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THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY :

An Expanded Paraphrase

VII. SIGNS OF THE END (Ch. 3: 1-9)

Here is something that you should be aware of: in the last days times of danger will set in. People will be selfish, money-grubbers, boastful, haughty, slanderers; they will be disobedient to their parents, void of all gratitude, piety and natural affection; they will be covenant-breakers, false accusers, unrestrained in passion, bereft of all pity and love of what is good. Treacherous, headstrong, inflated with a sense of their own importance, they will love pleasure rather than God. O yes, they will maintain an outward form of religion, though they have renounced its inward power. Avoid people like that. They are the kind of people who infiltrate into houses and captivate unstable young women overwhelmed by their sins and led hither and thither by all sorts of desires, always learning but never able to attain the knowledge of the truth.

As Jannes and Jambres in their day opposed Moses, so these people still oppose the truth; they are men of corrupt minds, completely discredited so far as the faith is concerned. But they will not make much more progress, for their folly will become patent to all, just as the folly of Jannes and Jambres was exposed.

VIII. PAUL'S LAST CHARGE TO TIMOTHY (Chs. 3: 10-4: 5).

As for you, Timothy, you have been a close follower of my teaching, conduct and aim in life; you have shared with me loyalty, patience, love and endurance, in my persecutions and afflictions such as came my way at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. You know what persecutions I had to endure, but the Lord delivered me from them all. Yes, and all those who desire to lead godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But wicked men and charlatans will go from bad to worse, straying from the right path and drawing others after them.

But as for you, persevere with the things which you have learned, the things which have been committed to you to hand on to others. You know who it was that taught you these things. You know that from your earliest days you have been familiar with the sacred writings—the writings which had the power to impart that wisdom which brought you to salvation through faith in Christ

Jesus. Every part of those writings is divinely inspired and useful for teaching the truth and refuting error, for correcting the line of a man's life and instructing him in righteousness. By them the man of God may be completely fitted out, equipped for every good work.

Now here is the charge which I lay upon you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge both the living and the dead ; I lay the charge upon you by His appearing and His kingdom. Proclaim the message ; persevere with it whether the times are propitious or not. Refute error ; rebuke evil ; encourage good. Show limitless patience as you teach. There will come a time when they will not put up with wholesome doctrine. Their ears will so itch that they will multiply teachers for themselves in accordance with their own desires ; they will avert their ears from the truth and turn aside to fables. But you must maintain sound judgment throughout ; endure hardship, fulfil the duty of a preacher of the gospel ; bring your ministry to completion.

IX. PERSONAL NOTES: PAUL'S IMMINENT MARTYRDOM (Ch. 4: 6-18)

For my part, my life is being poured out as a libation ; the time is at hand when I must strike my tent. I have waged the noble warfare, I have finished my race ; I have guarded the faith. For the rest, there awaits me the well-earned crown which the Lord, my righteous Judge, will award me on that coming day. Nor will He award it to me alone ; all who have set their love on His appearing will receive it too.

Be sure that you come to me quickly. Demas has deserted me out of love for the present order of things, and has taken himself off to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, and Luke alone is left with me. Take Mark and bring him with you. I find him useful in the ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

I left a cloak with Carpus at Troas ; bring it when you come, please, and the scrolls too, especially the parchments.

Alexander the bronze-worker did me great harm ; the Lord will requite him in accordance with his deeds. You must beware of him yourself ; he was a mighty opponent of our preaching. When I made my first defence in court no one came to my aid ; they all deserted me. (May it not be held against them!) But the Lord came to my aid and gave me strength, so that the message might be proclaimed by me in all its fulness for all the Gentiles to hear. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. Yes, and the Lord will rescue me from every wicked work and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

X. FINAL GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION (Ch. 4: 19-22)

Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, and the family of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth. I left Trophimus sick at Miletus. Be sure and come before winter. Eubulus sends his greetings ; so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all our brothers and sisters here.

May the Lord be with your own spirit, Timothy, and may His grace be with you all.