paul's Situation (1:15–18)
- Special Instructions to Timothy (ch. 2)
 - Call for Endurance (2:1–13)
 - Warning about Foolish Controversies (2:14–26)
- Warning about the Last Days (ch. 3)
 - Terrible Times (3:1–9)
 - Means of Combating Them (3:10–17)
- Paul's Departing Remarks (4:1–8)
 - Charge to Preach the Word (4:1–5)
 - Paul's Victorious Prospect (4:6–8)
- Final Requests, Greetings and Benediction (4:9–22)