

**BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT**

**A SERIES OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES**

**By Bob Young**

**SECOND TIMOTHY**

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## **BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT**

### **2 TIMOTHY**

**By Bob Young**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

These Bible study guides reflect how I organize and understand the text, taking into account various exegetical factors—syntax, grammar, vocabulary, etc. Along the way, I share some observations that may help clarify passages that are difficult to understand. I have not tried to write about every passage where potential problems or differences in understanding exist. At times my notes may seem to be unnecessary comments on clear passages; in other passages some may ask why I did not include a comment. Such is the individualized nature of Bible study. Some of my comments are designed to help maintain focus on the original author's purpose for writing.

These guides are not intended to take the place of your own reading but are intended to provide help and an opportunity to check your understanding. For each chapter there is a content outline followed by textual notes. The content sections of these guides (including how the text is divided and how subsections are described) are drawn from a comparison of several modern translations and reflect the majority. The textual notes at times provide a periphrastic summary, but as noted above they are not intended to be complete. I have tried to address matters that may not be included in other sources. Texts that are easily understood and matters usually explained in other writings are not treated in detail.

My primary purpose is to make it easier for you the reader or student to analyze and understand the text. Ultimately, you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible and you cannot simply follow what a favorite preacher or commentator says.

#### **INITIAL READING AND PARAGRAPHING**

In several previous writings, I have explained the importance of preparatory reading and personal study of the text. It is important that you learn to do this on your own. Once the text is familiar, I suggest you think about what themes you can identify and how you would mark the paragraph divisions, based on the subjects treated in the passage. Once you have completed this work, it is good to compare your paragraphing with that of several modern versions (or you can use the content section of these guides).

#### **A NOTE ABOUT PARAGRAPHING**

Paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Most modern translations are divided into paragraphs and provide a summary. Ideally, every paragraph has one central topic, truth, or thought. There will be several ways to describe the subject of the paragraph.

Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation can we truly understand the Bible. Only the original author is inspired—readers must take care not to change or modify the message. A first step toward integrity with the text is to develop the ability to analyze it and establish paragraphs.

Note that this introductory page is not repeated for each chapter. Many students will find it helpful to return to this information and reread it before beginning to read, analyze, and study a new chapter of the text.

## **BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT**

### **2 Timothy 1**

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[Note: it is suggested that the introductory materials on the previous page be read before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

#### **CONTENT**

There is some disagreement about the division of this chapter into paragraphs. I have divided the longer section of 1:3-14 into two shorter paragraphs, even though linguistically it should likely be considered a single paragraph, in part due to the fact that 1:8-14 is one long sentence in Greek.

1:1-2, greeting or salutation

1:3-7, Faith and heritage of Timothy

1:8-14, Loyal to the gospel—not ashamed, willing to suffer, guarding healthy teaching

1:15-18, update on Paul's situation

#### **STUDY HELPS**

1:1-2. Writer (Paul, apostle) and recipient (Timothy, dear son). As in the first letter, Paul's description of himself as an apostle emphasizes his authority, especially since the letter was to be read to the church. The need to combat false teaching may also explain the need for identifying Paul as one with apostolic authority.

That Timothy a son to Paul reflects a close relationship similar to that of father-son. The Bible does not say that Paul baptized Timothy (compare 1:18; see also Acts 16 where Timothy was apparently already a Christian when Paul met him). The close association of Paul and Timothy serves to give Timothy authority.

Paul writes to instruct Timothy about false teachers (as in the first letter). Paul, anticipating his death, seeks to give Timothy the authority needed to address the problems arising from the false teachings.

1:3-7. Including a word of thanksgiving to God (the gods) was a customary part of Greek epistolary form. In this paragraph, Paul urges Timothy to remember his life, family, and calling. These were an encouragement to Paul; to remember this spiritual history would be a source of spiritual strength and encouragement to Timothy. Timothy was blessed by a spiritual heritage that began with his grandmother and mother. This memory should strengthen Timothy's desire to correct false teaching.

1:5. "Sincere" is literally "unhypocritical," without pretense, perhaps already preparing for the idea that the false teachers were not sincere and were pretentious.

1:6-7. Timothy had been well prepared for the task Paul gives him. Timothy's preparation and giftedness are also mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14. Here the text describes the gift as received "through" or "by" Paul's hands. In 1 Tim. 4:14, a different preposition is used—"with" the hands of the elders. New Testament parallel contexts suggest that "laying on hands" refers to blessing and commissioning rather than imparting gifts or official status. Laying on hands in Acts 6:6 is accompanied with prayer with the purpose of appointing the Seven as special

servants or ministers. Acts 1:26 does not mention laying on of hands in the appointment of Matthias as an apostle to take Judas' place. Acts 8:17 includes laying on of hands in a special circumstance to give God's blessing (through the apostles) to opening the gospel to the Samaritans. Such a variety of contexts makes clear that one should not understand laying on of hands to mean apostolic succession, even though Paul later speaks of his impending death.

The word gift (charisma) is singular. It often refers to a (spiritual) endowment or qualification. The New Testament does not give details of a time or times when Paul appointed Timothy by laying on hands. The reference to what God gives in v. 7 suggests a possible connection between the two verses. If so, v. 7 is a description of the gift. Since v. 7 can apply to all Christians, it is possible in v. 6 that Paul is encouraging Timothy by reminding him of how God works in the lives of Christians.

1:7. "Spirit" can refer to the Holy Spirit or to one's attitude and desire. The Greek has no definite article. Either way, the Christian is not timid, but has a (S)pirit of power, love, and self-discipline. Again, the application of this verse does not apply exclusively to Timothy, but Christians generally. Timothy has been prepared and empowered for God's purpose in his life.

1:8-14. These verses are one extended sentence in Greek, which I have identified as a single paragraph in these notes. The Greek construction can be seen as support for the idea that the paragraph is 1:3-14, and not just this one sentence.

1:8-10. Ashamed appears three times in the passage (vv. 8, 12, 16). Timothy is to testify without being ashamed of the gospel or of Paul. The gospel is God's calling to holiness, God's power, and evidence of God's grace and purpose, revealed in Christ's coming to destroy death by bringing light and immortality. The mention of suffering in 1:8 is echoed several times in the book.

1:11-14. Paul describes himself as herald, apostle, and teacher of the gospel. Appointed reflects God's part in Paul's calling. A herald (kerux) is one who announces or proclaims (kerusso) the message (kerygma) of another. Kerygma is used in the New Testament to describe apostolic preaching. A good translation for us today is preacher. (I have written a study of the 15 Greek words that are translated as "preach"; the article appears on my website: <http://www.bobyongresources.com/bible/grkprch.htm>.) Apostle is repeated from 1:1 and carries the idea of having authority as one sent to represent another.

If the phrase "to the Gentiles" is accepted as authentic, a primary reason for Paul's sufferings is his efforts to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul was confident of his calling and confident of God's ability to protect him. He seeks to transfer this attitude to Timothy.

1:12. How should the words "my deposit" (NIV, what I have entrusted to him) be understood? Is this something God has given to Paul (as in v. 14 with reference to Timothy) or something Paul has given to God? One can translate trust, since a deposit is entrusted to another. The Greek uses the genitive-ablative form (of/from me, my deposit) which opens the possibility of meanings other than the possessive. Either Paul has entrusted something to God and is confident that God will guard it, or Paul is convinced that God will protect the purity of the gospel described in vv. 8-10, the deposit of the gospel which God has entrusted to Paul. These options hinge on how one translates the Greek words "my deposit" or "my trust." The use of "deposit" in v. 14 is less difficult because it is not modified with the personal pronoun; the reading is "the good deposit" (see below).

1:13-14. Sound teaching is healthy teaching. The Greek word is where we get our word hygiene. Timothy is to be guided by what he heard from Paul. Keep is holding fast rather than observing or obeying. Timothy is to guard (same verb as v. 12) the good deposit (same word as v. 12). In the context, the reference in v. 14 is most certainly to the gospel. Reading the same meaning for the word in v. 12 gives sense: I am convinced that he is able to guard my gospel until that day. However, the use of the same words (guard, deposit) with two different meanings in the same context could also be a literary device.

The sound teaching comes from God. The false teachers cannot make that claim. The teaching Paul brought and passed on to Timothy was from God, and thus authoritative. The affirmation that the Holy Spirit dwells in Timothy should be noted. Timothy will be helped in his work by God's very presence. Much of the content of this introductory section of the letter supports the purpose of identifying and opposing false teachers.

1:15-18. "Everyone in Asia" is obviously exaggeration, the technical term is hyperbole. The meaning is that many have deserted Paul, including two who are unknown to us, named only here. Verses 16-18 are in the optative mood, in this case indicating a prayerful desire of Paul. Onesiphorus is mentioned again in 4:19. We do not have details elsewhere of the events mentioned by Paul in this text.

## **BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT**

### **2 Timothy 2**

**By Bob Young**

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory materials that precede Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

#### **CONTENT**

The chapter naturally divides itself into two major paragraphs. It may be helpful to identify smaller units of the text due to the length of the sections.

- 2:1-13, Endure hardships (continuation of the thought of 1:8ff)
- 2:14-26, How to handle controversies

Homiletic paragraphing (how the text divides itself for sermonic applications) may focus on the numerous illustrations Paul uses to describe the Christian worker.

#### **STUDY HELPS**

2:1-13. "My son" is repeated (see 1 Tim. 1:2, 2 Tim. 1:1). Be strong has application to the charge Paul is giving Timothy when connected to 1:8-14; it may also be a continuation of 1:15, in the sense that those who did not remain with Paul were not strong. Strength will be required to endure suffering and hardship. As Timothy is entrusted with what he heard from Paul (1:13), he is to continue the process for future generations. Four generations are in view in 2:1-2: Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others. Entrust is a verb from the same Greek root as the noun deposit in chapter 1.

2:3-6. Paul uses several examples to encourage Timothy and to teach endurance: soldiers, athletes, and farmers.

2:7. Some have seen here a reference to the Holy Spirit, since one way God gives insight is through the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Such is not demanded by the text, but provides an interesting connection between 1:7, 1:14, and 2:7.

2:8-13. This is an explanatory section based not in illustrations from common human experience, but in Jesus, Paul, and the gospel. The use of the word "remember" parallels 1:3-6. The focus is on suffering hardships. The reference to Jesus' resurrection should be understood as including his suffering. Paul is suffering, even in chains (see also 1:8, 2:3). Paul is anticipating his death (4:1-7).

"My gospel" is interesting in light of "my deposit" in 1:12. Paul is not the source or subject of the gospel. The gospel has been entrusted to him. As a herald, it is his message, although it is received from another. This gospel (word of God) continues to go forth freely even when the messengers suffer and are imprisoned.

The motive for suffering is the salvation of God's chosen ones. Paul affirms this as motivation for his suffering; it was obviously the reason for Christ's suffering.

2:11-13. This is the last of the five "faithful sayings." These sayings point to a major teaching that follows the phrase. This saying was perhaps an early creedal statement or hymn. The first class conditional statements assume the truthfulness of each statement (they are not conditional possibilities). The first two verbs are positive (what it means to endure hardship); the second two verbs are negatives (describing lack of endurance).

2:14-26. The word “remember” reflects a common, often repeated theme in the book. These things can either look back to 2:1-13, or forward to 2:14-26. In the context, my preference is the latter. Ashamed in v. 15 is also repeated from earlier references in the letter.

2:14-19. This section is characterized by several words and phrases related to “speaking”: remind, quarreling about words, ruining listeners, word of truth, godless chatter, false teaching, God’s solid foundation (word), confessing the name of the Lord. Timothy is to confront both the negative actions and false teachings. To do so, he must be God’s worker (present yourself, v. 15), wholly depending on God and God’s word. One who faithfully fulfills these duties will be approved. Some have seen in the verb “handling correctly” (literally, cutting straight) a reference to Paul’s work in tent making.

Two false teachers are mentioned by name: Hymenaeus (1 Tim. 1:20) and Philetus (not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible). The text identifies the false teaching as a misunderstanding of the resurrection, specifically that it is already past. The New Testament mentions in other places several misunderstandings of the Day of the Lord, the second coming, and the resurrection (for example, 2 Thess. 2; 1 Cor. 15, and others). Our knowledge of other misunderstandings or false teachings comes from cultural factors such as Gnosticism, Greek philosophy, and the religious climate of the first century. An incomplete list of factors based on the first century context, to help us understand the nature of this false teaching, includes the influence of dualism and other teachings of Greek philosophy, Gnosticism, the Sadducees, teachings like those described in 2 Thessalonians 2, and the idea that the resurrection the Bible describes in the new life (Romans 6) and is not related to the physical body.

2:19. Foundation is a common metaphor in Paul’s writings and here is likely a reference to the Scriptures (Old Testament) with a citation possibly based on Num. 16:5. Note that 1 Tim. 3:15 describes the church as upholding the truth. The word of God is certain (sealed), and cannot be destroyed by false teaching (see also 2:9). The second quotation is from an unknown source. The point of this paragraph is the necessity of opposing such false teachings, and that God has provided the resources to do it.

2:20-26. Here is an illustration about different kinds of equipment (vessels) with different purposes. In the everyday world, some vessels, although important, have ignoble uses (compare 1 Cor. 12:22-24). The goal of every Christian is to fulfill God’s noblest purposes, to be set apart, useful, and ready for God’s work. This requires cleansing (catharsis, possibly a reference to putting aside the false teachings and the accompanying actions).

2:22-26. These instructions to Timothy are reminiscent of 1 Tim. 4:11-12 and 6:11ff. The point is clear in v. 23: have nothing to do with the arguments and quarrels, but teach with gentleness. The specific context in which the teaching mentioned in v. 24 is to be applied to for those who have been led astray by the false teachers. Those who accept the false teachings will be vehemently opposed to the truth, but the correct approach is gentle instruction and godly hope that they will come to know truth and turn back from the influences of the false teachers, which are described here as from the devil.

## **BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT**

### **2 Timothy 3**

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[Note: it is suggested that the introductory material that precedes Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

#### **CONTENT**

This relatively brief chapter naturally falls into two primary parts or paragraphs.

- 3:1-9, Ungodliness in the last days
- 3:10-17, Paul instructs Timothy about persecution and the importance of persevering in teaching God's Word

#### **STUDY HELPS**

3:1-9. Last days is perhaps parallel to 1 Tim. 4:1, but here the text reads "last days" (eschatais hemerais); in 1 Tim. 4:1 it reads in "later times" (husterois kairois). The reference in both texts seems to be to a coming time, although it seems the situation described is already in development. The false teaching in the context of these verses is already present.

3:1-5. Terrible (difficult) times (kairos) will come. In the last days difficult times will come. Times is the same word as 1 Tim. 4:1. The actions of godless people are described. These people may appear to be godly (they have a form of godliness) but because of their manner of life, God and godliness have no power to change them. In the context, this is probably a reference to the false teachers and those influenced by the false teachers. They are to be avoided.

3:6-9. It is difficult to fill in the details behind these verses because we have no parallel New Testament references to help us understand them. The unstable women (3:6) may be similar to those women who were influenced by false teachers in 1 Timothy 5. From the text, we understand that there were in Ephesus certain women who are described as guilt-ridden, without strong wills, filled with desires, and victimized by the false teachers. The gender of the Greek words shows that v. 7 also refers to the women; they are constantly learning but never able to gain a full knowledge (epignosis) of truth (without the article). Secular writers from the period noted that Gnosticism sought to influence women. The reference may be to the false teachers already described, or to other false teachers with roots in Gnosticism, or a combination of the two.

These teachers stealthily enter houses and take captive (the minds of?) such women. Take captive likely refers to influencing their thinking (see NIV translation, gain control). Paul writes to warn Timothy (and the church) of these things.

3:8-9. To make clear the danger involved, Paul gives the example of Jannes and Jambres. In Jewish tradition, these are the names of the Egyptian court magicians who opposed Moses (Exod. 7:11). In the same way, the false teachers oppose truth. The false teachers are beyond hope—corrupt minds, incapable of accurately describing the faith, rejected by those who genuinely understand the truth. Their impact will not be great (will not extend beyond the susceptible women) because the folly of the false teachers is apparent.

The text of 3:6-9 has been used to develop some strange interpretations. The text is relatively clear in its teachings. Some people (in the text, some women) are especially susceptible to false teaching. False teachers usually work secretly, casting doubt and using mind-control methods. Those who oppose God's workers are not hard to identify. When they are opposed, their influence can be limited.

3:10-17. Paul's life is a stark contrast to what has just been described. The aorist verbs show that Paul has already experienced these things—things Timothy is well aware of. The places mentioned are near Timothy's home (see Acts 13, 14, 16). Paul was suffering hardship. He did not expect that disciples would be exempt from suffering as they faithfully followed Christ. Through the centuries, persecution has come to Christians in many forms—not all physical. In Paul's view, the world is getting worse.

3:14-17. Because of the situation described in vv. 10-17, it was important that Timothy follow the teachings he had received (1:13, 2:1-2). The reference to the Holy Scriptures is to the Old Testament; the New Testament as a book did not exist at the time of Paul's writing. The reference to Timothy's childhood connects to 1:3-6. Paul affirms the inspiration of the Scriptures by God, their usefulness in four areas, and the complete equipping of God's servants. The inspiration of Scripture declares that these words originated with God and not with human beings. The four verbs of v. 16 provide a progression: walking in the teaching, departing from the path and in need of rebuke, correction that helps one return to the path, and instruction or training for faithful living. The result is a Christian ready for service in every good work.

Paul has described the false teachers as unlikely to return, but Paul is obviously concerned and hopeful that those who have been influenced by the false teachers will be restored. They need good teaching, rebuke when they err, correction that helps them return, and continual instruction.

## **BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT**

### **2 Timothy 4**

**By Bob Young**

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory material that precedes Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

#### **CONTENT**

The paragraphs are relatively easy to identify. Many versions make 3:10-4:5 a single paragraph of Paul's final charge to Timothy. I have separated that section to maintain the chapter division (3:10-17, 4:1-5).

4:1-5, Paul's concluding instruction to Timothy about preaching and endurance (a continuation of 3:10-17)

4:6-8, Paul's evaluation of his situation

4:11-16, conclusion and personal details

#### **STUDY HELPS**

4:1-5. Even if this section is understood as a continuation of Paul's final instruction to Timothy, he renews the command in 4:1-5. In the paragraph that follows, Paul includes nine imperatives in his instructions to Timothy. First, Timothy is to preach, be prepared always, correct, reprove, and encourage. (In some translations the same words are used here as in 3:16, but these last three verbs are not the same verbs as those in 3:16.) Timothy is to do these things with a correct attitude, keeping in mind the challenges that will come. The rejection of healthy teaching will increase and become worse. This is the result of the false teachers and those who follow them. People will seek teachers who will say what they want to hear, an apt picture of the situation in many places and churches in our world today. Continuing with more imperatives, Paul urges Timothy to respond to the threat of false teaching but distinguishing himself through his way of life (v. 5).

4:6-8. Some have described these verses as Paul's final testament. The present tense verbs show that he can see that this is already happening. Paul knows that his sacrifice is nearing completion; the time of his death is near. He confidently affirms that he has done three things: fought the fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. He anticipates the crown, the winner's wreath.

4:9-22. Few comments are necessary in these verses because they are straightforward and easily understood. There are few differences of opinion regarding these verses. When there are different ideas, the variations are not of great importance in understanding the book.

4:9-15. Paul was in prison, desiring warmth and study materials, but most important is the parchments.

4:16-18. Defense is a technical word for legal defense in Acts, something Paul did frequently. Paul writes that he stands alone with reference to men, but that God is always at his side, so that he continues his work of declaring the gospel to the Gentiles, something he was able to do especially well in prison. The reference to being delivered to the lions is figurative, perhaps a

way of saying that he has not yet been found guilty. Paul is confident God will continue to be with him and rescue him, even as he declared in 4:6-8. Throughout his life, this has been Paul's antidote to persecution and hardships. He is teaching Timothy about the faithfulness of God to prepare Timothy for difficulties and hardships.

4:19-22. As was often his custom, Paul concludes with personal greetings to several whom he knew. Paul often wrote the concluding part of a letter with his own hand (it was common to use a secretary or amanuensis to write the letter). In the concluding verse, the first you (your) is singular as is the word spirit. The second you is plural, again indicating that the letter was likely intended to be read to the church, even though there are numerous personal references and instructions in the letter. A public reading would serve to validate Timothy's actions in opposing the false teachers and would give him authority as Paul's representative and coworker. This may also explain Paul's references to himself as an apostle (1:1, 11). One can identify throughout the letter various places where this motive of giving Timothy authority is in view (1:3-7; 1:8, 13-14; 2:1-2; 2:14; 3:14; 4:1-5).