

2 Timothy

1

Summary: *Paul writes to Timothy from prison, expressing longing to see him and recalling Timothy's sincere faith, which first lived in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. He urges Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God, reminding him that God gave a spirit not of fear but of power, love, and self-discipline. Paul calls Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony about the Lord or of Paul as his prisoner, but to share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us according to his own purpose and grace given in Christ Jesus before the ages began. This grace has now been manifested through the appearing of Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This letter is widely considered Paul's last — written from a Roman prison as he anticipates death (cf. 4:6-8). The emotional texture is unique in the Pauline corpus: deeply personal, retrospective, and urgent. The reference to Timothy's grandmother and mother (v. 5) is the only place in the New Testament where a believer's spiritual heritage is traced through female family members. The christological statement in verses 9-10 is one of Paul's most compact summaries of the gospel: pre-temporal grace, historical appearing, and the abolition of death.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'before the ages began' (pro chronōn aiōniōn, v. 9) describes God's purpose in eternity past — we render without imposing specific predestination frameworks. The reference to Paul's 'deposit' (parathēkē, vv. 12, 14) echoes 1 Timothy 6:20 and raises questions about the relationship between divine preservation and human guarding of the gospel.*

Connections: *Timothy's family faith connects to Acts 16:1. The 'fan into flame' metaphor for spiritual gifts connects to 1 Thessalonians 5:19 ('do not quench the Spirit'). The gospel summary in vv. 9-10 parallels Titus 1:2-3 and 3:4-7. Onesiphorus's loyalty (vv. 16-18) contrasts with the Asian believers' desertion (v. 15).*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, ²From god the father and christ jesus our lord, to Timothy, my dearly dear son — Grace, mercy, and peace. ³I am grateful to God, whom I serve with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I am persuaded, lives in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷Because God has not given

us the spirit of fear. But of authority, and of love, and of a sound mind. ⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹Who has saved us, and known as us with an holy calling, not in keeping with to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,. ¹⁰However, is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light by way of the gospel:. ¹¹For which purpose I am appointed as a herald, and an emissary, and an instructor to the non-Jewish peoples. ¹²For the which cause I also suffer these things — nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. ¹⁵You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. ¹⁷Instead, when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me — ¹⁸Indeed, the Lord grant to him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day — and in how numerous things he ministered to me at Ephesus, you knowest very well.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul's apostleship is grounded in *dia thelēmatos theou* ('by the will of God') — divine calling, not personal ambition. The prepositional phrase *kat' epangelian zōēs* ('according to the promise of life') defines his apostolic mission: he proclaims the life promised in Christ Jesus. This opening sets the letter's dominant theme: life in Christ versus the death Paul faces.
2. The adjective *agapētō* ('beloved') replaces *gnēsio* ('true, genuine') from 1 Timothy 1:2, reflecting the deeper emotional register of this final letter. The threefold greeting — *charis, eleos, eirēnē* ('grace, mercy, peace') — matches 1 Timothy's greeting.
3. Paul connects his service to God with his ancestral faith (*apo progonōn*, 'from ancestors') — his Christian faith is the fulfillment of Jewish faith, not a departure from it. The 'clear conscience' (*kathara syneidēsei*) assures Timothy that Paul's imprisonment is unjust, not the result of wrongdoing. The constant remembrance (*adialeipton... mnēian*) echoes 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3.
4. Timothy's tears (*dakryōn*) may refer to their last parting — a detail that reveals the depth of their relationship. The verb *epipothōn* ('longing, yearning') expresses intense desire. Paul's joy would be 'filled' (*plērōthō*) — made complete — by seeing Timothy again. From prison, facing death, Paul's greatest desire is personal reunion.
5. The adjective *anypokritos* ('sincere, unhypocritical, genuine') describes faith without pretense (cf. 1 Timothy 1:5). Paul traces this faith through three generations of women: grandmother (*mammē*) Lois and mother Eunice. This is the only New Testament passage that names a believer's grandmother in the context of faith transmission. Timothy's father was Greek (Acts 16:1), making his maternal line the source of his Jewish-Christian faith. The verb *enōkēsen* ('dwelt in, took up residence in') personifies faith as a living presence that inhabits successive generations.
6. The verb *anazōpyrein* ('to fan into flame, to rekindle') implies the gift is a fire that may have diminished — not extinguished but needing renewed attention. First Timothy 4:14 mentions the laying on of hands by the council of elders; here Paul mentions his own hands (*tōn cheirōn mou*) — both likely occurred at the same commissioning event. The gift (*charisma*) is specific to Timothy's calling and requires active cultivation.
7. The noun *deilias* ('cowardice, timidity, fear') is the only occurrence in the New Testament. Paul addresses what may be Timothy's temperamental tendency toward timidity. The three replacements for fear are: *dynamis* ('power' — the capacity to act), *agapē* ('love' — the motivation to act), and *sōphronismos* ('self-discipline, sound judgment' — the wisdom to act well). This triad equips Timothy for courageous ministry.
8. Two potential sources of shame: the testimony (martyrion) about Christ and Paul himself as a prisoner (*desmion*). In Roman culture, association with a convicted prisoner brought social stigma. The compound verb *synkakopathēson* ('share in suffering, join in hardship') calls Timothy to voluntary participation in the cost of the gospel. The enabling power for this is not Timothy's courage but *dynamis theou* ('the power of God').
9. This verse contains a compact gospel summary. Two divine actions — 'saved' (*sōsantos*) and 'called' (*kalesantos*) — are grounded not in human works (*ou kata ta erga hēmōn*) but in God's own 'purpose and grace' (*idian prothesin kai charin*). The stunning claim: this grace was given (*dotheisan*) in Christ Jesus *pro chronōn aiōniōn* ('before eternal ages, before time began'). God's saving purpose preceded creation itself.
10. The pre-temporal grace (v. 9) has been *phanerōtheisan* ('manifested, made visible') through Christ's *epiphaneia* ('appearing' — his incarnation and ministry). Two achievements of Christ are stated: *katargēsantos ton thanaton* ('having abolished/rendered powerless death') and *phōtisantos zōēn kai aphtharsian* ('having brought to light life and immortality'). The verb *katargeō* means not that death no longer occurs but that its power and finality have been broken. Light imagery pervades: death is darkness; life and imperishability (*aphtharsia*) are illuminated through the gospel.
11. The three roles mirror 1 Timothy 2:7 but without 'of the Gentiles' and without the oath formula. Paul's imprisonment is the direct result of his appointment — he suffers because of what he was commissioned to proclaim.

12. Paul's personal confession: *ouk epaischynomai* ('I am not ashamed') answers the call of verse 8. The ground of his confidence is relational — *oida gar hō pepisteuka* ('I know whom I have believed') — not abstract theology but personal trust in a known Person. The 'deposit' (*parathēkēn mou*) could mean 'what I have entrusted to him' (my life, my ministry) or 'what he has entrusted to me' (the gospel). Both readings are theologically rich. 'That day' (*ekeinēn tēn hēmeran*) is the day of Christ's return and final judgment.
13. The noun *hypotypōsin* ('pattern, model, outline') appeared in 1 Timothy 1:16 for Paul as a 'pattern' of conversion. Here it refers to the pattern of sound teaching — Timothy must not merely remember the content but maintain the form (the healthy framework) of apostolic doctrine. The qualifying phrase *en pistei kai agapē* ('in faith and love') means the pattern must be held with the right disposition, not merely intellectual adherence.
14. The 'good deposit' (*kalēn parathēkēn*) is the apostolic gospel and teaching. The means of guarding it is *dia pneumatōs hagiou* ('by the Holy Spirit') — human effort alone cannot preserve divine truth. The participle *enoikountos* ('dwelling in') describes the Spirit's permanent residence in believers, providing ongoing empowerment for the task.
15. The verb *apestrophēsan* ('turned away from') indicates abandonment — when Paul needed support, his Asian associates deserted him. 'All' (*pantes*) is likely hyperbolic but indicates widespread desertion. Phygelus and Hermogenes are named as representative defectors — they appear nowhere else in the New Testament. This personal pain sets up the contrast with Onesiphorus in the next verses.
16. Onesiphorus's name means 'profit-bearer' — fitting for one who brought refreshment (*anepsyxen*, 'cooled, refreshed' — the opposite of the 'rekindling' metaphor in v. 6). His loyalty is highlighted by what it cost: *ouk epaischynthē* ('was not ashamed') of Paul's chains (*halysin*). The prayer is directed to 'the household' (*oikō*) of Onesiphorus, which some interpreters take as evidence that Onesiphorus himself had died, though this is uncertain.
17. The adverb *spoudaiōs* ('earnestly, diligently') and the verb *ezētēsen* ('sought, searched for') indicate that finding Paul in Rome was not easy. Prisoners were not always easily located in the Roman system. Onesiphorus's persistence contrasts sharply with those who turned away (v. 15).
18. The prayer 'may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord' (*dōē autō ho kyrios heurein eleos para kyriou*) uses 'Lord' twice — possibly distinguishing God the Father and Christ, or using 'Lord' for both as the source and the mediator of mercy. 'That day' (*ekeinē tē hēmera*) is the same day of judgment referenced in verse 12. Onesiphorus's service in Ephesus, well known to Timothy (*beltion sy ginōskeis*, 'you know better than I'), preceded his courageous service in Rome.

2

Summary: *Paul calls Timothy to endurance in ministry through a series of vivid metaphors: a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer — each illustrating single-minded devotion and the promise of reward. Paul grounds his exhortation in the faithfulness of Christ, offering a creedal fragment ('if we died with him, we will also live with him'). He warns against quarrelsome, divisive teaching — specifically naming Hymenaeus and Philetus, who claim the resurrection has already occurred — and contrasts it with the quiet competence of a worker rightly handling the word of truth. The chapter closes with instructions on gentleness toward opponents, in hope that God may grant them repentance.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'faithful saying' in verses 11-13 is likely an early Christian hymn or confession, exhibiting parallelism and conditional logic: faithfulness yields co-reign, denial yields denial, yet human faithlessness cannot override divine faithfulness ('he cannot deny himself'). The metaphor of a 'large house' containing vessels of honor and dishonor (vv. 20-21) draws on the Pauline body imagery but applies it to the church's mixed composition. The phrase 'rightly handling the word of truth' (*orthotomeo*, v. 15) literally means 'cutting straight' — a metaphor from road-building or tentmaking.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'faithful saying' (*pistos ho logos*) is debated — does it begin at verse 11 or earlier? We take verses 11b-13 as the quoted material. Hymenaeus appears also in 1 Timothy 1:20; whether this is the same person is assumed but uncertain. The 'resurrection has already happened' teaching (v. 18) likely reflects an over-realized eschatology that spiritualized the resurrection, a recurring problem in early churches.*

Connections: *The soldier/athlete/farmer triad connects to 1 Corinthians 9:7, 24-27 and the broader Pauline theme of disciplined endurance. The 'faithful saying' formula appears five times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8). The large-house metaphor recalls Romans 9:21 (potter and vessels). The call to gentleness toward opponents anticipates the warnings of chapter 3.*

¹You therefore, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier on active duty gets entangled in civilian affairs, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵Likewise, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶The hardworking farmer ought to be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. ⁸Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David — this is my gospel, ⁹Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even to bonds. But the message of God is not bound. ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹¹This saying is trustworthy: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹²Indeed, if we suffer, we will also reign with him — if we deny him, he also will deny us: ¹³If we trust not, yet he remains faithful — he cannot deny himself. ¹⁴Remind them of these things, charging them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good but ruins the hearers. ¹⁵Make every effort to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid irreverent, empty talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, ¹⁷Their word will eat as does a canker — of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; ¹⁸Indeed, who concerning the truth have erred and stated that the resurrection is past already. And overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." ²⁰Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use and some for dishonorable. ²¹Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. ²²So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. ²³Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. ²⁴And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. If God perhaps will provide them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. ²⁶so that they may come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *endynamou* ('be strengthened') is a present passive imperative — Timothy is not told to muster his own strength but to be empowered by grace. The address *teknon* ('child') expresses Paul's paternal relationship to Timothy, established in 1 Timothy 1:2.
2. This verse outlines four generations of transmission: Paul to Timothy to faithful people to others. The Greek *parathou* ('entrust, deposit') uses banking language — the gospel is a deposit to be guarded and transmitted intact. 'Faithful people' (*pistoi anthropoi*) uses the gender-inclusive *anthropoi* rather than the male-specific *andrasin*.
3. The compound verb *synkakopatheson* ('share in suffering together') links Timothy's hardships to Paul's own — and ultimately to Christ's. The military metaphor is the first of three vocational images (soldier, athlete, farmer) that structure verses 3-6.
4. The Greek *empeketai* ('gets entangled') conveys the image of being woven into something that restricts movement. Roman soldiers were legally prohibited from engaging in trade during service. The application to ministry is clear: undivided loyalty to the commanding officer — Christ.
5. The athletic metaphor shifts from military endurance to disciplined competition. The Greek *nomimos* ('lawfully, according to the rules') refers to the strict training and competition regulations of the Greek games. The *stephanos* ('crown, wreath') is the victor's garland, not a royal diadem.
6. The third metaphor — the farmer — emphasizes both labor and reward. The Greek *kopiaonta* ('laboring, toiling') is the same word Paul uses for ministerial work (1 Cor 15:10, 1 Tim 5:17). The right to first fruits echoes Deuteronomy 18:4 and 1 Corinthians 9:7-11.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Paul invites Timothy to active reflection (*noei*, 'perceive, think over') but assures him that understanding ultimately comes from the Lord. The future indicative *dosei* ('will give') expresses confidence, not mere wish.
8. This compact creedal statement names the two essential facts: resurrection (*egegermenon*, perfect participle — risen and still alive) and Davidic descent. The order is significant: resurrection comes first, then lineage. 'My gospel' (*to euangelion mou*) does not mean Paul invented it but that he was entrusted with it (cf. Rom 2:16, 16:25).

9. The contrast is sharp: Paul is bound (desmōn, 'chains'), but the word of God is not bound (ou dedetai). The Greek kakourgos ('criminal, evildoer') is the same word used for the criminals crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:33). Paul's situation mirrors his Lord's.
10. Paul's suffering is vicarious — endured for the benefit of the elect (tous eklektous, 'the chosen ones'). The phrase meta doxes aioniou ('with eternal glory') places present suffering against the horizon of eschatological weight, echoing Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:17.
11. The formula pistos ho logos ('the saying is trustworthy') introduces what appears to be an early Christian hymn or confession (vv. 11b-13). The aorist synapethanomen ('we died with') likely refers to baptismal identification with Christ's death (Rom 6:8), not physical martyrdom.
12. The parallelism intensifies: endurance yields co-reign (sympasileusomen), but denial yields reciprocal denial. The warning echoes Jesus' own words in Matthew 10:33 and Luke 12:9. The shift from first person plural ('we') maintains the hymnic, communal voice.
13. The hymn's climactic line shifts from conditional symmetry to asymmetry: human unfaithfulness does not cancel divine faithfulness. The reason is ontological — 'he cannot deny himself' (arnesasthai heauton ou dynatai). God's faithfulness is not contingent on human response but rooted in his own nature. This is not a promise of universal salvation but a statement about God's character.
14. The Greek logomachein ('to fight about words, quarrel verbally') is a compound of logos and machomai. Paul is not dismissing theology but condemning fruitless verbal combat. The strong word katastrophe ('ruin, destruction') — from which English 'catastrophe' derives — shows the stakes of divisive teaching.
15. The Greek spoudason ('be diligent, make every effort') is stronger than the KJV's 'study.' The key term orthotomeo literally means 'to cut straight' — possibly from road-building (cutting a straight path) or tentmaking (cutting fabric correctly). The KJV's 'rightly dividing' has sometimes been misused to support compartmentalizing Scripture; 'rightly handling' better captures the sense of accurate, faithful interpretation and proclamation.
16. The Greek kenophonias ('empty sounds, empty talk') is a compound of kenos ('empty') and phone ('sound, voice'). The verb periastaso ('stand away from, avoid') conveys deliberate distance. False teaching is not merely incorrect — it produces progressive moral decay (epi pleion, 'more and more').
17. The medical metaphor is graphic: gangraina ('gangrene') describes dead tissue that spreads to healthy flesh. The Greek nomen hexei ('will have pasture, will spread') uses a grazing image — the disease feeds and spreads. Hymenaeus also appears in 1 Timothy 1:20 as someone Paul 'handed over to Satan'; Philetus is mentioned only here.
18. The Greek estochesan ('missed the mark, swerved') is an archery metaphor. The heresy — that the resurrection has already occurred (teen anastasin ede gegonenai) — likely represents an over-realized eschatology that spiritualized bodily resurrection. This directly undermines the hope Paul grounded in verse 11. The verb anatrepousin ('overthrow, upset') means to flip something upside down.
19. The two inscriptions (sphragida, 'seal, inscription') combine Numbers 16:5 (God knows his own — from the Korah rebellion) and a paraphrase of Numbers 16:26 or Isaiah 52:11. The architectural metaphor of a foundation with an inscription evokes ancient building dedications. Despite defections, God's foundation remains unshaken (hesteken, perfect tense — 'stands and continues standing').
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 16:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 52:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The 'great house' (megale oikia) represents the church, containing a mix of vessels. The categories are material (gold/silver vs. wood/clay) and functional (honor vs. dishonor). The metaphor echoes Romans 9:21 but shifts agency — in the next verse, one can change one's category through self-purification.
21. The Greek ekkathare ('cleanses thoroughly') implies decisive separation from the false teachers and their influence. The progression — cleansed, set apart (hegiastmenon), useful (euchreston), ready (hetoimastmenon) — moves from purification to active service. The 'master' (despotes) refers to Christ as lord of the household.
22. The contrast between 'flee' (pheuge) and 'pursue' (dioke) creates a two-directional imperative: run away from and run toward. 'Youthful passions' (neotericas epithymias) may refer to Timothy's relative youth but more broadly to impulsive desires of any kind — impatience, combativeness, pride. The four virtues (righteousness, faith, love, peace) are pursued in community, not isolation.
23. The Greek apaideutos ('uneducated, ignorant, undisciplined') describes speculations that lack intellectual and moral formation. The verb gennōsin ('breed, give birth to') personifies these controversies as producing offspring — namely fights (machas).
24. The title 'the Lord's servant' (doulon kyriou) echoes the Old Testament 'servant of the LORD' (ebed YHWH) applied to Moses, David, and the prophets. The three qualities — kind (epion), able to teach (didaktikon), patient under mistreatment (anexikakon) — describe the temperament required for corrective ministry.
25. The Greek prauteti ('gentleness, meekness') is the quality Jesus claimed for himself (Matt 11:29). Repentance (metanoian) is here described as something God grants — not merely a human decision but a divine gift. The phrase epignōsin aletheias ('full knowledge of truth') uses the intensified form epignosis, indicating deep, experiential knowledge.
26. The Greek ananepsōsin ('come to their senses, become sober again') implies that the opponents are in a state of spiritual intoxication. The imagery combines hunting (pagidos, 'snare, trap') and military capture (ezōgremenoi, 'taken alive as prisoners'). The final phrase eis to ekeinou thelema ('to do his will') is ambiguous — 'his' could refer to the devil or to God. We take it as the devil's will, from which they may escape to do God's will.

3

Summary: *Paul warns Timothy that the last days will bring moral and spiritual decay, cataloguing vices that masquerade as piety — people who hold to the outward form of godliness while denying its power. He draws a parallel between these deceivers and Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses. Against this backdrop, Paul points to his own life as an example: his teaching, conduct, persecution, and endurance. The chapter culminates in one of the most significant statements in Scripture about the nature of sacred writings: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 16 contains the word theopneustos ('God-breathed'), found nowhere else in the New Testament or in earlier Greek literature — Paul may have coined it. The term does not describe the process of inspiration (how God did it) but the origin and character of Scripture (it comes from God's breath). The vice catalogue in verses 2-5 is structured around the concept of disordered love: love of self, love of money, and love of pleasure replace love of God. The reference to Jannes and Jambres (v. 8) draws on Jewish tradition not found in the Hebrew Bible but preserved in later texts — Paul treats this tradition as reliable.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'last days' (eschatai hemerai, v. 1) has been debated — does Paul refer to a future period or to the present age inaugurated by Christ? The Pastoral Epistles treat the 'last days' as already underway, with conditions worsening. The scope of 'all Scripture' (pasa graphe) in verse 16 originally referred to the Hebrew Scriptures (the only 'Scripture' Timothy knew from childhood), though the church later applied the principle to the New Testament writings as well. We render theopneustos as 'God-breathed' rather than the KJV's 'given by inspiration of God,' which is accurate but less precise about the metaphor.*

Connections: *The vice catalogue parallels Romans 1:29-31 in structure and content. The Jannes and Jambres tradition appears in the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 7:11 and in later Jewish and early Christian texts. Paul's appeal to his own suffering (vv. 10-11) recalls 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. The Scripture passage (vv. 15-17) connects to the deposit language of 1 Timothy 6:20 and 2 Timothy 1:14, and provides the theological basis for the 'word of truth' in 2:15.*

¹But understand this: in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³Apart from natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are upright, ⁴Treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure rather than loving God; ⁵Indeed, having a form of godliness, but denying the authority thereof — from such turn away. ⁶For among them are those who creep into households and captivate vulnerable women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷Ever learning, and never able to arrive to the knowledge of the what is genuine. ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth — people of corrupted minds, disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was the folly of those two. ¹⁰You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance, ¹¹Persecutions, afflictions, which arrived to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. What persecutions I endured — but out of them every one of the Lord delivered me. ¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³However, evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵That from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation by way of faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷Indeed, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished to all good deeds.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek chalepoi ('difficult, hard, dangerous') is used in Matthew 8:28 to describe the Gadarene demoniacs as 'fierce.' The 'last days' (eschatai hemerai) in Pauline theology began with Christ's resurrection and continue until his return — they are not solely future.

2. The catalogue begins with two phil- compounds: philautoi ('lovers of self') and philargyroi ('lovers of money'), establishing disordered love as the root problem. This prepares for the climactic contrast in verse 4: 'lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.' The list echoes Romans 1:29-31, where moral decay follows the rejection of God.
3. The Greek astorgoi ('without natural affection, heartless') denotes the absence of storge — the instinctive love within families. The word diaboloi ('slandering') is the same word used as a title for the devil (ho diabolos, 'the slanderer'). These people take on the character of the adversary himself.
4. The catalogue reaches its climax with the contrast: philedonoi mallon e philotheoi ('lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God'). The structure mirrors the opening — phil-compounds frame the entire list. The Greek tetyphomenoi ('puffed up, blinded by smoke') suggests delusion caused by pride.
5. The Greek morphosin ('outward form, appearance') implies an external shape without internal reality — a religious veneer over moral emptiness. The 'power' (dynamis) of godliness is the transformative energy of the Holy Spirit working through genuine faith. The command apotrepeō ('turn away from, avoid') is present imperative — this is an ongoing stance, not a one-time action.
6. The Greek gynaikaria (diminutive of gynē) has often been translated pejoratively ('silly women'). The diminutive likely indicates vulnerability rather than contempt — these are people in precarious situations who are exploited by predatory teachers. 'Captivate' (aichmalotizontes) is military language: taking prisoners of war. The false teachers conduct household-level infiltration campaigns.
7. The paradox of perpetual learning without ever reaching truth (epignosis aletheias) describes a cycle of religious consumption without transformation. The intensified epignosis ('full, experiential knowledge') underscores what is missing — not information but genuine encounter with truth.
8. Jannes and Jambres are not named in the Hebrew Bible but appear in Jewish tradition as the Egyptian magicians who replicated Moses' signs (Exodus 7:11, 8:7). Paul draws on this extrabiblical tradition without qualification. The term adokimoi ('disqualified, failing the test') is the opposite of dokimos ('approved') in 2:15 — these men fail the very test Timothy is called to pass.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 7:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul offers reassurance: the false teachers' progress has limits. Just as Jannes and Jambres were ultimately exposed and defeated (Exodus 8:18-19, 9:11), so these opponents will be revealed. The Greek anoia ('folly, senselessness') contrasts with the 'knowledge of truth' they claim to possess.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 8:18-19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The Greek parekolouthesas ('followed closely, investigated, accompanied') means Timothy did not merely hear Paul's teaching but observed his entire life. The seven items form a comprehensive portrait: doctrine (didaskalia), behavior (agoge), purpose (prothesis), faith (pistis), patience (makrothymia), love (agape), and endurance (hypomone).
11. Paul cites three cities from his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14) — notably, these are cities in Timothy's home region. Timothy would have known firsthand about these events (Acts 16:1-2). The Lystra reference is especially poignant: Paul was stoned and left for dead there (Acts 14:19). The declaration 'the Lord rescued me from them all' (ek pantōn me errhysato ho kyrios) echoes Psalm 34:19.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 34:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. This is a universal statement without qualification: all (pantes) who pursue godliness in Christ will face persecution. The passive diochthesontai ('will be persecuted') is a divine passive — God permits persecution as part of the faithful life. This verse functions as a theological axiom grounding the entire chapter.
13. The Greek goetes ('impostors, sorcerers, charlatans') originally meant 'wailing ones' — referring to the incantations of sorcerers. The double participle planōntes kai planōmenoi ('deceiving and being deceived') captures the self-referential nature of deception: the deceivers are themselves deceived. This is not merely about bad actors but about a contagion of falsehood.
14. The Greek epistōthes ('have become convinced, have been assured') implies settled conviction, not mere intellectual acceptance. 'From whom' (para tinōn) is plural — Timothy learned from multiple sources: Paul, his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice (1:5). The appeal to personal relationships as a basis for trust in teaching is characteristic of the Pastoral Epistles.
15. The Greek ta hiera grammata ('the sacred writings') refers to the Hebrew Scriptures — the Torah, Prophets, and Writings that Timothy learned from his Jewish mother and grandmother. The word brephos ('infant, baby') indicates that Timothy's scriptural education began in earliest childhood. These writings accomplish their saving purpose 'through faith in Christ Jesus' — the Old Testament is not superseded but fulfilled.
16. The Greek theopneustos ('God-breathed') is a compound of theos ('God') and pneō ('to breathe, blow'). It appears nowhere else in the New Testament and may be Paul's own coinage. The word describes not the process by which Scripture was written but its character and origin — it carries God's breath, his life-giving and authoritative word. The KJV's 'given by inspiration of God' accurately conveys the meaning but obscures the vivid breath metaphor. The four uses of Scripture — teaching (didaskalia), reproof (elegmon), correction (epanorthōsin), and training in righteousness (paideian tēn en dikaiosynē) — cover both doctrine and ethics, both confrontation and formation.

17. The Greek *artios* ('complete, capable, proficient') does not mean sinless perfection but fitness for purpose. The related verb *exertismenos* ('equipped, fully furnished') reinforces the practical aim: Scripture is not given for abstract knowledge but to produce people capable of every good work. 'The person of God' (*ho tou theou anthropos*) is a title with Old Testament roots (applied to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and others) now applied to the Christian minister.

4

Summary: *Paul delivers his most solemn charge to Timothy: preach the word in season and out of season, for a time is coming when people will accumulate teachers to suit their own desires. Paul then shifts to a deeply personal valediction — 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith' — announcing that his departure is at hand and a crown of righteousness awaits him. The chapter closes with personal requests and greetings: Demas has deserted, Luke alone is with him, Paul asks for Mark and for his cloak and scrolls left at Troas. He reports on Alexander the coppersmith's opposition and notes that at his first defense, no one stood with him — but the Lord stood by him and strengthened him.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is widely regarded as Paul's final written words — a spiritual last will and testament. The triple declaration in verse 7 ('I have fought... finished... kept') uses three perfect tenses, each indicating completed action with ongoing results. The metaphors shift from combat (*agōn*) to athletics (*dromos*) to stewardship (*pistin*) in three staccato clauses. The personal details in verses 9-21 provide an unparalleled window into Paul's final circumstances: the pathos of abandonment, the practicality of requesting a cloak for Roman winter, and the enduring importance of his scrolls (likely Scripture).*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'first defense' (*prōtē apologia*, v. 16) is debated — it may refer to a preliminary hearing in Paul's current trial or to his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28). 'The lion's mouth' (v. 17) may be literal (the arena), figurative (Satan or Nero), or an allusion to Psalm 22:21. Alexander the coppersmith (v. 14) may or may not be the Alexander of 1 Timothy 1:20 or Acts 19:33. The 'scrolls, especially the parchments' (v. 13) likely refer to Old Testament Scriptures, though their exact contents are unknown.*

Connections: *The charge to 'preach the word' (v. 2) builds on the Scripture passage in 3:16-17. The 'crown of righteousness' (v. 8) connects to the athletic crown in 2:5 and the crowns in 1 Corinthians 9:25, James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10. Paul's abandonment at his trial (v. 16) echoes Jesus' experience in Gethsemane, and his prayer 'may it not be charged against them' echoes Stephen (Acts 7:60). The lion's mouth alludes to Psalm 22:21 and Daniel 6:22.*

¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴They will turn away their ears from the truth, and will be turned to fables. ⁵As for you, be sober-minded in everything, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. ⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. ⁹Do your best to come to me soon. ¹⁰For Demas, in love with this present age, deserted me and went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. ¹²Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. ¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. ¹⁵Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. ¹⁶At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. ¹⁹Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erast

us remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. ²¹Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers and sisters. ²²The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *diamartyromai* ('I solemnly testify, I charge under oath') is the strongest form of adjuration available. The charge is issued before two witnesses: God and Christ Jesus. The phrase 'the living and the dead' (*zōntas kai nekrous*) encompasses all humanity across all time. 'His appearing' (*tēn epiphaneian*) and 'his kingdom' (*tēn basileian*) serve as the eschatological horizon that gives urgency to the charge.
2. Five imperatives in rapid succession create urgency: preach (*kēryxon*), be ready (*epistēthi*), reprove (*elegxon*), rebuke (*epitimēson*), exhort (*parakaleson*). The phrase 'in season and out of season' (*eukairōs akairōs*) means 'when it is convenient and when it is not' — the preacher does not wait for ideal conditions. The final phrase adds the necessary temperament: patience (*makrothymia*) and substance (*didachē*).
3. The medical metaphor *hygiainousēs didaskalias* ('sound/healthy teaching') recurs throughout the Pastoral Epistles — false teaching is a disease, sound teaching is health. The vivid image of 'itching ears' (*knēthomenoi tēn akoēn*) describes people who crave novelty and flattery rather than truth. The verb *episōreuousin* ('pile up, accumulate') suggests an excess of teachers — not quality but quantity, selected to validate existing desires.
4. The contrast is between truth (*alētheia*) and myths (*mythous*). The Greek *mythoi* in the Pastoral Epistles likely refers to speculative theological narratives — genealogical fantasies, proto-gnostic origin stories, or fanciful reinterpretations of Scripture (cf. 1 Tim 1:4, 4:7; Titus 1:14). The passive *ektrapēsontai* ('will be turned aside') suggests they are led astray rather than making a fully conscious choice.
5. Four more imperatives directed at Timothy: be sober (*nēphe*), suffer (*kakopathēson*), evangelize (*ergon poiēson euangelistou*), fulfill (*plērophorēson*). The term 'evangelist' (*euangelistou*) designates one who proclaims the good news — a role distinct from but overlapping with pastor and teacher (cf. Eph 4:11). 'Fulfill your ministry' (*tēn diakonian sou plērophorēson*) means to carry it to completion, leaving nothing undone.
6. The Greek *spendomai* ('I am being poured out as a libation') is a sacrificial metaphor — Paul's life is being poured out like the wine offering that accompanied temple sacrifices (Num 15:5-7; Phil 2:17). The word *analyseos* ('departure, loosing, breaking camp') is a euphemism for death drawn from military or nautical language — a ship being untied from port or an army breaking camp to march. Paul faces death not with dread but with the composure of a completed mission.
7. Three perfect tenses in succession — each denoting completed action with lasting results. The 'good fight' (*kalon agōna*) may refer to an athletic contest or military campaign. The 'race' (*dromon*) is a footrace — Paul has reached the finish line. 'Kept the faith' (*tēn pistin tetērēka*) carries a double sense: he has maintained personal trust in Christ and has guarded the deposit of apostolic teaching (cf. 1 Tim 6:20). This is perhaps the most quoted passage in the Pastoral Epistles.
8. The *stephanos* ('crown, wreath') is the victor's garland, not a royal diadem (*diadēma*). The genitive 'of righteousness' may mean the crown that consists of righteousness, the crown given for righteousness, or the crown awarded by the righteous judge. Paul immediately universalizes the promise: the crown belongs to 'all who have loved his appearing' (*tois ēgapēkosin tēn epiphaneian autou*) — not just apostles but every believer. The perfect participle *ēgapēkosin* ('have loved and continue to love') indicates an ongoing disposition.
9. The shift from theological grandeur to personal urgency is jarring and deeply human. Paul is alone, facing death, and wants Timothy beside him. The imperative *spoudason* ('be diligent, hurry') conveys genuine urgency.
10. Demas is mentioned positively in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 but here has 'loved this present age' (*agapēsas ton nyn aiōna*) — the same verb used of those who 'loved his appearing' in verse 8, creating a painful contrast. Crescens and Titus apparently left on legitimate missions (no negative language is used), unlike Demas who deserted (*egkatelipen*, 'abandoned').
11. Luke the physician (Col 4:14) — traditionally the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts — is Paul's sole remaining companion. The request for Mark (John Mark) represents a remarkable reconciliation: Paul had refused to take Mark on the second missionary journey because Mark had deserted them earlier (Acts 15:37-39). Now Paul calls him *euchrēstos* ('useful, serviceable') — the same root as the name Onesimus ('useful') in Philemon.
12. Tychicus was Paul's trusted envoy, mentioned in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and Titus 3:12. He may have carried this very letter and was likely sent to relieve Timothy so Timothy could travel to Paul in Rome.
13. The *phailonēn* ('cloak') was a heavy outer garment needed for a Roman winter (cf. v. 21). The request is poignantly practical — Paul is cold. The *biblia* ('books, scrolls') were likely papyrus rolls, and the *membranās* ('parchments') were animal-skin documents — possibly Old Testament Scriptures, legal documents, or Paul's own notes. The distinction between papyrus and parchment suggests different types of documents. This verse provides a rare glimpse into the material conditions of Paul's imprisonment.
14. The identification 'the coppersmith' (*ho chalkeus*) distinguishes this Alexander from others with the same common name. His 'great harm' (*polla kaka*) may have been testimony against Paul at trial. Paul does not curse Alexander but commits judgment to the Lord — echoing Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12. The future *apodōsei* ('will repay') expresses confident trust in divine justice.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 62:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 24:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 15.** The warning to Timothy suggests Alexander may still be active and dangerous. The phrase *tois hēmeterois logois* ('our words') could mean Paul's legal defense or the apostolic message more broadly.
- 16.** The *apologia* ('defense') is a legal term for a formal defense in court. The abandonment by 'all' (*pantes*) parallels Jesus' experience when the disciples fled (Matt 26:56). Paul's prayer — *mē autois logistheīē* ('may it not be reckoned to them') — echoes Stephen's dying prayer (Acts 7:60) and Jesus' words from the cross (Luke 23:34). The optative mood (*logistheīē*) expresses a genuine wish.
- 17.** The contrast is stark: all human companions deserted, but the Lord stood by (*parestē*) — the very verb used for human support in the previous verse. The purpose of divine strengthening was not personal comfort but mission completion: full proclamation (*plērōphorēthē*) to all nations (*panta ta ethnē*). The 'lion's mouth' (*stomatos leontos*) most likely alludes to Psalm 22:21 and may refer to the immediate threat of execution, to Nero, or to Satan (cf. 1 Pet 5:8).
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 22:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** Paul's confidence in rescue (*rhysetai*, future tense) is not necessarily about avoiding physical death — it is about deliverance from spiritual defeat. The ultimate salvation is entrance into 'his heavenly kingdom' (*tēn basileian autou tēn epouranion*). The doxology ('to him be the glory forever and ever, amen') follows the standard form of Jewish and early Christian praise, closing this section of the letter with worship.
- 19.** Prisca (the formal name; Priscilla is the diminutive used in Acts) and Aquila were Paul's co-workers and hosts (Acts 18:2-3, Rom 16:3-4). The 'household of Onesiphorus' (rather than Onesiphorus himself) has led some scholars to conclude that Onesiphorus had died — Paul commended his past service in 1:16-18. However, this is not certain.
- 20.** Erastus may be the city treasurer of Corinth mentioned in Romans 16:23. Trophimus was the Ephesian companion whose presence with Paul in Jerusalem triggered the riot in Acts 21:29. The detail that Paul left Trophimus ill (*asthenounta*) is significant — even Paul, who had healed others, did not always exercise miraculous healing.
- 21.** The urgency 'before winter' (*pro cheimōnos*) is practical — sea travel ceased during winter, and Paul needed his cloak (v. 13). But it also carries the unspoken weight of Paul's limited time. Linus is traditionally identified as the first bishop of Rome after Peter. 'The brothers and sisters' (*hoi adelphoi*) uses the masculine plural inclusively, as is standard in Greek.
- 22.** The closing benediction has two parts: a singular address to Timothy ('your spirit,' *sou*) and a plural blessing on the community ('with you,' *hymōn*). The shift from singular to plural suggests the letter, while personal, was also meant to be read in the congregation. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen' in the closing, which appears in some later manuscripts. This is Paul's final recorded word: grace.