

# General Study Of Letters To Timothy

## – Part 5

**2 Timothy 3:1** [NIV] *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.”*

**The “last days” began with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will continue until His Second Coming.**

The urgency in Paul’s message was influenced by the fact that many believers thought that the return of Jesus Christ would be within their lifetime.

**Christianity was cradled in Judaism and very naturally it was thought largely in Jewish terms and pictures.**

Jewish thought had one basic conception: The Jew divided all time into “*this present age*” and “*the age to come*.” The present age was evil and the age to come would be the golden age of the Eternal God.

In between these two ages was “*the day of the Lord*,” on that day God would definitely and personally intervene and would shatter the world in order to remake it. That “*day of the Lord*” was to be preceded by a time of terror, a time when evil would gather itself together for its last and final assault on humanity, when moral and physical foundations would be shaken.

**Paul says these days would be terrible times. The Greek word used is “*chalēpōs*” meaning dangerous and perilous.**

**2 Timothy 3:2-4** [NIV] *“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,”*

Paul’s descriptive list of behaviour in the “*last days*” describes society today, even sadly the behaviour of some who call themselves Christian.

**We need to check our personal attitude against Paul’s list.**

Do not give into society’s pressures. Do not settle for comfort without commitment to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Stand up against evil by living a life that reflects that of Jesus Christ, an attitude of one who serves other human beings in an attitude of love and compassion.**

**2 Timothy 3:5** [NIV] *“having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”*

“*A form of godliness*” this can include being part of a Christian fellowship, knowing Christian doctrines, using Christian clichés and following a community’s Christian traditions.

**Such practices can make a person look good, but in the inner attitudes of belief, love and worshipping the true Eternal God are lacking, such outer appearances are meaningless.**

Paul warns us **not** to be deceived by people who only appear to be Christians. It may be difficult to distinguish them from true Christians at first, but their daily behaviour will give them away, for the characteristics described in **verses 2-4** are unmistakable.

**2 Timothy 3:6-7** [NIV] *“They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.”*

**Because of their cultural background, women in the Ephesian Church had never received any formal religious training. They now enjoyed their new freedom to study Christian truths but their eagerness to learn made them a target for false teachers.**

Paul told Timothy to watch out for men who would take advantage of these women.

**All new believers need to grow in their knowledge of the truth, because ignorance can make them vulnerable to deception.**

Such people as described by Paul, women but also men, were willing to learn from anyone, yet never coming to know the truth of the gospel message that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father to all humanity.

**2 Timothy 3:8-9** [NIV] *“Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth, men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.”*

**Jannes and Jambres were two magicians who counterfeited Moses’ miracles before Pharaoh, [Exodus 7:11-12]. Paul explained that just as Moses exposed and defeated them, [Exodus 8:18-19] God would also overthrow the false teachers who were plaguing the Ephesian Church.**

Every sin has consequences and no-one will get away with sin forever.

**Live each day as if your actions will one day be known to everyone.**

Now is the time to change anything you would not want to be revealed later.

**2 Timothy 3:10-13** [NIV] *“You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings, what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”*

In Lystra, Timothy’s home town, Paul had been stoned and left for dead, [Acts 14:19] and this was not the only incident among many, [2 Corinthians 11:23-33].

**Paul mentions his personal suffering for the sake of preaching the gospel message to contrast his experience with that of pleasure-seeking false teachers.**

Paul contrasts the conduct of Timothy, his loyal disciple, with the conduct of the heretics who were trying to wreck the Church.

**2 Timothy 3:14-17** [NIV] *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

Paul ends this part of his letter with an appeal to remain loyal to all the teaching Timothy had received from a young age. On his mother’s side Timothy was a Jew although his father had been a Greek, [Acts 16:1]. **We must remember that the scripture that Paul is writing was the Old Testament for the New Testament had not yet come into being. Always remember that both Old and New Testaments were inspired by the Holy Spirit, “God-breathed.”**

All scripture helps us to understand how we receive salvation from eternal death.

**The scriptures are of use in teaching –**

The record of the life and the teaching of Jesus Christ that is recorded in the New Testament and prophesied in the Old Testament is essential for our education as a Christian.

**The scriptures are valuable for reproof –**

Are designed to point a person to the error of their way of life and direct them on a new path in life that is in harmony with the very character of the Eternal Creator God.

**The scriptures are of use for correction –**

The real meaning of this is that all theories, all theologies, all ethical teaching, are to be tested against the teaching recorded in God's Word, the Christian Bible.

**If anything contradicts the teaching of God's Word it is to be rejected.**

**The study of the scriptures –**

**Is how we are trained in righteousness, to be in harmony with the Eternal Righteous Creator God. Only then can a person be used by God in the good work of preaching the good news that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father, [1 Peter 3:15-16].**

**The study of the scriptures must never be selfish but its end goal must be to serve all who as yet do not know the true Eternal God.**

**2 Timothy 4:1-5** [New King James] *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.”*

**“The living and the dead” the time in human history when this will happen is “His appearing”** referring to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this time as *“King of kings and Lord of lords,”* [Revelation 19:16] and the time when all humans both those alive at that time but also all who have died, [Revelation 20:4-6, 11-13].

**Paul reminds Timothy that the quality of the work that God had given him to do will also be judged by Jesus Christ at that time.**

**All who are true Christians must act on these words of Paul for we will also be judged as to how well we have represented our Saviour in the eyes of all who are “spiritually dead” in our generation.**

A Christian's work must be good enough, not to satisfy other humans, but to satisfy our Lord Jesus Christ. The one thing that any Christian should covet is the *“well done”* of Jesus Christ, [Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 25:14-30].

**There are few New Testament passages where the duties of a Christian are more clearly set out than here.**

### **Urgent –**

**The work of witness we do for our Lord Jesus Christ is not something we can leave until a later date,** the background to all that Paul is telling Timothy is for now.

Any person with a note of urgency in their voice demands, and will receive a hearing from other people.

### **Persistent –**

A Christian's witness is not just one day a week but every day of their life.

A Christian must take or make every opportunity to speak for their Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Convince –**

Any Christian, being aware of their own sins, must seek to convince others that they should examine their own lives, using God's Word, the Christian Bible, to show them what is sinful in their lives, all that need to be changed to receive the gift of salvation from God, [**Philippians 2:12**] by asking God for the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

### **Rebuke –**

It is **not** our place to set ourselves up as the moral judge of anyone, but it is our duty to speak that warning word when it needs to be spoken.

### **Exhort –**

No rebuke should be given in a way that drives a person to despair and takes the hope out of them. They must also be encouraged. Encouragement is as much a Christian duty as rebuke.

### **Long-suffering –**

The Greek word used is "*makrōthumia*" meaning unwearing patience, forbearance. It describes the spirit that never grows irritated, never grows annoyed, weary or loses its faith in the ability of human nature to change, a spirit that leaves no act of service unfulfilled.

**All this because a true Christian believes in the changing power of the Holy Spirit, [John 16:8] the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [Romans 8:9].**

**2 Timothy 4:6-8** [New King James] *"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."*

For Paul the end of the physical life was near and he knew it.

Paul could confidently say he had been faithful to the call of Jesus Christ and the work committed to him.

The Greek word translated "*fight*" is "*agōn*" is the word for an athlete in a contest, when he has done his best and comes off the field conscious that he has put the last ounce of energy into the contest, it has been a fair contest, win or lose, there is a deep satisfaction in the heart.

**Paul has come to the end of his contest and is quite certain that he has put up a good show.**

***“I have finished the race”*** – that is precisely the difficulty in life. It is easy to begin, it is hard to finish, for the thing necessary for life is staying power and that is what so many people lack. It is easy to wreck a noble life by some closing folly, it is easy to spoil a fine record.

In Paul we see a deep satisfaction of reaching the final goal in his life, the end of a marathon, the world’s most famous race is the marathon. **The marathon race is linked to the Battle of Marathon, one of the decisive battles of human history.**

In this battle the Greeks met the Persians, and if the Persians had won, the glory of Greek culture would not have flowered upon the earth.

It was against fearful odds the Greeks won the victory, and **after the battle, a Greek soldier ran all the way day and night to Athens with the news, and even as he gave the message he fell dead.**

**That soldier had completed his course and done his work, and there was no finer way to die.**

***“I have kept the faith”*** – this phrase has the background of the Olympic Games, when all the competitors took a solemn oath that they had not done less than ten months’ training and they pledged themselves to keep the rules in their contest.

It would be a great thing to die knowing that we had never in our lives transgressed the rules of honour and honesty in our race of life.

Paul also used this phrase that as a bond slave of Jesus Christ his Master he had never let his Master down through thick and thin, in freedom and in imprisonment in all his perils by land and sea, and now in the face of death he had never lost perfect confidence and trust in Jesus Christ.

**Paul was at this time turning from the judgement of human rulers, knowing very soon he would stand before Roman judgement and that trial could only have one end, physical death.**

**Paul was now focusing on a higher judgement court, that of Jesus Christ, [2 Corinthians 5:10-12].**

**Any person whose life is dedicated to Jesus Christ is indifferent to the verdict of any human court. They care not if they condemn what they do for Jesus Christ as long as in the end they hear their Master’s words, *“well done!”***

Paul then expands what he is saying to all true Christians who are awaiting the Second Coming of their Lord, Jesus Christ; this time as King of kings.

**2 Timothy 4:9-15** [New King James] *“Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica, Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.”*

In this part of his letter Paul draws up a roll of those who had worked with him. Some of them are only names to us, others as we read Acts and the Epistles, we get little revealing glimpses. Others, if we are allowed to use our imagination, we can reconstruct their lives with Paul.

Let us look at one of the men in this list, to learn from him.

**Demas** – there was three mentions of Demas in Paul’s letters:

In **Colossians 4:14** Demas is mentioned with no other comment.

In **Philemon 24** Demas is listed among Paul's "*fellow labourers.*"

In **2 Timothy 4:10** Demas had forsaken Paul, being attracted once again to this present society. Why?

**It may be that Demas began to follow Jesus Christ, become a Christian, without first counting the cost.**

**Luke 14:26-33** [New King James] "*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it, lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*"

These words of Jesus Christ need to be well considered, meditated on, before you commit your whole life to Jesus Christ and make the outward commitment of baptism, [**Romans 6:1-6**].

**To become a true Christian is not something that you do in a moment of emotion, without having thought out and faced the cost of being a true Christian.**

**Once a person accepts Jesus Christ, they have accepted an entirely new set of standards that will influence their whole life.**

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.*"

**This is what must happen to us if we are to become a true Christian. The key to understanding this verse is the Greek word translated "bodies" which is "soma" meaning whole life, our physical body, our mind and our human spirit, [Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11].**

The sacrifice mentioned is that of the sin sacrifice when the whole of the offering is burnt up on the altar, nothing is returned to the person making the sacrifice, nor is any eaten by the priests who make the sacrifice as the represents of the God to whom the sacrifice is made, [**Leviticus 6:30**].

**It may be that there came to Demas the inevitable weariness of years that can cause us to lower our standards because of the pain of continual persecution and a body that has become less resilient as the years pass.**

This can only be kept at bay and defeated by being constantly in the thrill of the presence of Jesus Christ, by the active presence of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, [**Romans 8:9**] as we follow His lead and produce the "*fruits*" of that relationship, the very character of the Eternal Triune God, [**Galatians 5:22-25**].

Without this intimate relationship we are denied the joy of producing these "*fruits*" in our life, [**John 15:1-8**].

We must think of Demas, **not** to condemn but to sympathise, for there are so many like him in this world, even some who claim to be Christians yet are **not** allowing the Holy Spirit to dramatically change their lives.

**It is possible that this is not the end of the record of the life of Demas.**

Demas is exactly the same name as Demetrius, a shortened version, and we may suggest, even if not a historical fact but the mercy and life of a God who wishes all people to repent, [**2 Peter 3:9**].

**3 John 12** [New King James] *“Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.”*

**Could this be Demas the deserter who became, by the mercy of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, Demetrius, a man that the apostle John called a person of “good testimony from all who knew him and from the truth itself.”**

**2 Timothy 4:16-18** [New King James] *“At my first defence no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”*

**When Paul was brought to the preliminary examination, not one of his friends stood by him, for it was too dangerous to proclaim yourself as the friend of a man on trial for his life.**

One of the curious things about this passage is the number of reminiscences of **Psalm 22**. *“Why have you forsaken me?” – “I was delivered from the mouth of the lion” – “that the Gentiles might hear” – “preserve me for His Heavenly Kingdom.”*

**It seems that the words of Psalm 22 was running in Paul’s mind. The wonderful thing is that the same Psalm was in the mind of Jesus Christ as He hung upon the cross facing a painful death.**

**This Psalm begins with “my God, why have you forsaken me?” but ends in triumph and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**

**2 Timothy 4:19-22** [New King James] *“Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”*

Finally there are greetings sent and given.

There is a greeting to Priscilla and Aquila, the husband and wife in whose house was a Church meeting place, who had at some time risked their lives for Paul’s sake, [**Acts 18:2; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19**].

There is also a greeting to the gallant Onesiphorus, who had sought Paul out when he was in prison, [**2 Timothy 1:16**] and who, it may be, had paid for his loyalty with his life, for the greeting was to his family.

There is a greeting to Erastus, whom once Paul sent as his emissary to Macedonia, [**Acts 19:22**] and who was afterwards within the Church at Rome, [**Romans 16:23**].

There is a greeting to Trophimus who Paul had been accused of bringing into the temple precincts in Jerusalem, barred to Gentiles. This was the incident for which Paul’s last imprisonment began, [**Acts 20:4; Acts 21:29**].

Finally, there are greetings from Linus, Pudens and Claudia. Linus was identified by later historical writers as the first Bishop of Rome after the apostles.

Paul comes to the end of his letter by commending his friends to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of His Lord and theirs and as always the last word is grace.

**Timothy was Paul’s living legacy, a product of Paul’s faithful teaching, discipleship and example.**

We have to ask what legacy will we leave behind?

**For every true Christian has the responsibility to do all they can in a personal legacy to keep the gospel message alive for future generations.**