

## HOW PRIMARY SOURCES THROW LIGHT ON 1.COR. 14:33.ff.

EXPLANATION. By Primary Sources I mean the hand written manuscripts that contain the texts of the N.T. from which our current Greek N.T.s are derived. Our translations follow these.

Unfortunately the Primary Sources often do not agree. In fact scholars calculate there are hundreds of thousands of differences among the Sources (I will use this term to refer to them). As an example, for Acts 10:32 we have to choose from over thirty differences in the Sources ([www.uni-muenster.de/intf/](http://www.uni-muenster.de/intf/)). We cannot avoid choices to determine what the N.T. author has written. It is on the basis of our choices that we will explain the meaning of that part of Scripture. In the vast majority of cases it makes no difference to the message which choice we make. However in a few cases it makes all the difference what choices we make from the Sources. This applies to the choices we make for our text of 1. Cor. 14:33.ff.

We are helped by knowing the rules for making such choices which the scholars have worked out over time. Scholars are generally agreed that our N.T. Sources had branched into three recognisable streams by about the end of the fourth century, at least in the Gospels, Acts and Paulines. Prior to this time the Sources are often mixed (P46). These three streams go by the names of Western, Alexandrian, and Byzantine.

The Western stream is regarded as the earliest, as the earliest Church Fathers used it, also the earliest translations into Latin and Syriac drew from this stream. It covered a huge geographical area, from the Latin and Church Fathers in the West, to the Syriac and Fathers in the East.

The Alexandrian stream is regarded as only slightly later in date than the Western. This stream is quite limited geographically, limited to Egypt and surrounds and the Coptic translations of that area. For a little over a hundred years this has been the favoured stream from which to choose the Greek N.T. We find the rule, 'prefer the shorter reading' exhibited in this stream. However this rule has been seriously challenged with strong evidence. I 'grew up' with this rule. I now would give priority to 'prefer the longer reading'. This stream is losing its position of favouritism. (I have prepared an article trying to explain which rules are being followed today, especially since computers can process masses of detail).

The Byzantine stream is later, from about the fourth century onwards. Constantine relocated the capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium which was renamed Constantinople early in the fourth century. Hence the Greek speaking church there became most influential, shaping the N.T. text. The Sources from this stream became dominant in the church. Our earlier translations such as the King James Version drew from this late stream. The church in Rome by then was Latin speaking.

An important rule when choosing a text is to give very serious consideration when two streams have the same reading against the other stream. This applies also for 1 Cor. 14:33.ff.

Assumptions. Neil Stiller has helpfully shown how one's assumptions, biases, and presuppositions colour how we see things. He shows how new experiences, further study, insights given by other's points of view modify and perhaps change our outlook. This is true of all of us, including those who choose the text for our Greek N.T.s., and not only the text they choose, but also what information they give in the footnotes, what they think is important to show us, and what they omit because to them it seems unimportant. There has been debate in the church during the last century about the

role of women in the church, and coinciding with this debate our major Greek N.T.s have strengthened the case against women by the arrangement of the text, what footnotes they give, what footnotes they remove from previous times, and what evidence they omit entirely. ( The Expository Times of March 2008 gives details). The scribes too who copied the Scripture lived in a world with many matters in debate. It is the role of scholars to identify these assumptions and presuppositions. We need to keep this in mind as we check our Sources.

Checking me out. I put in brackets (...) as you can see above, further information for those who can read the Sources, are able to apply the methods for choosing a text from a variety of readings, or want to check the material suggested . This is so that what I present can be affirmed or corrected. All our Sources are numbered, and many can be checked On-line, a good site being [www.csntm.org](http://www.csntm.org)

SPECIFIC GOALS. I have two aims:

- I. To show that our Primary Sources do not support the current text of 1 Cor. 14:33.b. being joined to v.34. Both major Greek N.T.s (UBS and Nestle) and translations from them begin a new paragraph and give us the reading 'As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. (NIV)
- II. To show that our Primary Sources support the already strong argument that our verses 34-35 are an Add-on, an interpolation. This means they are not St Paul's writing but a comment someone made that has found its way as text, but in different places (See below).

1.Firstly: By joining the last words of v.33. to verse 34., the silencing of women is made universal. It is for all the congregations of the saints; and by starting a new paragraph with these words it highlights them. Secondly, it rules out the possibility of our v.34-35 being an early Add-on.

I note those commenting in 'We are listening' have taken this as their text, and I do not blame them, for this is what their Greek N.T.s present. What Pastor in active service has time to go behind the text, checking other Greek N.T.s from other churches, of former times, or check the Sources for verification? A gift of 'Retirement' is the time to pursue one's interests and hobbies!

The Sources. I present the four Sources of these verses we have up to about 400 AD.

Our earliest Source (P46.) from the early third century has no space between the word 'peace' and 'as', no punctuation mark or room for one in v.33. In fact the two words are joined together. At this early stage punctuation was limited, but this Source certainly cannot support the start of a new paragraph or new sentence here.

A Source from the fourth century (P123) is similar. What was said of P46 applies also to this Source.

Another fourth century Source (01 = Sinaiticus), like the two examples above, joins the letters of the words for 'peace' and 'as', allowing no space for punctuation. Rather after 'saints' there is a colon which equates to our full-stop. A new line is then begun with our v.34., even though only two letters of the word for 'saints' were on the previous line. (See below).

The other Source (03 = Vaticanus) has our word 'peace' ending a line and 'as' starting a new line but without any punctuation in between. Like the last example above, after 'saints' is the Greek full-stop

equivalent, the colon. These early Sources do not allow the current punctuation which joins the end of v.33. to v.34.

I have checked over 25 Sources after the fourth century, up to near the time of printing, and the large majority end our v. 33. with a colon, sometimes inserting a comma after 'peace'.

Also against joining our v.33.to verse 34 to universalise the silencing of women and rule out the possibility of our verses 34-35 being an Add-on are the Sources which conclude v. 33 with the word which translates as 'I teach'.

Verse 33. then reads, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as I teach". The Sources with this reading require a full-stop. I note representatives from two of our Source streams have this reading, which as stated above, require us to take special notice. (see Reuben Swanson (Ed) The New Testament Greek Manuscripts – Variant Readings...1 Corinthians. Manuscripts 010 =F; 012 =G; 326; 330; 365; 440; 629; 1243; 1315; 1319; 1573; 1837; 2400; 2815, and from my own reading add 491.) This list is not short. This reading accords with St Paul's style as he concludes 1 Cor. 4:17 similarly.

However our Greek N.T.s have chosen for whatever reasons not to report this 'I teach' to us at all. We have to find it for ourselves. Thanks to hard working scholars who have gathered these Sources, we can now access many of them On-line.

Some Sources (See below) have our v.34-35. after our v.40., but do not drag along any part of our v.33. with them, which highlights the clear break between v.33. and v.34.

In addition to the Sources conflicting with the modern presentation, we find that joining v.33.b. to v.34. leaves us with a most clumsy Greek sentence with 'in the churches' repeated. Even with my limited knowledge of ancient Greek one recognises a problem with this unnecessary repetition.

When Stephanus added numbered verses to the N.T. in 1551, he separated v.33. from v.34. I find I cannot agree (again!) with my classmate Neil when he claims 'Chapter and verse numbers were added ONLY as a means of locating ... sentences or words'. No. When the verses were numbered the Source followed were punctuated that way.

Our most recent scholarly Greek N.T. (NA28 2012) has not served us well at this point. No longer does it show in the footnotes the earlier punctuation options which separated v.33. from v. 34. This important information has been withdrawn which we with our older Greek N.T.s benefitted from. Further an Appendix in former Editions which showed how scholars of other Greek N.T. presented their text has been removed. As mentioned, no footnote draws attention to the Sources which end v. 33. with "as I teach". We have no ways of knowing that v.33. and v.34. should be separated. I hope this is not deliberate but simply that the scholars are unaware of their presuppositions. Recently I was given Souter's 1910 Greek N.T. He begins a new paragraph with v.34., but this was before the role of women in the church had become a serious topic of debate.

In summary of the first point, the Primary Sources do not support universalising of the silencing of women which joining v.33. to v.34. allows. In fact they contradict it. Rather St Paul is stressing that God wants peace and not disorder in all churches, the topic of Ch. 14., a point repeated at v.40.

11. Sources supporting the doubt that v.34 -35. Is part of St Paul's text.

We have three Sources with these verses copied before 400.

Our earliest Source (P46. - also P123. came On-line at the end of 2013) has marks like small coloured raindrops at both the beginning of v.34. and after v.35 in the right margin, too far from the text to be punctuation, and too large, but precisely where one would expect such markings if they were indicating doubt about the passage or words so marked. The marking at v.34. is the only marking in the right margin on p.109. There may be other explanations of such markings, perhaps they are just dirt or ink blobs on the papyrus. However we cannot rule out that the scribe is noting a doubtful passage, or one that is different or absent from the Source or Sources available to him.

The fourth century Source noted above (01) appears clearer. Two letters only of the word for 'saints' of our v.33.begin a new line. But a new line is begun with our v.34! The last letter only of the word for 'church' which ends our v.35 runs to a new line. But this line too is left empty. Another new line is begun with our v.36. Normally Greek at that time did not even separate words! Hence v.34 - 35. are highlighted. Since the scribe does not highlight other punch lines, such as 1. Cor. 13:13, 'Now these three remain...' there must be another reason. He had doubts about the genuineness of the verses and copied it so readers could note it and choose to omit it if in doubt.

The Source many regard as the 'best' of our manuscripts (03) has a bar and other markings around v.34 - 35. A scholar Payne claimed this bar sign marked passages of doubt but was challenged by Niccum. Payne sought permission to re-examine the manuscript under special lighting with P Canart and recorded the use of these signs. Repeatedly it appears in places where we know there is another reading. A Jesuit in Rome after examining this evidence concluded, 'there can be no doubt that 1 Cor, 14:34 - 35 is an interpolation'. (A Forte, Biblica. Vol. 94 Fasc. 2 2013 with a summary of the evidence). One would expect that a Roman Catholic would defend at all costs the silencing of women as they ordain men only. However when the evidence is so compelling one has to accept the conclusion.

Also we cannot ignore the Sources which place our v.34 - 35 after our v.40. (06 =D; 010 =F; 012 =G; 88; 915; the Old Latin, ar; b.; some Vulgate texts and the Church Father Ambrosiaster. 08 =E. which has no text of the Paulines has sometimes incorrectly been included in this list in older Greek N.T.s and by some scholars.) We have the oldest stream and the Byzantine stream represented in this list. More recent Greek N.T.s have removed the evidence of the Byzantine stream for unknown reasons. Again we older clergy benefit from having such evidence in our 'old' N.T.s. Note how strongly the earliest stream is represented in both the Greek and the Latin, and by a Church Father who died before 400. The earliest cannot be dismissed lightly.

In these Sources 'the Lord's command' ending our v.37. must refer to the disorder in worship in Corinth, the topic of Ch.14, as the mention of the silencing of women is after v.40. This also applies to the end of v.38, 'he himself will be ignored' which must refer to those already mentioned. Some Sources read that it is 'God's command' which would require a search of the O.T. for this command, unless Paul is aware of direct inspiration here. Unless the context is clear the word 'Lord' can apply either to God as Father or as Son. Not infrequently the Sources, as here, differ over this (e.g. Acts 16:14,15.)

These Sources which place v.34 – 35. after v.40. raise the question: Why, if these verses followed our v.33 in St Paul's letter, did these early scribes remove these verses from after v. 33. and place them after v.40? They would seem to have no place after v. 40 but fit, if somewhat uncomfortably, after v.33. I know of no argument from those who accept v.34 - 35. as part of St Paul's letter explaining why they were moved in these very early Sources.

When statements are found in different places in the Sources scholars see this as a sign that a comment in the margin has found its way into the text. It is an Add-on, and not part of the original, and 1. Cor. 14:34 – 35. is an example they give.

As well as the Sources casting doubt about the genuineness of v.34 - 35., the content of these verses conflict with what St Paul permits. In 1. Cor. 11. he allows women to prophesy in public if they cover their heads. He approves of women taking leadership positions in congregations such as Phoebe in Corinth; Junia, Prisca; in Philippi Euodia and Syntyche. These latter two had fallen out with each other like St Paul had fallen out with Barnabas (Acts 15:36 – 39). St Paul had to learn to become culturally sensitive if he wanted to spread the saving message in Gentile territory, and says , 'I became a slave to everyone ... I do all this for the sake of the gospel' (1 Cor. 9: 19 – 23). He was on a steep learning curve when he crossed over to Europe, to the Greek world in Philippi. (Acts 16:13.ff.) He joined a prayer group of women, was persuaded to stay in the home of a Gentile woman named Lydia. Peter, when he entered Cornelius the Gentile's house informed him, 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile of visit him' (Acts 10:28). What was St Paul the Jew thinking when invited to stay with a Gentile woman? He was now in the Greek world where in the surrounding religions women took leading roles. The Oracle of Delphi, regarded as one of the highest religious authorities, was a woman. When the Olympic torch is lit for our Games it is accompanied by an ancient religious rite led by women. As we read in Acts about St Paul's ministry in Greece, women are noted as prominent in the places he visits. Hence no surprise that Phoebe takes such a leading role in Corinth. When v. 34 - 35. commands the silencing of women it conflicts with other writings of St Paul.

Further the words of v. 34, 'as the law says' is not the way Paul refers to the law in other places.

The doubts the Sources suggest about the genuineness of v.34 - 35 being part of Scripture plus the theological problems leave little doubt these verses are a later Add-on.

Why would someone want to add these words? We know that from about the middle of the second century there was a debate about the role women in the church. The Montanist movement from this time gained widespread support and was a huge challenge to the church. Two of its three leaders were women who prophesied. How tempting it must have been for a scribe to write in the margin a comment such as v.34 – 35! Around this time is when scholars believe the Western stream purged the Book of Acts of the prominence of women, but that is another story.

We can now check on-line most of our key Primary Sources, and I hope many do. They make clear that joining v.33.b. to v.34 to universalise the silencing of women has no support from the Sources, in fact it is contradicted by them.

Further the Sources confirm the doubt that has long been there on theological grounds that v.34. – 35. are an Add-on, an interpolation, and not part of St Paul's letter. These verses should be put in

brackets in translations, as someone told me is already the case, and preferably placed after our v. 40. Those who believe these verses were written by St Paul to follow our v.33. must present a strong argument explaining why they were moved in the earliest Sources to after v. 40.

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