

B+

I Corinthians 2:1-5
Greek 905B 3a
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METHOD OF MINISTRY
I Corinthians 2:1-5

TRANSLATION

- vs. 1 So in the same way, when I came to you brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom in proclaiming to you the testimony of God.
- vs. 2 For I resolved to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and this one having been crucified.
- vs. 3 And so I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling;
- vs. 4 And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive or seemingly wise words, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power,
- vs. 5 So that your faith should not rest on the seeming wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

EXEGETICAL IDEA

SUBJECT: Paul's resolution in teaching was . . .

COMPLEMENT: . . . to bear witness to certain facts about Jesus Christ, depending on God's power and not on rhetorical skill.

FULL STATEMENT: Paul's resolution in teaching was to bear witness to certain facts about Jesus Christ, depending on God's power and not on rhetorical skill.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE

- I. Being devoid of self-reliance, Paul took his message to the Corinthians simply as a herald of certain facts about Jesus Christ (vss. 1-3).
- A. Having expressed the theology of the cross, Paul in like manner relates his corresponding forfeiture of oratorical technique (vs. 1).

- B. Paul explains further the reason for the forfeiture of oratorical technique (vs. 2).
- C. Having made the forfeiture of oratorical technique, Paul has left himself in a personally vulnerable state (vs. 3).

II. Having chosen the rhetorically barren role of a herald, Paul clearly demonstrates the true source of power in the Gospel (vss. 4, 5).

- A. The mode of Paul's teaching was not rhetorical or cleverness (vs. 4a).
- B. To the contrary, his chosen mode of teaching actually demonstrated the true nature of the Gospel (vs. 4b).
- C. The intended result of Paul's method was the establishment of the Corinthians' faith in God's own power (vs. 5).

COMMENTARY

Introduction.

In the ancient Near East, sophistication of speech and speaker were often judged by the degree of eloquence, cleverness and brilliance displayed. Paul did not choose to operate in these ways, though. In keeping with the seeming "folly" of the Gospel (1:18), he reminds his hearers in 2:1-5 of the conformity of his preaching to that "folly." He has just taught of the theology of the cross ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) and now wants to emphasize that his method of ministry is designed to magnify that teaching. In his book Crucifixion, Martin Hengel clearly shows the true folly of the theology of the cross in the minds of Greeks, Romans and Jews. Hengel says, "The heart of the Christian message (the 'word of the cross') . . . ran counter not only to Roman political thinking, but to the whole ethos of religion in ancient times and in particular to the idea of God held by educated people (p. 5)." It is this fact that Paul exploits and uses so clearly to show the power of God in the Gospel.

- I. Being devoid of self-reliance, Paul took his message to the Corinthians simply as a herald of certain facts about Jesus Christ (vss. 1-3).

In this first section, Paul outlines with emphasis his chosen method of ministry among the Corinthians. It was not

What is the way movement here? see. to your subord. pts. II should read. The purp of Paul in not preaching in rhetor cleverness but in demon. of divine power was so that the Corinthian faith would be based in the power of God.

It seems the force of Paul's argument is - the reason that Paul's ministry in Corinth consisted of preaching the gospel was no that their faith would be based on God's power & not human wisdom. where does this come from in your subord. points

this pt should clearly reflect your subord.

if you would use the pedantic form in outlining this would not have been a problem

Have you read the pedantic outlining paper?

an easy route to take with them. Corinth, and its people were often characterized by a kind of hedonistic pride, fancying themselves cosmopolitan and intellectually alert (Morris, pp. 16, 17). And while the believers in Corinth were truly so, they were by no means immune from their cultural perverseness (1:11, 12). With marvelous determination, Paul explains his method to them.

A. Having expressed the theology of the cross, Paul in like manner, relates his corresponding forfeiture of oratorical technique (vs. 1).

The theology of the previous section has its clear effect on Paul's method. the emphatic *καί*, "and" in (BAGD, 386) is the strong and intentional connection here between his theology and his method. In his commentary (p. 62), Barrett translates it, "it was in line with this principle." This seems to stretch the simple word *καί*, though it is a good interpretation. Phillips' wording is a little more reasonable perhaps, "in the same way" The aorist participle followed by the aorist active of the same work emphasizes the verbal notion, the idea being, "when I came to you," placing attention on his arrival (Godet, 123; Expositor's, 775). The following was his drawn out plan from the very beginning of his ministry there. At the outset, Paul says what he did not do. He did not commence his ministry with oratorical superiority or seeming cleverness. Implicitly, he has not come as a superior person (*ὑπεροχῆ* BAGD, 841), with dazzling speech. Neither has he come employing wisdom (see Word Study) as a rhetorical device, attempting to maneuver people into the Gospel. It is not to say that Paul was incapable-- A. T. Robertson's comment is helpful here: "One is not to stress Paul's language in I Corinthians 2:1-4 into a denial that he could use the literary style. It is rather a rejection of the bombastic rhetoric that the Corinthians liked and the rhetorical art that was so common from Thucydides to Chrysostom (Grammar, p. 85)." Here is the issue of the passage. Was Paul ministering at Corinth with a degree of incompetence, or with a strangely deliberate lack of rhetoric? The subject of his ministry was "The testimony of God." The variant "mystery" (*μυστήριον*) is not to be preferred (see Textual Problem), and "testimony" or "witness" of God is taken. The testimony Paul was declaring was that which has God as its author (not Paul), the genitive here being of author (Godet, 124). Expositor's (775) opts for a subjective genitive, which is close to the same thing. So, Paul's manner was not as if it were his

*Oppt. for 2000
2) what shall
3) what means*

concoction he was preaching. He chose not to employ elegance or cleverness because he was handling the Gospel of God.

B. Paul explains further the reason for the forfeiture of oratorical technique, (vs. 2).

His mode of action is a result of his predetermined plan (we may call it a philosophy of ministry) and confirms the preceding statement (*οὗ γὰρ*). The aorist verb here "determine" is agreed to by Expositor's and Godet to mean that the only thing Paul wanted spoken of among them was Jesus Christ and the fact of his crucifixion, again the "folly of the cross." That was the sole subject of his plan of ministry in Corinth-- nothing about him personally, not his style, not his choice of words, etc., would be worthy of note except the content of his declaration--the person and work of Jesus Christ. *ἐπὶ τῷ σταυρῷ*, the perfect passive participle well illustrates that use of the perfect tense--Christ crucified in the past, with present effects and results. Blass--DeBrunner (p. 229) interestingly calls out the *καί* here also as emphatic, when coupled with the demonstrative; this also renders his point of the fact of Christ. With this statement, Paul has summed up both the simplicity and complexity of the entire New Testament message. His powerful (and unique) message was foolishness to those looking for persuasiveness of presentation or eloquence of speech; but to the saved it was the very power of God (1:18). In a very real sense, he is restating the importance of the theology of the cross. It does not facilitate the ways of the world, but runs counter to them.

C. Having made the forfeiture of oratorical technique, Paul has left himself in a personally vulnerable state (vs. 3).

With such an awesome responsibility at his charge, to preach God's own Gospel, and with the environment in which he must do his ministry so expectant, it should be of little wonder that Paul came fearfully. He knew he could not rely on himself. Again, the discussion rises here as to whether Paul was insecure, or properly aware of his own inadequacies. Again we have *καί*, "and so" emphatically tying vs. 3 with the preceding (vs. 1c-2). He was with them in weakness, fear and trembling in part perhaps due to external factors, but primarily because of his keen appreciation for the true profoundness of his message. He knew he was teaching something unique

*making the metaphor
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strong structural evidence
I (1-2) καί
II (3-4) καί
III (5) καί*

*1) 25 number
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and very surprising. And while his ministry at Athens was surely draining and trying, it did not make him any less sure of what he was saying. Again, he wanted no confusion of message and messenger. Such a paradoxical message laid Paul bare of any physical boastfulness.

II. Having chosen the rhetorically barren role of a herald, Paul clearly demonstrates the true source of power in the Gospel (vss. 4, 5).

There is never much glory for a simple herald. He announces a coming personage or event, etc., and fades into the background. This was the approach Paul wanted at Corinth when he began his work there. It did not detract from his Apostolic authority, but put the content of his message in the foreground. It was not Paul, at his passing, who was to be remembered so much as it was the fact of Jesus Christ. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Paul simply spoke of that person and of His death. He had the Corinthians' best interests at heart in choosing such a simple role. He wanted their faith grounded in something more lasting than mere philosophy and rhetoric, or in a teacher's eloquence.

A. The mode of Paul's teaching was not rhetoric or cleverness, (vs. 4a).

The ideas previously stated are so important that Paul restates them and introduces by the same reasoning the result of his kind of ministry. *λογος* recalls 1:18, Paul's Gospel message, and *κηρυγμα* his heralding or announcement of that message. The textual problems here encountered are probably due to Paul's coining of the word *Τελεθως* (found only here) for himself (Barrett, p. 65). It is not an unreasonable or even surprising notion for Paul to do so--it even would be in keeping with his strategy. It is derived from *τελεθειν*, and would mean "persuasive" (BAGD, 644), (Barrett, 65) or "enticing" (Morris, 52).

B. To the contrary, his chosen mode of teaching actually demonstrates the true nature of the Gospel, vs. 4b).

It is not in seemingly wise words (the addition of "human" is probably that of a copyist, Barrett, et al), but in "proof consisting in possession of the Spirit and power" (BAGD, 89). Expositor's offers here that *αποδεικνυται* is "the technical term for a proof drawn from facts or documents, as opposed to theoretical reasoning; in common use with the Stoics in this sense." It is a marvelous usage, opposing the *σοφιστικος λογος*

and actually makes quite an offence of the same. Paul came to the Corinthians deliberately with his method of announcing the fact of Christ in a way which really displayed the power of the Holy Spirit Himself. That was the true authentication and effectiveness of his ministry. Robertson (p. 1206) offers, "Paul . . . did not merely tickle the fancy of the lovers of sophistry . . . Paul denied that he spoke *δι' ἑαυτου σοφικως* . . . though his words seem to the lover of Christ to be full of the highest appeal to the soul of man. One must discount the disclaimer not merely by Paul's natural modesty, but by contrast with the Corinthians' concept of *Τελεθως* (persuasive). They loved the rhetorical flights of the artificial orators of the time."

C. The intended result of Paul's method was the establishment of the Corinthians' faith in God's own power (vs. 5).

The *ἵνα* clause now before us is one of purpose, concluding this argument. The deliberate plan of Paul was to ground his converts with a foundation "independent of human wisdom (Morris, 53)." That was the reason for his concentration on the theology of the cross, seeming foolish to men's wisdom but really the very wisdom of God, and grounded in His power. That is what would make the true Christian faith at Corinth last.

CONCLUSION

On his arrival at Corinth and to the day he departed, Paul desired nothing more than that his people should understand who Jesus was and clearly what He accomplished. Crucifixion being an uttermost humiliation, designed as a deterrent, and used in Roman times primarily on dangerous criminals and on members of the lower classes (Hengel, pp. 89-90) was about the last figure in which people would expect to find the very wisdom of God (vss. 6 ff). The offense of the cross was the very center of the Gospel. Having forfeited rhetoric, eloquence and "wise devices," Paul was left only with his message, which in fact alone can truly ground believers in the faith.

APPLICATION

In an age of media saturation, offensive topics are often handled with tact, caution and even compromise. The truth in events today is often the thing we wish to forget (Watergate,

Vietnam, crime, etc.). So was the inclination in Paul's day and in the young days of the Church. But Paul wished none of the Gospel message compromised. It is the "folly of the cross" that is the power of God to them being saved.

Some what identical in context / personal

APPENDICES

I. TEXTUAL CRITICISM: I CORINTHIANS 2:1

A. External Evidence.

1. List of Variants:

- a. $\tau\omicron \mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$
 - b. $\tau\omicron \mu\alpha\rho\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$
2. Classification of the evidence (Nestle²⁶ Apparatus):

VARIANT	BYZANTINE	ALEXANDRIAN	WESTERN	OTHERS
a.	Ephraemus Ambrosiaster	μ 6vid (c.200) μ -iv. A-v. C-v.	SP ^R -iv.	a, r, bo
b.	Byz-150-200	μ 2-iv. B-iv. V-xiii-ix.	D-vi. F-ix. G-ix SY ^A -iv. V ^g	sa

3. Evaluation of the Evidence:

- a. Date, Character and Geography of the Witnesses: Representation for the first reading is mainly in the Alexandrian family and can be seen as early as 200 A.D. with the presence of μ 6 (though the "vid" indicates a qualified certainty). The second reading has good to fair representation in all families, the strongest being among B, D and the Byzantine group. The date of the second reading can be pushed back to at least 300 A.D. (and possibly farther).

4. Conclusion Based on External Evidence.

b. Geneological Solidarity: The first reading is strongly represented in the Alexandrian family and slightly elsewhere. The second reading also is very noticeable in the Alexandrian as well as in the Byzantine and Western.

Since the second reading is strongly represented in all families and has agreement between them (the rule of Ehdum is agreement between two families), it is the choice based on external evidence alone.

B. Internal Evidence.

1. Transcriptional Evidence:

1st $\tau\omicron\mu\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$
2nd $\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\pi\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$

- a. Unintentional changes:
 - 1. Errors of sight:
 - a. Wrong word division--not a problem here.
 - b. Confusion of letters--possibly, though only if the copyist was thinking one word and wrote the other.
 - c. Homoioteleuton--not a problem here.
 - d. Metathesis--possibly, the upsilons being reversed and the number of letters being the same.
 - 2. Errors of hearing: Since the words are very similar (the last two syllables and most radicals identical), this is a real possibility. Either word could be heard and make sense in the context.
 - 3. Errors of memory: Again, because of the similarity of the words, either might be mistaken for the other, if attention was not kept in the special significance of the particular phrase.
 - 4. Errors of judgment: Again, this is a possibility, though unlikely since the two words have different meanings.
- b. Intentional changes--possibilities:
 - 1. Spelling changes: Possibly, if the copyist thought he was dealing with a previous error.

II.

WORD STUDY-- σοφία

- A. Classical Usage (L & S; Colin Brown): From Homer onwards, the word denotes an attribute and not an activity, meaning unusual ability and knowledge, earlier in the practical realm and later in the theoretical. The σοφία of a carpenter is noted, and the members of the college of the Seven Sages were renowned (Plato, Prt. 343a) for their worldly wisdom and political discernment. Plato notes (Ap. 21) that Socrates' wisdom consisted in the knowledge that he knows nothing. For Aristotle (Met. 1, 1; 5, 1) wisdom equalled philosophy. And with the Stoics, wisdom is realized knowledge. So, the word generally means cleverness, skill in matters of common life, sound judgment, and learning.
- B. LXX Usage (H & R; Colin Brown): Septuagintal usage is most noticeably located in Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and stands predominantly for σοφία, wisdom. It also stands for ἡγίαση, understanding (Prov. 2:3f; 3:5). The

- 2. Harmonistic changes: Possibly, since both the "mystery" and "testimony" of God are New Testament concepts.
 - 3. Doctrinal changes: Unlikely, though not impossible, since a copyist could have considered the I Corinthians 1:18-31 doctrine compelling on one or the other of the variants.
2. Intrinsic Evidence: The context would lend itself to a proclamation by Paul of the testimony of God, from God; that which Paul speaks plainly, and without embellishment. For him to say that he did not come to them in eloquence or seeming wisdom in proclaiming the mystery of God, would seem almost too paradoxical. While the plan of God is a mystery (2:7), in vs. 1 it is not the point.
3. Conclusion of Internal Evidence: While there are a number of things which could account for the problem internally, the contextual element seems to marginally support the second reading, "testimony."
- C. Conclusion of the Textual Problem.
Due to generally strong external evidence (and some internal support), the second reading is chosen as the most likely original.

- E. Conclusions: Paul is dealing with sophia as it has come to be understood in Greece and Corinth. He is dealing with a particular understanding of the word, a system of rhetoric, cleverness and attaining skill. The Gospel is not knowable by these devices (c.f. Simon Magus) and in fact runs counter to them. Paul was strategically countering what would at least later become the esoteric knowledge of Gnosticism (W. Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, quoted in C. Brown). The theology of the cross and Paul's methodology were based on revelation alone, not on sophia.
 - D. New Testament Usage (MG, 898, 899; Colin Brown): The word occurs 49 times in the New Testament, 26 in Paul's epistles and 15 in I Corinthians alone. It was a real issue at Corinth, deeply set within philosophical environs. Gospel usage is tied to the traditional Old Testament and Jewish conception, wisdom being man's approach to life, arising out of the covenant destroyed by God (Luke 2:40, 52; Matthew 13:54; see also Acts 6:3, 10). Paul's I Corinthians usage is most significant. In arguing that God has turned the wisdom of the world into foolishness (1:20, 3:19), he did not do it with words or arguments, where sentences of worldly wisdom were confronted with sentences of Christian wisdom. It was through an action, the death of Christ on the cross. Worldly wisdom which rejects this revealed wisdom of God is shown to be rebellion, self-exaltation and boasting. Paul does not reject the word sophia (2:6, etc.), but the colloquial concept it held. God's sophia is hidden in the mystery, knowable only by those whose hope is in the cross.
 - C. KOINE Usage (MM, 581; Colin Brown): MM relates sophia as appearing as a title of honor in P Oxy VIII. 1165 by the 6th century A.D., "your fraternal wisdom," a decidedly evolved usage. But this is late, and probably not common at all in New Testament times.
- usage is extensive, with general meaning very similar to the classical usage, skill in right living, sound judgment.

Handwritten notes in red ink:
 you would improve
 by your activity or
 by your activity in
 the world
 do you mean I don't
 know what you mean
 in the passage I don't
 see your point
 I don't know what you mean
 in your comment
 both make it clear
 if you mean both

