

2 Peter Introduction

The author of 2 Peter is the Apostle Peter (see Introduction to 1 Peter). In 1:1, he makes that claim; in 3:1, he refers to his first letter; in 1:14, he refers to the Lord's prediction of his death ([John 21:18,19](#)); and in 1:16–18, he claims to have been at the Transfiguration ([Matt. 17:1–4](#)). However, critics have generated more controversy over 2 Peter's authorship and rightful place in the canon of Scripture than over any other NT book.

- The church fathers were slow in giving it their acceptance.
- No church father refers to 2 Peter by name until Origen near the beginning of the third century.
- The ancient church historian, Eusebius, only included 2 Peter in his list of disputed books, along with James, Jude, 2 John, and 3 John.
- Even the leading Reformers only hesitatingly accepted it.

The question about differences in Greek style between the two letters has been satisfactorily answered. Peter wrote that he used an amanuensis, Silvanus, in 1 Peter (cf. [1 Pet. 5:12](#)). In 2 Peter, Peter either used a different amanuensis or wrote the letter by himself. The differences in vocabulary between the two letters can be explained by the differences in themes. First Peter was written to help suffering Christians. Second Peter was written to expose false teachers. On the other hand, there are remarkable similarities in the vocabulary of the two books. The salutation, "grace to you and peace be multiplied," is essentially the same in each book. The author uses such words as "precious," "virtue," "putting off," and "eyewitness," to name just a few examples, in both letters. Certain rather unusual words found in 2 Peter are also found in Peter's speeches in the Acts of the Apostles. These include "obtained" (1:2; [Acts 1:17](#)); "godliness" (1:3,6,7; 3:11; [Acts 3:12](#)); and "wages of iniquity" (2:13,15; [Acts 1:18](#)). Both letters also refer to the same OT event (2:5; [1 Pet. 3:18–20](#)).

The differences in themes also explains certain emphases, such as why one letter teaches that the second coming is near, and one deals with its delay.

- First Peter, ministering especially to suffering Christians, focuses on the imminency of Christ as a means of encouraging the Christians.
- Second Peter, dealing with scoffers, emphasizes the reasons why that imminent return of Christ has not yet occurred.

Moreover, it is seemingly irrational that a false teacher would spuriously write a letter against false teachers. No unusual, new, or false doctrines appear in 2 Peter. So, if 2 Peter were a forgery, it would be a forgery written by a fool for no reason at all. This is too much to believe. The conclusion to the question of authorship is that, when the writer introduced the letter and referred to himself as Peter, he was writing the truth.

Nero died in a.d. 68, and tradition says Peter died in Nero's persecution. The epistle may have been written just before his death (1:14; ca. a.d. 67–68).

Introduction

At the end of the parable of the soils where there are four different ways to receive the Word of God, but only one way that bears fruit and leads to life, Jesus says (in [Luke 8:18](#)), "Take heed how you hear; for whoever has, to him shall *more* be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him." So let it simply be a word of exhortation to all of us to take heed how we hear this afternoon. And as you hear my message to [the pastor], think over what it will mean to help in this charge and to respond the way Jesus wants.

The message is mainly to [the pastor].

First let's read the text, [2 Timothy 3:16–4:4 \(NASB\)](#). Keep in mind that in the original letters the chapter and verse divisions were not there. They were added later to help us tell people where we are reading.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 4:1 I 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: 2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

Pauls message to us is very simple and very precarious. It is [2 Timothy 4:2](#), "Preach the Word."

Five Things That Intensify the Command

Notice the five things in verse 1 that intensify this command:

1. "I solemnly charge you";
2. "in the presence of God";
3. "and of Christ Jesus" (both the Father and the Son have a great concern in this matter);
4. "who is to judge the living and the dead" (the stakes are raised to life and death, and beyond life and death to final judgment—this is why what we are doing here is more important than the installation of a mayor or governor. [A pastor] is called on to deal in more than life and death—the eternal judgment of Christ and what becomes of this congregation not just in your earthly state, but much more in the eternal state);
5. and by his appearing and his kingdom—that is, "I solemnly charge you . . . by the appearing and the kingdom of Christ." That is a remarkable reinforcement of the charge. It must mean that the ministry of preaching has a lot to do with what happens at the appearing of Christ in glory. At that appearing you, [pastor], will be called to account. Were you faithful to this charge? And at that time the congregation will be judged: how

did you respond? Were you like the people in verses 3–4? Some "will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths." That's what the appearing of Christ and his kingdom will reveal.

So I say the command is precarious. Paul realizes that there are many distractions and many obstacles and many temptations to make this seem less important than it is. So he leads into his command with the five introductory intensifiers. And then says, "PREACH THE WORD." So that is my message to you. "Preach the Word."

What Is the Word?

We can see two clues in the immediate context.

The God-Inspired Scripture

First, in [2 Timothy 3:16](#), "*All Scripture* is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." This is immediately followed by the command, "I charge you to preach the Word." So it is fitting to say that the Word to be preached is first the Scriptures that Timothy grew up on, the Old Testament. When you preach, preach the inspired Scriptures. The "Word" of 4:2 is the "God-inspired Scripture" of 3:16.

The Standard of Sound Doctrine

The second clue that we can see about "the Word" in these verses is in [2 Timothy 4:3](#) which gives the reason for preaching the Word: Preach the Word, "FOR the time will come when they will not endure *sound doctrine*." So the Word to be preached is "sound doctrine."

Now what does this "sound doctrine" refer to? [2 Timothy 1:13](#) gives us the answer: "Retain *the standard of sound words* which you have heard from me." Sound doctrine in [2 Timothy 4:3](#) refers to a "standard of sound words" transmitted to Timothy by the apostle Paul. "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard *from me*."

Why Does Paul Say to Preach This Word?

Now we ask, Why does Paul say to PREACH this Word? Not just teach it. Not just read it. Not just share it. Not just memorize it. But preach it. What does that mean? And why is this so important that there should be five intensifying phrases leading up to this command?

Preaching Is Not Just Explaining or Teaching

Preaching (*kerussōn*) is different from teaching. In [2 Timothy 1:10–11](#), Paul says, "[Christ] abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 for which I was

appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher." That is, I was appointed for three tasks: heralding or announcing the Truth as a preacher; composing, preserving, and transmitting the authoritative pattern of Truth as an apostle; and explaining and applying the Truth as a teacher.

So preaching is not just explaining or teaching. Preaching is heralding. Preaching is what a town crier does when there is a message from the king.

Two Reasons Why This Kind of Speaking Is So Crucial

There are two reasons why this kind of speaking in the church is so crucial. One is that the subject matter is infinitely important. There is no other organization on earth that deals in matters of eternal life and eternal death—matters about God and his Son and his Spirit, matters about salvation and judgment, matters about the life that pleases God or displeases him.

The other reason why preaching is so crucial is that our hearts yearn for the truth to come to us in ways that highlight the worth of the truth. Our hearts long for true preaching.

Preaching Must Be Expository Exultation

God exists to be worshiped—to be admired and treasured and desired and praised. Therefore, the Word of God is written primarily to produce worship. The Truth of God begs to be handled with exultation. And our hearts yearn for this and need it. Something in us starts to die when precious and infinitely valuable realities are handled without feelings and words of wonder and exultation. That is, a church starts to die, without preaching.

heart. Or, no head. You're dead. And so is preaching. And not too long after, the church.

Preach the Word

So the command of the Lord is, Preach the Word. Keep your *head* on (exposition) and keep your *heart* alive (exultation). Handle the precious living Word of God accurately. And come to this pulpit week after week and do *expository exultation*.

[Martin Luther](#) was one of the great preachers of all time. He explained the need for preaching like this:

Because heresies threatened the living apostolic message, it had to be recorded in a book to protect it from falsification. Preaching reverses this process of conservation again, allowing the Scriptures of the past to become the tidings of the present . . . The Gospel has been committed to lifeless paper; fresh words can transform it into glad tidings again.