

PREACH THE WORD: THE MEANING OF LOGOS IN 2 TIMOTHY 4:2

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a solution to the following question: “What is the understanding that Timothy and the original audience have about the meaning of *λόγος* in the exhortation *Preach the Word?*”. The literature on this topic has offered several options: 1. *Gospel*; 2. *Scripture*; 3. More generic meanings such as *sound doctrine, true faith, word of truth, and Paul’s teachings*. This paper is divided into three parts. The first one aims to demonstrate that the recent debate points out, in synthesis, to either Gospel or Scripture as the meaning intended by Paul. The second one performs a brief analysis of *λόγος* throughout the New Testament. Finally, the third one assesses the text and the context of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 in order to verify the meaning of *λόγος* in such a passage. The data analyzed in this paper allow us to conclude that an inseparable unity between the Gospel and Scripture is the best option for the meaning of *λόγος* in 2 Timothy 4:2. Indeed, Paul uses this term to refer to the *Christ-event* just as it is described in the Old and New Testament, i.e., life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, for Paul, the relationship between Scripture and the Christ-event – or vice versa – forms an inseparable unity, so that affirming that by the word *λόγος* he also meant *Scripture* is not a mistake.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a solution to the following question: “What is the understanding that Timothy and the original audience have about the meaning of λόγος in the exhortation *Preach the Word?*”. The literature on this topic has offered several options: 1. *Gospel*; 2. *Scripture*; 3. More generic meanings such as *sound doctrine, true faith, word of truth, and Paul’s teachings*. This paper is divided into three parts. The first one aims to demonstrate that the recent debate points out, in synthesis, to either Gospel or Scripture as the meaning intended by Paul. The second one performs a brief analysis of λόγος throughout the New Testament. Finally, the third one assesses the text and the context of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 in order to verify the meaning of λόγος in such a passage. The data analyzed in this paper allow us to conclude that an inseparable unity between the Gospel and Scripture is the best option for the meaning of λόγος in 2 Timothy 4:2. Indeed, Paul uses this term to refer to the *Christ-event* just as it is described in the Old and New Testament, i.e., life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, for Paul, the relationship between Scripture and the Christ-event – or vice versa – forms an inseparable unity, so that affirming that by the word λόγος he also meant *Scripture* is not a mistake.

THE RECENT DEBATE

Λόγος as gospel

Several scholars have associated the term λόγος to the gospel. In his insightful commentary to the Pastoral Epistles, Philip H. Towner observes that 2 Timothy 4:2 is the only case in the New Testament where the word λόγος serves as the object of the verb *to preach* (κηρύσσειν), which is, according to him, “a standard term to describe the communication of the gospel about Christ”. This scholar argues that connecting λόγος to “the Pauline gospel is easily enough determined from other uses of the term in this letter and elsewhere (2:9, ‘the word of God’; 2:15, ‘the word of truth’)”.²

Timothy Johnson claims that the exhortation *preach the word* builds “on what Paul has said earlier in the letter concerning ‘the word’ λόγος”.³ This is precisely what Gordon Fee proposes in his interpretation of the passage. When assessing the meaning of the phrase *preach the word*, he invites the reader to see his commentary on 1 Tim. 4:5, where

² Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 600.

³ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, The Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 428.

one can find his analysis of the term *word of God*. He claims that in 2 Tim. 4:2 Paul urges Timothy to preach “the message of the gospel, which here has the same effect as the charge to ‘guard the deposit’ in 1 Timothy 6:20 and 2 Timothy 1:14. This is what the whole appeal from 1:6 to 3:17 is all about”.⁴ Although he is incisive in his explanation to 2 Tim. 4:2, in 1 Tim. 4:5 he is even more emphatic:

There has been considerable debate as to what the word of God means in verse 5. Many see it as referring to the words of the OT often used in the thanksgiving prayer (e.g., Ps 24:1, used by Paul in his argument in 1 Cor. 10:25-26). However, Paul does not use the term word of God to refer to the OT as an objective, inscripturated reality. In the PE, the word of God invariably refers to the gospel message (2 Tim 2:19; Titus 1:3; 2:5; cf. 1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2).⁵

A similar thought can be found on the Commentary by Robert W. Wall and Richard B. Steele,

The principal command given Timothy to “proclaim the word (λόγος)” (4:2a) reiterates Paul’s previous instruction (1:13; 2:15; 1 Tim 4:14-16), and the additional four commands – “stand ready... refute... rebuke... encourage” (4:2b) – are ancillary to this main one. The immediate purpose of Timothy’s ministerial duty to “proclaim the word” is to refute falsehood and clarify the gospel.⁶

Although this train of thought above is followed by other scholars,⁷ a remarkable comment is offered by N. T. Wright. He claims that

The earliest Christian oral tradition we can trace, and the earliest sermons we can reconstruct, embody what Paul called ‘the word’, ‘the word of truth’, or simply ‘the gospel’ (for instance, Colossians 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Thus, before there was any ‘New Testament’, there was already a clear understanding in early Christianity that ‘the word of God’, to which the apostles committed themselves when refusing to engage in extra administrative duties (Acts 6:1-4), lay at the heart of the church’s mission and life. It is not difficult to summarize this ‘word’. It was the story of Jesus (particularly his death and resurrection), told as the climax of the story of God and Israel and thus offering itself as both the true story of the world and the foundation and energizing force for the church’s mission.⁸

⁴ Gordon Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus: A Good News Commentary* (New York, NY: Harpers & Row Publishers, 1984), 233.

⁵ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 62-63.

⁶ Robert W. Wall and Richard B. Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), p. 271-280. (Italics supplied).

⁷ See Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 240; John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, and J. J. van Oosterzee, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 1 & 2 Timothy*, trans. E. A. Washburn and E. Harwood (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 112; Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 242-243; H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *2 Timothy*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 69; Adam Clarke, *Second Timothy*, electronic ed., Clarke’s Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1999), 2 Ti 4:2; C. Michael Moss, *1, 2 Timothy & Titus*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994), 2 Ti 4:2.

⁸ N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2005), 35.

The strength of this standpoint is that the idea that Paul meant the gospel's message by the word λόγος in 2 Tim. 4:2 seems to be coherent with what he says about the gospel not only in the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim 1:8, 10; 2:8), but also in the rest of his letters. On the other hand, a fragile point of this interpretation has to do with the fact of not heeding – in a sufficient manner – the importance Paul gives to the term γραφή in the Timothean correspondence (1 Tim 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16). This is what we will briefly see above.

Λόγος as scripture

Lenski argues that *preach the word* is connected “directly with 3:14–17, especially with ‘all Scripture God-inspired’.⁹ This seems to be the same conclusion of Litfin, which become clear by the fact that he uses the phraseology of 2 Tim. 3:16 in order to make a remark about 2 Tim 4:2: “Paul could hardly have emphasized the matter more strongly. Because *the Word is inspired and profitable* for all aspects of the ministry, proclaiming that Word was to be Timothy’s business in season and out of season”.¹⁰ In turn, Thomas C. Oden establishes a relationship between λόγος in 2 Tim. 4:2 and the term Scripture even more directly, as one can see below:

What word? God’s own address to humanity made known through Scripture, promised in Torah and prophecy, and fulfilled in Christ’s coming... There is no hint here that preaching is thought of primarily as self-expression of subjective experience or feeling-disclosure or autobiography or “telling one’s story” so as to neglect Scripture... The canonical word as received by the church—the Old Testament as fulfilled in Christ as attested in the apostolic tradition (later to become the New Testament)—is the substance of preaching in the earliest Christian tradition.¹¹

The strength of this interpretation is that it seems more consistent with the several warnings against false teachings throughout the Pastoral Epistles. In this sense, “preaching the Word/Scripture” is the *answer* to the false teachings.¹²

More generic proposals

Proposals of more subjective and generic meanings for the term λόγος in 2 Tim. 4:2 also have been provided as, for instance, the one suggested by Kenneth S. Wuest, “The

⁹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 852.

¹⁰ A. Duane Litfin, “2 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 757–758. (Italics supplied).

¹¹ Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: J. Knox Press, 1989), 135–136. (Italics supplied).

¹² See L. Timothy Swinson, *What is Scripture: Paul’s Use of Graphe in the Letters to Timothy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), Kindle Locations 1436–5183. In this remarkable work, Swinson makes an interesting incursion about Paul’s usage of γραφή in the Timothean correspondence.

word ‘Word’ here refers to the whole body of revealed truth”.¹³ A quite generic proposal has been given by Knute Larson, “Timothy understood that the Word was the same as Paul’s teachings (2 Tim. 2:2), ‘sound doctrine’ (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:13), the ‘glorious gospel’ (1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:11), the ‘true faith’ (1 Tim. 2:7; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:5), and the ‘Scriptures’ (1 Tim. 4:13)”.¹⁴

A clear weakness of these proposals is that they fail in assessing what Paul meant by each one of such expressions. In fact, many scholars have simply associated Paul’s teachings as well as the terms *sound doctrine*, *the word of God*, and *the word of truth* to the Gospel.¹⁵

THE MEANING OF Λόγος IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES¹⁶

¹³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 2 Ti 4:2.

¹⁴ Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 319.

¹⁵ In fact, many scholars have associated the expressions *Paul’s teachings*, *sound doctrine*, *the word of God*, and *the word of truth* to the Gospel. See Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 201; George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 381 and 412; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 600.

¹⁶ I have not included a discussion regarding the meaning of λόγος in the NT, LXX and extra biblical literature on the body of this paper not to make it longer. A brief survey is provided here. The word λόγος occurs 330 times throughout the New Testament, and with a great variety of meanings. As it is observed by Balz and Schneider, “The breadth of possible meanings for λόγος in the NT extends from everyday usage (e.g., 2 Pet 2:3: “with lying words”; Eph 5:6: “with empty words”) to the deepest christological terminology in the Johannine prologue” (Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 357). According to *The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, the meaning of λόγος can vary between three leading semantic domains, namely: (1) a *communication* whereby the mind finds expression; (2) *computation*; and (3) the independent personified expression of God. As *communication*, λόγος appears in the New Testament containing the following meanings: a) *word*; b) *statement, question, prayer, principal speaker, preaching, prophecy, command, report, story, proverb, proclamation, instruction, teaching, message, speech, commission, gospel*; c) individual declaration or remark, *assertion, declaration*; d) in the plural, *speeches, commandments*. When λόγος is used within the semantic field of *computation*, it can be translated as: a) *account, reckoning*; b) *settlement* (of an account); c) *reflection, respect, regard*; d) *reason, ground, motive*; e) *case*. Finally, as the personified expression of God, λόγος is rendered simply as *Word*. While there is a plurality of options for rendering λόγος into English, it is usually translated by the term *word* in the New Testament, even when the context indicates that its meaning is related to a more specific concept as one of those above. In 2 Tim 4:1-5, Paul does not take λόγος from the domain of accounting, which is absolutely clear by the fact that in such passage he uses λόγος as the direct object of the verb “to preach” (κηρύσσω). In general, Paul’s usage of λόγος in such passage is in consonance with most of its usage in the NT. For details, see William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 599-601. In addition, apparently Paul does not take λόγος in the sense of a title for Christ as John does in his writings (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 John 1:1; Rev 19:13). This significance for λόγος is virtually absent in the commentaries to the Pastoral Epistles. In any case, James Swanson, in his *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997) cogitates the possibility of such meaning by mentioning 2 Timothy 4:2 as an example of New Testament’s usage of λόγος as a title for Christ. Anyway, such possibility will not be assessed in this paper since Swanson just mentions it with no comments nor arguments. In the LXX, the meaning of λόγος is related to the Hebrew word *dāḇār*, which can be rendered into English as *word, report, command, thing, matter, affair*. Indeed, λόγος translates the majority of instances of *dāḇār* in the Septuagint. See Michael Scott Robertson, “Divine Revelation,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014). As for the meaning of λόγος in the Extra-Biblical literature, it is used in the sense of *collection, counting, list or catalogue*, and *narrative* (word or speech), including, obviously, all the derivatives. See Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley,

The word λόγος occurs twenty times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:5, 6, 9, 12; 5:17; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:9, 11, 15, 17; 4:2, 15; Titus 1:3, 9; 2:5, 8; 3:8). Just as elsewhere in the New Testament, λόγος is “a communication whereby the mind finds expression”.¹⁷

Based on patterns as to Paul’s usage of λόγος in the Pastoral Epistles, it is possible to divide all the occurrences into five groups: i. λόγος as a saying (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Titus 3:8); ii. λόγος within the binomial λόγος/διδασκαλία (1 Tim 4:6; 5:17; 6:3; Tit 1:9; 2:7-8); iii. λόγος subordinated to the noun θεοῦ (1 Tim 4:5; 2 Tim 2:9; Tit 2:5); iv. λόγος as a criterion for pattern to be followed (1 Tim 4:12; 2 Tim 1:13); v. other occurrences (2 Tim 2:15, 17; 2 Tim 4:15; Tit 1:3).

Λόγος as a saying

The first occurrence of λόγος belongs, so to speak, to a group of five either introductory or recapitulative proverbial statements, i.e. Θεὸς ὁ λόγος (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Titus 3:8). The context makes it clear that *proverb* or *saying* is an adequate translation for λόγος within this formula, or, to use the words of George W. Knight, within this *quotation-commendation formula*.¹⁸ In turn, Balz and Schneider add that such a formula “refers to the kerygmatic, liturgical, and institutional faith tradition of the Christ-event”.¹⁹ This aspect introduced by these authors takes into account the fact that each one of such passages “deal with some aspect of salvation Paul’s opponents distorted”.²⁰

and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 73. This shows that the variety of meanings found for λόγος in the New Testament only reflect an even greater variety outside the Bible. Also it is remarkable the commentary of Balz and Schneider, “The influence that the term λόγος exercised on philosophical interpretation... beginning with Heraclitus of Ephesus (550–480 B.C.) until Hegel and Nietzsche has *little significance for NT exegesis*. The basic principle is that the meaning of the word is always to be found from the *biblical* context”. See Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–), 357. The etymology of λόγος also does not offer any help to the current discussion. According to Kittel et al, “both in general and in detail the development of λόγος is exactly parallel to that of λέγω”. The basic meaning of the root *leg-* is “to gather”, but it also can mean “to count”, “to enumerate”, and “to narrate”. They argue that “there is a great difference between Hellenistic Logos speculation and the NT λόγος... From the very first the NT λόγος concept is alien to Gk. Thought”. See Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 73, 91. Thus, both the extra-biblical literature data regarding λόγος and its etymology are virtually irrelevant for the purposes of this paper.

¹⁷ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 599.

¹⁸ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 99. For a discussion on whether Θεὸς ὁ λόγος is an introductory or recapitulative formula, see R. Alastair Campbell, “Identifying the Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Epistles,” *JSNT* 54 (1994): 73-86.

¹⁹ Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–), 359.

²⁰ For details, see C. Marvin Pate, *Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013), 267-268.

Λόγος within the binomial λόγος/ διδασκαλία

Paul's usage of λόγος in 1 Tim 4:6; 5:17; 6:3; Tit 1:9; 2:7-8 calls attention specially by its recurrence along with διδασκαλία, as one can see in the chart below:

English Standard Version (ESV)	The Greek New Testament, 5 th Edition (GNT)
"...in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine ..." (1 Tim 4:6)	"... τοῖς λόγοις τῆς ἰστέως καὶ τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας ..." (1 Tim 4:6)
"...in preaching and teaching ..." (1 Tim 5:17)	"...ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ ..." (1 Tim 5:17)
"...with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching ..." (1 Tim 6:3)	"...ὕγιαίνουσιν λόγοις τοῖς τοῦ κυρίου ἡQῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῇ κατ' εὐσέβειαν διδασκαλίᾳ..." (1 Tim 6:3)
"...holding fast to the faithful word according to the teaching , so that he is able to exhort in sound doctrine ..." (Tit 1:9, my translation)	"...τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδασκίαν ἰστοῦ λόγου , ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ ἠαρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ..." (Tit 1:9)
"...in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech ..." (Tit 2:7-8)	"...ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ ἀφθορίαν, σεQνότητα, λόγον ὑγιῆ..." (Tit 2:7-8)

In Tim. 4:6, the term λόγος is qualified by two genitives. "Faith" and "good doctrine" characterize the words to be *placed* (ὑἰοτίθηQi) before the brothers. Besides, it is possible that *these things* (1 Tim. 4:6a) be a reference to the *word of God*, which is mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:5.²² If this is the case, so λόγος in this passage is a reference to the Gospel,²³ which promotes *faith* (Rom. 10:17)²⁴ and *good doctrine*.²⁵

Even though λόγος is used in association with διδασκαλία in these passages, it differs from that in meaning. Indeed, "by λόγος we are to understand a discourse, either prophetic or hortatory, while διδασκαλία refers specially to teaching".²⁶ For Lenski, λόγος deals with

²¹ Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, Fifth Revised Edition. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014), 1 Ti 6:3.

²² George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 193.

²³ A reference to the Gospel is, at the same time, a reference to the Christ-event. See R. H. Mounce, "Gospel," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 426; Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 3 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 68.

²⁴ Though the Greek term translated by "word" in Rom. 10:17 is ῥῆQα and not λόγος, as Louw and Nida observe, "Any difference of meaning between λόγος and ῥῆQα would be only a matter of stylistic usage". See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 399.

²⁵ Dibelius and Conzelmann claim that "good teaching" in 1 Tim. 4:6 is equivalent to the "sound doctrine" in 1 Tim. 1:10. See Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 68.

²⁶ Even though the hypothesis of an objective genitive has been raised – "the words *about* the Lord Jesus" (see John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, and J. J. van Oosterzee, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 1 & 2 Timothy*, trans. E. A. Washburn and E. Harwood (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 63), it is likely that we have here a subjective genitive (the words [which come] from the Lord Jesus). To that conclusion, special attention must be given to the article "τοῖς", which plays the role of a relative pronoun, connected to the genitive phrase "τοῦ κυρίου ἡQῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ".

that which is to be taught (content), while διδασκαλία has to do with the application of such content (teaching).²⁷ Such idea seems to be clear in 1 Tim. 5:18. Immediately after Paul mentioned the binomial λόγος/διδασκαλία at the end of v. 7, he puts together a quotation from the Old Testament along with a Jesus saying, unifying them by the term *Scripture*. It seems that Paul wants to make it clear that the Scripture is the teaching of the Gospel. The inseparability of Scripture and Gospel is stressed by the fact that the sentence in verse 18 is introduced by the causal conjunction “γάρ”, which demonstrates the relationship between the current clause with the previous one.

In Tim. 6:3, it seems that the concept of content and teaching of such content is used as well. Paul puts together “the *sound words* of our Lord Jesus Christ and the *teaching*”. Lea and Griffin claim that by “the sound words [which come] from our Lord Jesus Christ”,²⁸ Paul meant “Jesus as the ultimate source of sound doctrine.”²⁹ In other words, they argue that Paul refers to the gospel message as a whole. However, by the term *teaching* we can infer that the gospel is founded on the Scripture.³⁰

In Titus 1:9, the overseer is exhorted to hold firm to the “word” which was transmitted by the apostles. In Titus 2:7-8, Titus is exhorted to show (ἁρεσχεῖν) integrity, dignity, and sound *word* by means of his teaching (διδασκαλία). The contribution of these two passages to the current discussion is that λόγος cannot be equated to διδασκαλία. Although there is a close relationship between them, they are not strictly the same.

Λόγος subordinated to the noun θεοῦ

There is no full agreement as to the meaning of λόγος in the phrase λόγος θεοῦ. It has been understood as “a statement or message from God.”³¹ It is also seen as “referring to table prayers using Biblical expressions”, but also “as the divine word of creation”.³²

²⁷ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 682.

²⁸ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 1 Ti 6:3.

²⁹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 166.

³⁰ In their *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Balz and Schneider imply that the Christ-event is the content of the gospel. See Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-), 72. In this sense, it can be said that the gospel is the announcement of the Christ-event, and that the Scripture brings the record of such announcement. On this matter, Balz and Schneider state that “The relationship of Scripture and the Christ-event is dealt with in the Gospels particularly in terms of “fulfillment of the Scripture(s)”. See Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 263. Gerhard Kittel *et. al* observe that “The NT quotes the OT as both Scripture and word... To receive the word is not just to receive the OT but to receive the message of Jesus which is the fulfilment of the OT. The usage of Paul is the same (1 Th. 1:6; 1 Cor. 14:36; Gal. 6:6; Col. 4:3-4). Tit. 1:2-3 plainly states the content of the Pauline *logos*”. Thus they conclude, “preaching the Christ event is preaching the word”. See Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 511-512.

³¹ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 192.

³² Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 64.

Lea and Griffin claim that “In the Pastoral Epistles the expression “word [of God]” is generally a reference to the gospel message”.³³

Λόγος as a criterion of pattern to be followed

The meaning of λόγος in 1 Tim. 4:12 has been virtually understood as both public teaching and daily conversation.³⁴ However, the content of such public teaching is not specified. “Doctrine” has also been presented as other alternative of meaning for λόγος in this passage.³⁵ In 2 Tim. 1:13, clearly the context points that the “words” Paul refers to are his own words. Nevertheless, “Paul speaks of himself as the source of the sound words because he understands himself, as an apostle, to be an appointed communicator of God’s message”,³⁶ the cross of Christ.³⁷

Other occurrences

In this section, it is intended to briefly treat three occurrences of λόγος which seem to have no direct relationship with one another. In 2 Tim. 2:15, the word λόγος is subordinated to the word ἀλήθεια, in a combination (word of truth) that, except for one single occurrence in James 1:18, is used only by Paul in the New Testament (2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13; Col 1:5; 2 Tim 2:15). Through Paul’s usage of such phrase in Eph. 1:13, it can be inferred that by “word of truth” Paul meant the gospel.³⁸

In 2 Tim. 2:17, it is quite clear by the context that λόγος is taken as meaning nothing more than *frivolous conversation*. And in 2 Tim. 4:15, λόγος is used in the sense of Paul’s message. Such message must be related to the gospel. As for Titus 1:3, it will be briefly analyzed along with 2 Tim. 4:2 due to its similarity with it.

³³ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 131-132.

³⁴ See John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, and J. J. van Oosterzee, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 1 & 2 Timothy*, trans. E. A. Washburn and E. Harwood (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 53; Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 104; C. Michael Moss, *1, 2 Timothy & Titus*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994), 1 Ti 4:12.

³⁵ Adam Clarke, *First Timothy*, electronic ed., Clarke's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1999), 1 Ti 4:12.

³⁶ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 381.

³⁷ Paul’s statement in this verse is similar to expressions one can find in his other epistles: (1) “according to my gospel” (Rom 2:16, 16:25); (2) “I glorify my ministry” (Rom 11:13); (3) “great is my boasting” (2 Cor 7:4); (4) “And [I] profited in the Jews’ religion above many of my own age in my generation” (Gal 1:14); (5) “for my boast in the day of Christ” (Phil 2:16); (6) “my glory and praise/glory of God and my praise” (Phil 1:11); (7) “I am more” (2 Cor 11:23; Phil 3:4). In all these cases, the cross of Christ is the reason for Paul’s self-boasting.

³⁸ See Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 111; and George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 412.

THE TEXT AND CONTEXT OF 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

The main idea of the paragraph in analysis (2 Tim 4:1-5)³⁹ is given already in verse one, i.e., Paul adjures Timothy with a solemn charge,⁴⁰ whose content is introduced by means of five imperatives: *preach, be ready, reprove, rebuke, and exhort* (v. 2). Next, Paul (1) *describes* the reason why it is crucial to take the charge so seriously: “the time is coming”, (2) *characterizes* the time he mentioned in the previous clause and shows why a charge is necessary: “people will not endure sound doctrine”, (3) *explains* that instead of paying attention to the sound *teaching*, “they (people) will accumulate for themselves *teachers* to suit their own passions” (v. 3). It is clear that the exhortation given to Timothy is presented in the context of false teachings. Such a thought is confirmed by verse 5, where Paul establishes a contrast between the behavior of “people” and that which should be demonstrated by Timothy.

In order to assess 2 Timothy 4:1-5 in this part of the paper, I divided it into four sections. The first one analyzes the charge given to Timothy. The second one deals with the verb κηρύσσω and its content in the Pastoral Epistles. The third one aims to show that 2 Timothy 4:1-5 resumes the theme introduced in 1 Timothy 3:16-17. The fourth one intends to present λόγος in 2 Timothy 4:1-5 as a response to the false teachings.

The charge to timothy

A comparison among 1 Tim 5:21, 6:13, 2 Tim 2:14, and 4:1-2 can show a considerable similarity, as one can easily realize from the chart below:

Passage	Introduction	Verb	Exhortation's Content
1 Tim. 5:21	In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you	I <u>charge</u> you	to keep <u>these</u>
1 Tim 6:13	I charge you in the presence of God... and of Christ Jesus	I <u>charge</u> you	to keep <u>the commandment...</u>
2 Tim 2:14	charge them before God not to quarrel about words	<u>charge</u> them	not to quarrel about words

³⁹ That the verses 1 and 5 are the borders of the paragraph it is supported by the SBL Edition of *The Greek New Testament* (see Michael W. Holmes, *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (Lexham Press; Society of Biblical Literature, 2011-2013), 2 Ti 4:1) as well as by several exegetical commentaries (see Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 327).

⁴⁰ That should not surprise us since, as Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards observe, “Very often in translations of Paul’s writings we’ll find that the first sentence of a paragraph is a key to his subject”. See Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher’s Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 841.

Passage	Introduction	Verb	Exhortation's Content
2 Tim 4:1-2	I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus	I charge you	preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort

It is clear by the context that *these [things]* Paul refers to in 1 Tim 5:21 are found in verses 17-20. The importance of this passage is that *these things* that Paul tells Timothy about are related to two administrative matters of remuneration and discipline of elders, whose concept is deeply rooted in the Old Testament.⁴¹ This means that in charging Timothy about the way to deal with the elders, Paul has the Old Testament in mind. On the other hand, in 1 Tim 6:13 Paul seems to designate the Christian faith as the commandment that Timothy is exhorted to keep.⁴² In 2 Tim 2:14, Paul reminds Timothy to charge his audience not to get involved with quarrels. Timothy should face these issues by “rightly handling the word of truth” (v.19), which seems to be an allusion to the gospel, as we have seen so far. Accordingly, the three passages in parallel to 2 Tim 4:1-2 show that when charging Timothy with so solemn exhortation Paul may have in mind either the Old Testament or the gospel.

The content of κηρύσσω in the pauline epistles⁴³

In Romans 10:8, Paul's preaching is the *word of truth*, and, therefore, the gospel. The gospel as the content of Paul's preaching also appears in Gal 2:2, Col 1:23, 1 Thes 2:9, and 1 Tim 3:16. However, it calls special attention the fact that Paul also presents Jesus Christ as the content of his preaching (1 Cor. 1:23, 24; 2 Cor. 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Phil. 1:18-21 [cf. v. 15]). These data, nevertheless, cannot lead one to hastily conclude that the term λόγος in the phrase κήρυξον τὸν λόγον (preach the word) equates to the Johannine Λόγος (John 1:1-3). In fact, as Lea and Griffin observe, “the historical person Jesus Christ, encompassing both his teaching and complete redemptive word, is the gospel”,⁴⁴ in such a way that sometimes the gospel and the person Jesus Christ are mixed in Paul's description. Paul's usage of the nouns κήρυξ (preacher) and κήρυγμα (preaching) are also consistent with his

⁴¹ See Philip H. Towner, “1-2 Timothy and Titus,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 899.

⁴² See full discussion in George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 267.

⁴³ The second step has to do with the content of the verb κηρύσσω (to preach) in Pauline Epistles, which occurs 19 times (Rom 2:21; 10:8, 14, 15; 1 Cor 1:23; 9:27; 15:11, 12; 2 Cor 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Gal 2:2; 5:11; Phil 1:15; Col 1:23; 1 Thes 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 4:2; and it is implicit in 1 Cor 1:24).

⁴⁴ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 271.

usage of the verb κηρύσσω (to preach), as one can see in the following passages: Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 9:23, 27; 1Tim. 2:5-7; 2 Tim. 1:9-11; 4:17; Tit. 1:2-3. In Titus 1:3, it is also relevant to notice Paul's usage of the verb φανερώω (to manifest, to disclose), which is frequently associated in the New Testament to the incarnation of Christ (e.g., Rom 16:26; Col 1:26; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 1:10; 1 Pet 1:20), but also to his death (e.g., Heb 9:26) and second coming (1 Pet 5:4; 1 Jo 3:2). In other words, it is a reference to the Christ-event as a whole.

Perhaps, two key-texts for one to understand how Paul mixes the preaching of the historical person Jesus Christ and the preaching of the gospel are 1 Cor. 1:23 (“we preach Christ *crucified*”) and 1 Cor. 15:14 (“if Christ *has not been raised*, then our preaching is in vain”). In short, “Christ crucified” and “Christ resurrected” are the theme of Paul's preaching: the gospel cannot be unlinked from Christ. As Henry M. Shires observes, “The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus constitute the major influence on Paul's thought”.⁴⁵

Paul's usage of λόγος in 2 Tim. 4:2 is unique in Pauline Epistles and even in the New Testament. That is the only place where it is attached to the verb κηρύσσω. Timothy is exhorted to face the false teachings by means of five imperatives, that, in short, can be summarized in preaching and teaching. For Paul, preaching and teaching are founded on Scripture (1 Tim. 5:17-18). And, as Timothy Swinson notes, the term *Scripture* (γραφή) in 1 and 2 Timothy is used by Paul “to refer to the integration of the OT writings with apostolic gospel writings”.⁴⁶

Timothy 4:2 as continuation of 1 timothy 3:16-17

William D. Mounce affirms that 2 Tim 4:1-2 is the continuation of 1 Tim 3:16-17.⁴⁷ A brief observation of both passages can show remarkable correspondence. The Scripture's profitability is given by means of a series of four “for phrases”: *for* teaching, *for* reproof, *for* correction, *for* training... (in Greek, ἐπὶ) plus a fifth element formed by a ἵνα phrase which can mean either purpose or result (v. 17). In 2 Tim 4:2, there are precisely five elements presented as the content of the exhortation in 2 Tim 4:1. The chart below can help us look for correspondences between the two passages.

⁴⁵ Henry M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul in the Light of Modern Scholarship* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1996), 30.

⁴⁶ L. Timothy Swinson, *What is Scripture: Paul's Use of Graphe in the Letters to Timothy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), Kindle Location 5934.

⁴⁷ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 571. Other scholars have presented the same idea. See R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 852; A. Duane Litfin, “2 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 757-758. Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: J. Knox Press, 1989), 135-136.

2 Tim 3:16-17	2 Tim 4:2
for teaching (Ἐρὸς διδασκαλίαν)	Preach the word (κήρυξον τὸν λόγον)
for reproof (Ἐρὸς ἐλεγξόν)	Reprove (ἐλεγξον)
for correction (Ἐρὸς ἐῤανόρθωσιν)	Exhort (Ἐαρακάλεσον)
for training in righteousness (Ἐρὸς Ἐαιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ)	Rebuke (ἐῤτιῤησον)
in order that/so that the man of God be mature and equipped for every good work	be ready in season and out of season (ἐῤίστηθι εὐκαίρως ἀκαίρως)

If the correspondence expressed by this chart is possible, so the binomial λόγος/ διδασκαλία occurs once again. Whereas the focus in 2 Tim 4:2 is on λόγος, the focus in 2 Tim 3:16 seems to be on διδασκαλία. Whereas the imperatives in 2 Tim 4:2 are supposed to be performed with “complete patience and *teaching*”, the profitability of the Scripture expressed by the four “*for* phrases” (2 Tim 3:16-17) is not possible without “preaching the word”. One thing does not exist without the other.⁴⁸

A response to the false teachings

In his monograph *Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul*, C. Marvin Pate claims that “there are a number of New Testament texts which indicate the eschatological apostasy began with Israel’s rejection of Jesus”.⁴⁹ In fact, a close reading of Paul’s statements concerning the false teachings will demonstrate that he sees them as a denial of Christ’s atoning sacrifice as the only means of salvation.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The content of 2 Tim 3:17, “in order that/so that the man of God be mature and equipped for every good work”, may also be related to 2 Tim 4:5. In this sense, to be a man of God, mature and equipped for every good work is to be sober-minded, to endure suffering, to do the work of an evangelist, and to fulfill the ministry.

⁴⁹ See C. Marvin Pate, *Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013), 80.

⁵⁰ The false teachings are referred to several times throughout the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:3-11, 19-20; 4:1-10; 6:3-5; 2 Tim 1:15; 2:14, 16-18, 23; 3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4; Tit 1:10-16; 3:9-11). See Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 65. The false teachings are mentioned for the first time in the Pastorals in 1 Tim. 1:3, which is within an unexpected structure consisting of a long sentence without a main clause. As Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton observe, “an incomplete sentence in the Greek has some rhetorical functions”; in this case, an incomplete sentence “is in a context where the writer is deeply concerned with a problem and is writing about it in an extremely emotional state. Thus in the present passage one can imagine the concern of Paul with regard to what was happening in the Christian community to which Timothy belonged.” See Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 15. Max Turner highlights that “most (if not all) of Paul’s letters were written to particular historical circumstances” (see Max Turner, “Review of The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary by N. T. Wright,” *Themelios* 13, no. 2 (1988): 63). To use the words of Henry M. Shires, in his letters Paul “answers specific questions” (see Henry M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul in the Light of Modern Scholarship* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1996), 34). Accordingly, a better comprehension of Paul’s theology in the Pastoral Epistles only is possible from a better comprehension of the teachings against which he is struggling. In general, it is assumed that the false teachings referred to in the Pastoral Epistles are of the same sort (see George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek

Although it is not easy to determine the nature of false teachings, since Paul “is not concerned to describe the teaching but to refute it”,⁵¹ it seems that Paul has in mind at least three different groups: 1) Those who demanded for Gentile adherence to the Mosaic regulations;⁵² 2) Those who defended ascetic habits;⁵³ and 3) Those with Gnosticizing tendencies.⁵⁴

As Max Turner highlights, “most (if not all) of Paul’s letters was written to particular historical circumstances”.⁵⁵ To use the words of Henry M. Shires, in his letters Paul “answers specific questions”.⁵⁶ That is precisely what is happening with his letters to Timothy and Titus. It seems quite clear that these teachings have at their core a common denominator, i.e., an alternative means of salvation.⁵⁷

The demand for Gentile adherence to the mosaic regulations lessens the worth and significance of Christ’s sacrifice. Even though, as Van Voorst postulates, the concern of the Judaizers has to do with the interest to maintain “the essence of Christianity and the unity of the Church”,⁵⁸ Paul rejects this foundation for faith and unity, once it lessens

Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 11; and Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 662). A different and more convincing opinion is introduced by Timothy Johnson. He argues that although Baur’s idea that the “myths and genealogies” (1 Tim 1:3) and the “falsely called *gnōsis*” refer, respectively, to the developed Gnostic Systems and the heretic Marcion in the mid-second-century still influences the recent scholarship, “reconstructions have been frustrated by the fact that the combination of elements presented by all three letters (in composite) does not match precisely the profile of any known heresy”. The elements Johnson speaks about are the following: “teaching that the resurrection is already past (2 Tim 2:17-18); forbidding marriage and certain foods (1 Tim 4:3), advocating physical asceticism (1 Tim 4:8), being concerned with the observance of the Law (1 Tim 1:7; Tit 3:9), and practicing circumcision and purity regulations (Tit 1:10,15)”. See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001), 73. In addition, he argues that there are two other difficulties to portrait Paul’s opponents in the second century: “The first is that each of the elements found in the Pastoral Letters can separately be found in Paul’s other letters (e.g., 1 Cor 7:1; 8:1-3; 15:17-19; Gal 4:8-10; Col 2:20-22). The second is the realization that a great deal of the characterization of the opponents is derived from the rhetorical conventions of antiquity governing polemic between opposing teachers” (Johnson, 73).

⁵¹ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 72.

⁵² See T. R. Schreiner, “Circumcision”, In: Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 137. James W. Aageson argues that it is not possible assessing the “circumcision” dilemma without taking into account the problem Paul deals with in Galatians. For further details, see James W. Aageson, “Judaizing,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1089. In addition, J. N. D. Kelly also sees Paul’s statements in 1 Tim 1:3-4 under Jewish overtones. He claims that “the fables and genealogies must have had to do with allegorical or legendary interpretations of the O.T.” For further details, see J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1963), 44. And Robert E. Van Voorst, “Judaizing,” ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 748.

⁵³ Nygaard, Mathias, “Asceticism,” ed. Barry, John D. et al. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016; and F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 115.

⁵⁴ Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black, *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 553.

⁵⁵ Max Turner, “Review of The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary by N. T. Wright,” *Themelios* 13, no. 2 (1988): 63.

⁵⁶ Henry M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul in the Light of Modern Scholarship* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1996), 34.

⁵⁷ C. Marvin Pate highlights that each occurrence of the formula *the saying is trustworthy* (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Tit 3:8) “deal with some aspect of salvation Paul’s opponents distorted. For details, see C. Marvin Pate, *Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013), 267-268.

⁵⁸ Robert E. Van Voorst, “Judaizing,” ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 748.

the significance of Christ's sacrifice and, by this means, introduces an alternative path to salvation.

In turn, the asceticism Paul is struggling with is seen as "an imitation of the sacrificial life of Christ and as a means of expiation of one's own sins and those of others".⁵⁹ In addition, "...some Christians have overemphasized the role of ascetic practices. This prompted the apostle Paul to assert that ascetic practice alone is insufficient as a means of escaping from sin (see Col 2:20-23)."⁶⁰ For Paul, "salvation has been inaugurated because of the Christ event (1 Tim 1:15-16; 2:3-6; 2 Tim 1:9-10; 2:8-13; Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7)".⁶¹ There is no alternative means of salvation.

Likewise, the gnosticizing tendencies, or the so-called Proto-Gnosticism,⁶² could well be seen as a counterfeit of the sacrificial life of Christ and His expiatory sacrifice. Such a type of beliefs denies or radically reinterprets the doctrine of the incarnation,⁶³ the resurrection and the last judgment,⁶⁴ with emphasis on knowledge and wisdom as a means of salvation.⁶⁵

Accordingly, when reading the Pastoral Epistles, particularly 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and the solemn exhortation *preach the word* (v.2), one needs to take into account the fact that Paul's admonition to Timothy has, as background, the false teachings briefly analyzed here. To put it differently, *preach the word* is the means by which Paul expects Timothy to face the false teachers and their false doctrines.

⁵⁹ F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 115.

⁶⁰ Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 16.

⁶¹ See C. Marvin Pate, *Apostle of the Last Days*, 267. As Pate observes, although salvation has been inaugurated because of the Christ event, it has a future dimension (1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:18; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7). That is why "the Pastorals speak forcefully of the hope of Christ's return (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:12, 18; 4:1, 8, 18; Titus 2:13)". Nevertheless, none of this would be possible without the Christ event.

⁶² See Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 353; and Edwin Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism, the New Testament and Nag Hammadi in Recent Debate," *Themelios* 10, no. 1 (1984): 23.

⁶³ Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 228. See also Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, 204-205.

⁶⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 278.

⁶⁵ David A. Fiensy, *New Testament Introduction*, *The College Press NIV Commentary* (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1997), 297. All the ideas above and the ones who carried them are seen as forerunners of the fully developed Gnosticism in the second century. See Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 79. Douglas Mangum and E. Tod Twist notice that speaking of "gnostic or proto-gnostic or gnosticizing makes little sense without a basic understanding of what the major ideas of Gnosticism were". See Douglas Mangum and E. Tod Twist, *1 Timothy*, ed. Douglas Mangum and Derek R. Brown, *Lexham Bible Guide* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), 1 Ti 1:4. For Fiensy, a serious hindrance in addressing this issue is that "defining Gnosticism is difficult since there were so many sects sharing certain Gnostic traits but quite different in other respects". Fiensy, *New Testament Introduction*, 221. See also Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism, the New Testament and Nag Hammadi in Recent Debate," 23. Even though the Gnostic groups present remarkable differences as to its theology, ritual practice, and ethics (see Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 349), many (or most) of them share certain features in common (see Cross and Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 687). An useful summary of such features is provided by Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 274).

CONCLUSION

I have suggested in this paper that the best answer to the question “What is the understanding that Timothy and the original audience have about the meaning of λόγος in the solemn exhortation *Preach the Word?*” is that it refers to the gospel, or, to use a more technical term, the Christ event as described in the Old and New Testament, i.e., life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, for Paul, the relationship between Scripture and the Christ-event – or vice versa – forms an inseparable unity, so that affirming that by the word λόγος he also meant *Scripture* is not a mistake. This explains why the recent scholarship oscillates between Gospel and Scripture as the meaning intended by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:2.

Paul’s usage of λόγος in 2 Timothy 4:2 is consistent with the other occurrences within the Pastoral Epistles. Just as it happens elsewhere, λόγος is taken as an act of communication, like the Scriptures and the Gospel. By his usage of the binomial λόγος/διδασκαλία it seems that Paul wants to make it clear that the Scripture is the teaching of the Gospel. Hence the inseparable nature of these two elements. Probably it is on this basis Timothy is to be a pattern in λόγος (1 Tim 4:12) and to follow the pattern of the sound λόγων (2 Tim 1:13a). In other words, the message of “the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13b) are founded on Scripture.

The three passages in parallel to 2 Tim 4:1-2 show that when charging Timothy with a solemn exhortation Paul may have in mind either the Old Testament or the gospel. Paul makes reference to the Christ event as the content of the verb κηρύσσω several times. This seems to be the case in 2 Timothy 4:2. However, since 2 Timothy 4:1-5 seems to be the continuation of the argument introduced in 2 Tim 3:16-17, it is reasonable to conclude that λόγος in 2 Timothy 4:2 is associated to γραφή in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

The idea that by λόγος in 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul meant both the Gospel and the Scripture is coherent with Paul’s interest to fight against the false teachings, i.e., the Christ event as described in the Scripture is the only way to face the false teachers. In another way, Timothy is to preach Scripture from the hermeneutical perspective of the Christ event.

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