

PAUL'S USE OF Εἴτε ... Εἴτε CONSTRUCTIONS AND THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL (PHIL 1:18A)

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that like other ancient writers, Paul commonly uses εἴτε ... εἴτε, “either ... or” constructs in a particular way which is significant for interpretation. When used in a string, εἴτε ... εἴτε are usually attached to an axiomatic theological, philosophical, or wisdom statement. The statement to which the “either ... or” constructs are dependent, is usually a stand-alone premise that indicates the view of the writer. The εἴτε ... εἴτε clause develops this axiom in context. Such a seemingly insignificant observation takes on importance in ascertaining Paul's theology. In some areas this is crucial such as the question of whether Paul wanted all Christians to take up the challenge of proactive evangelization, an area of dispute in Pauline missiology. This study focuses on Phil 1:18a where Paul joins a premise (“what matters is that in every way Christ is proclaimed”) with an εἴτε ... εἴτε construct—(“whether in pretence or in truth”). When his use of εἴτε ... εἴτε strings is understood, it becomes clear that for Paul it is axiomatic that other believers are motivated by his example to share Christ regardless of whether they are specialist gospel-sharers or the general Christian. This adds significant support to those who argue that Paul wanted other Christians and churches to share the gospel proactively.

KEYWORDS

evangelism, missiology, Paul's theology, εἴτε