

NOT ONLY THAT (οὐ μόνον), BUT IT HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE: A RESPONSE TO VERLYN VERBRUGGE, OR WHY READING PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP CAN AVOID SCHOLARLY MISUNDERSTANDINGS

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In the September 2011 issue of *JETS*, Verlyn Verbrugge claims to have made what is to him an unexpected discovery.¹ On the basis of a statement by a former teacher that the use of οὐ μόνον in Rom 5:3 indicates that Paul is using indicative verbs in Rom 5:2b and 3, Verbrugge says he “figured” that his teacher’s “observation was commonly acknowledged in commentaries on Romans that deal with textual-critical issues. But as I began to do research in the critical commentaries, I discovered such is not the case” (p. 559). He also consulted “one of today’s top text critics, Daniel B. Wallace,” who is also reported never to have noticed the use of οὐ μόνον (p. 559, n. 3), which led to Verbrugge’s purported discovery that “even those commentaries that deal significantly with text-critical issues make no mention of οὐ μόνον as an interpretive element of their analysis and decision regarding ἔχομεν/ἔχωμεν or even regarding the mood of καυχώμεθα in 5:2b, 3” (p. 559, n. 3). Lastly, he claims to have discovered that “no one works back from deciding this issue to see what effect it might have on the ἔχομεν/ἔχωμεν issue in 5:1” (p. 560). Verbrugge cites commentaries by C. K. Barrett, Brendon Bryne [*sic*; Brendan Byrne], C. E. B. Cranfield, James D. G. Dunn, Joseph Fitzmyer, Everett F. Harrison and Donald A. Hagner, Ernst Käsemann, Leander E. Keck, Douglas J. Moo, John Murray, Anders Nygren, W. Sandy [*sic*; Sanday] and A. C. Headlam, Thomas Schreiner, and John Zeisler [*sic*; Ziesler].² Many scholars have heard the legendary story of a scholar claiming to make a new discovery, only to have it later revealed that an obscure German scholar made the same discovery a century earlier. Unfortunately, in Verbrugge’s case at least two scholars have provided just the analysis that he claims is missing—one a hundred years ago, the other twenty years ago—and both in English. I know, because I was the one who did so twenty years ago—not in a commentary, but in a well-known journal, *JBL*. This is the danger of making bold claims without sufficiently checking the available evidence—one runs the

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¹ Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “The Grammatical Internal Evidence for ἔχομεν in Romans 5:1,” *JETS* 54 (2011) 559–72. I cite this article by page numbers within the text of this article.

² Several of these errors regarding names of well-known scholars are repeated elsewhere in the essay (e.g. “Grammatical Internal Evidence” 569, n. 22, 571 and n. 28, 572, n. 31). Beside the disappointingly high number of errors regarding the names of these scholars, there is the problem that I would not expect several of these commentators to be particularly astute commentators on the Greek text, as their commentaries are not designed with that purpose in mind.

risk of being shown not only to have not considered all the evidence, but (as in this case) to have missed major arguments that might influence one's conclusions.

In this short note, I wish to (1) briefly review the comments made by the previous commentators; (2) show how due consideration of οὐ/μή μόνον especially in light of matters of negation enters into the discussion; and finally (3) reaffirm the argument that ἔχωμεν, the subjunctive, is the correct reading for Rom 5:1, whatever one concludes about Rom 5:2–3.

I. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS COMMENTATORS

The earlier grammarian to show awareness of the issue of οὐ μόνον was none other than James Denney in his commentary in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*. Originally published in 1901 and reprinted since then (my copy was reprinted in 1980), Denney cites six reasons for the indicative in Rom 5:1, even though the manuscript evidence, in his words, "is overwhelmingly in favour of ἔχωμεν."³ The first reason is: "To read ἔχωμεν, and then to take καυχώμεθα as subjunctive both in ver. 2 and ver. 3 (as the R.V.), is not only awkward, but inconsistent with οὐ μόνον δέ, ver. 3. If the hortative purpose dominated the passage throughout, the Apostle must have written μή..."⁴ This sounds like the very statement that Verbrugge claims not to have found. In my 1991 *JBL* article, reprinted in a collection of essays on the Greek NT,⁵ though I conclude for the subjunctive, I list four major internal arguments made by other scholars against the subjunctive. The second argument is this: "if ἔχωμεν and καυχώμεθα are both subjunctives, they are inconsistent with οὐ μόνον δέ (instead of μή) and a general awkwardness results,"⁶ with a footnote to Denney as cited above. Thus, it is clear that Verbrugge is wrong to suggest that he is the first to raise the issue of οὐ μόνον in Rom 5:3. It has been raised at least two times before in prominent places, with opposite conclusions regarding ἔχομεν/ἔχωμεν.

II. οὐ/μή μόνον AND GREEK NEGATION

The second issue is how to understand the issue of οὐ/μή μόνον in this context and in light of matters of Greek negation. This short response is not the place to rehearse the evidence, as Verbrugge does, regarding οὐ/μή μόνον. Instead, I wish to draw attention to several issues about the phrase and negation in Greek that

³ James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (ed. W. Robertson Nicoll; vol. 2; 1901; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 623.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Stanley E. Porter, "The Argument of Romans 5: Can a Rhetorical Question Make a Difference?" *JBL* 110 (1991) 655–77; repr. in Porter, *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice* (SBG 6; New York: Lang, 1996) 213–38.

⁶ Porter, "Argument of Romans 5" 663; *Studies* 222.

show that the matter is more complex than Verbrugge indicates.⁷ There are three issues to consider.

1. *Blass's canon*. Verbrugge cites "Blass's canon" (first identified, so far as I know, by James Hope Moulton) regarding the use of οὐ and μή in the NT (pp. 566–67).⁸ Although he calls it a "general rule," Verbrugge seems to treat it as a hard-and-fast rule that dictates that καυχώμεθα in Rom 5:2 must be indicative because the phrase used with it is οὐ μόνον. The situation is not quite as simple as Verbrugge desires. Blass's canon is a descriptive observation, not a prescriptive one, as Verbrugge seems to take it. There are many instances in which the canon is not followed within the Greek of the NT, indicating that still pertinent is the recognition that negation is related to perception of the "concrete or actual" (οὐ) versus the "notional or ideal" (μή).⁹ Thus, rather than seeing uses of μή with the indicative as "special constructions" or "idiomatic," as does Verbrugge (p. 563), these and other supposed deviations from Blass's canon reflect uses still influenced by the relation of negation to a view of reality, as well as recognizing the encroachment of the negative μή during the Hellenistic period. As a result, μή can be used in questions with indicative verbs expecting a negative answer, with εἰ in second class conditional protases with indicative verbs, in other configurations with εἰ (as a conjunction with an indicative verb,¹⁰ and with δέ without a verb¹¹), in negation of an indicative verb not in a conditional construction,¹² as a conjunction with an indicative verb,¹³ in a negative phrase with εἰ,¹⁴ and with οὐ as a strong negation with both subjunctive and future forms.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the negative οὐ may still be used to negate participles in some instances.¹⁶ Moulton sees this last set as examples of the use of οὐ to express statements of fact. The negative οὐ is also used with future

⁷ There are several occasions when Verbrugge is surprisingly, and I would think unnecessarily, rudimentary in his discussions of Greek, for example, when he needs to cite an elementary grammar to establish that καυχώμεθα could be either indicative or subjunctive in form.

⁸ Citing Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. Robert W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) 220 § 426 (p. 220, not § 220, as Verbrugge). See Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; London: Continuum, 1994) 281.

⁹ The terms are taken from A. C. Moorhouse, *Studies in the Greek Negatives* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1959) 40, n. 1.

¹⁰ E.g. Mark 6:5; Acts 26:32.

¹¹ E.g. Matt 6:1; 9:17; Mark 2:21, 22; Luke 5:36, 37; 10:6; 13:9; 14:32; John 14:2, 11; 2 Cor 11:16; Rev 2:5, 16.

¹² E.g. Luke 11:35; John 3:18; 1 Tim 6:3; Titus 1:11; Heb 9:17; 2 Pet 1:9; 1 John 4:3.

¹³ E.g. Gal 2:2; 1 Thess 3:5.

¹⁴ E.g. Matt 11:27; 12:39; 13:57; 14:17; 15:24; 16:4; 17:8; 21:19; 24:36; Mark 2:7, 26; 5:37; 6:4, 8; 8:14; 9:29; 10:18; 11:13; 13:32; Luke 4:26, 27; 5:21; 6:4; 8:51; 10:22; 11:29; 17:18; 18:19; John 3:13; 6:22; 14:6; 17:12; 19:15; Acts 11:19; Rom 7:7; 11:15; 13:1; 1 Cor 1:14; 2:11; 8:4; 10:13; 12:3; 2 Cor 12:5; Gal 1:19; 6:14; Phil 4:15; 1 Tim 5:19; Rev 9:4; 19:12.

¹⁵ James Hope Moulton, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (3d ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908) 170–71. Verbrugge cites most of these categories ("Grammatical Internal Evidence" 563–64).

¹⁶ E.g. Matt 22:11; Luke 6:42; John 10:12; Acts 7:5; 26:22; 28:17, 19; Rom 9:25 (OT quotation); 1 Cor 9:26; 2 Cor 4:8, 9; Gal 4:8, 27 bis; Phil 3:3; Col 2:19; 1 Thess 2:4; Heb 11:1, 35; 1 Pet 1:8; 2:10; 2 Pet 1:16. Moulton, *Prolegomena* 231–32.

forms, even though μή is used with the subjunctive (but also οὐ μή) and optative. In any case, there are enough instances that do not follow strict rules to raise the question of whether such rules are pertinent in discussing οὐ/μή μόνον.

2. *Examples with οὐ/μή μόνον and Negation.* Verbrugge, as a result of his wishing to prescribe the use of οὐ μόνον (and μή μόνον), is not willing to accept that there may be other explanations of the evidence than rigid conformity with Blass's canon.

I begin with two instances from his treatment of μή μόνον. I think that we must recognize first that instances of μή μόνον may, in some circumstances, reflect the encroachment of μή noted above. This would mean that, where οὐ might have been expected, encroaching μή is found with an indicative verb. Such an explanation might clarify Phil 2:12, with μή μόνον linked to the indicative verb (ὕπηκούσατε), not the following κατεργάζεσθε. This would result in an instance of μή μόνον contrasting phrases. In discussion of John 13:9, Verbrugge is simply trying too hard to make Blass's canon fit all of the evidence. Verbrugge wishes to infer an imperative from the previous verse, thus justifying the use of μή.¹⁷ There is no imperative in the previous verse. One may just as well infer the indicative of that verse—"Lord, [I want you to wash] not just my feet but also my hands and my head." John 13:8 uses ἐὰν μή with a subjunctive, providing a possible explanation of encroachment of μή in v. 9.¹⁸

I am more concerned, however, with uses of οὐ μόνον.¹⁹ There are a number of examples that are clear "exceptions" to Verbrugge's sought-after hard-and-fast rule, and these present problems for his analysis. They include the following:

(a) 2 Cor 8:10, with two infinitive phrases contrasted. If οὐ μόνον does not go with non-finite verbs, then this instance does not follow the rule. Verbrugge does not treat this example, categorizing it with nouns or pronouns by treating the infinitives as "articular infinitives" and hence as nouns (p. 565). This instance counts against his interpretation of Blass's canon.

(b) Acts 19:27 and 21:13. In both of these examples, the οὐ μόνον construction appears to be used with two contrasting pairs of infinitives. Verbrugge posits that these should be read in light of an "understood repetition" of the main verb in the contrasting part of the sentence. There is another, and probably better, explanation. Verbrugge fails to note that, whereas earlier writers were "careful to place the negative before the element which is in contrast," in "later Greek [including the Greek of the NT] this is not always so."²⁰ Moorhouse cites a number of examples where οὐ is used but where infinitives or participles are being contrasted, including

¹⁷ That instances with οὐ/μή μόνον require inference of preceding words or phrases is not itself inappropriate. See Georg Benedikt Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek* (trans. W. F. Moulton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1882).

¹⁸ Verbrugge's discussions of Gal 4:18 and Jas 1:22 are not germane to the case he is making.

¹⁹ There may be other issues that need to be addressed, such as the separating the elements of the οὐ μόνον construction, including ἀλλά and καί. However, I do not treat these here, but accept the construction as Verbrugge discusses it.

²⁰ Moorhouse, *Studies* 141.

Matt 5:17; 9:12; 20:28, and where presumably Verbrugge would expect μή.²¹ In these instances, “here is juxtaposition of the contrasted phrases: οὐ, however, is initial and removed from the contrast.”²² This points to a fundamental issue that Verbrugge appears to have missed. It seems to me that Verbrugge, in analyzing use of οὐ/μή μόνον constructions, treats them as what are called word or special negatives, that is, he concentrates upon the particular word, especially the verb, that is the basis of the unit, and hence determines whether οὐ or μή should be used. What he fails to see is that word/special negation needs to be treated differently than sentence or nexal negation, in which case the negative used is not directly linked to the verb form in the negated unit or the actual units being contrasted. Of his examples (and others), Moorhouse says that they “are understandable on the single hypothesis that the negative is everywhere nexal.”²³ He has previously clarified what that means: “one type of sentence calls for remark, that where an antithesis is expressed (not A but B); and this is a favourite form of expression in Greek, with its love of contrast. Any elements in the sentence may be so opposed, and where they are two finite verbs (he does not fight but runs away) the negative will be nexal οὐ.”²⁴ Moorhouse only treats Matthew’s Gospel. However, he appears to indicate that nexal negation with οὐ,²⁵ rather than word/special negation, accounts for those instances when the units contrasted may contain elements that might otherwise expect to be negated by word negation with μή, such as infinitives or participles.

This understanding may help to clarify three more problematic instances for Verbrugge.

(a) John 12:9: Verbrugge is wrong that οὐ μόνον is to be linked with the finite verb (p. 565). We have here an instance of word/special negation.

(b) Rom 5:10–11: Verbrugge considers this instance a problem because the second element being contrasted has a participle (p. 566). However, as already noted above, we should expect οὐ with nexal negation, which appears to be the case here.

(c) John 11:52. Verbrugge is troubled by this example because he thinks μή μόνον may have been appropriate after an instance of the infinitive (p. 566). However, this is again an instance of word/special negation, with a phrase negated by οὐ.

3. *Romans 5:3*. On the basis of discussion above, it is clear that there is perhaps more to be considered than Verbrugge has said. First, on the basis of the above discussion, there is no certainty, only a tendency, that οὐ μόνον must be used with indicative verbs and μή μόνον with non-indicative verbs. In Rom 5:3, we may have an example of nexal negation, where οὐ μόνον is used to negate two con-

²¹ Ibid. He cites other types of examples as well. At this point, the NT is said by Moorhouse to be like Homeric Greek in being freer from the uses of negation found in classical Greek (p. 142).

²² Moorhouse, *Studies* 141.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. Moorhouse does not further define finite verb. A preliminary analysis along these lines is offered in Porter, *Idioms* 281–83.

²⁵ I note that with use of οὐ/μή μόνον the negative is not necessarily initial. This may be because of use of οὐ/μή μόνον as a fixed unit usually linked with ἄλλά.

trasting clauses with finite verbs, whether indicative or subjunctive (καυχώμεθα). Secondly, more careful examination of the two contrasting clauses may indicate that it is not the two verbs that are being contrasted, which is the focus of Verbrugge's analysis. Instead, the same verb is used in each element of the contrast, explicitly providing the element that is sometimes implied in the contrast. The contrast, however, is not about boasting but between the two grounds of boasting—boasting “upon the hope of God's glory” (Rom 5:2) and boasting “in the tribulations” (Rom 5:3). If this is the case,²⁶ and there are good indications that this is the contrast indicated, then even according to Verbrugge's criteria οὐ μόνον is the appropriate construction.

III. ROMANS 5:1 AND ἔχωμεν/ἔχωμεν

I wish now to reconsider whether Verbrugge has shown that, on the basis of οὐ μόνον being used in Rom 5:3, this has heightened the probability that the indicative ἔχωμεν must be read in Rom 5:1, as he contends. There are four reasons for doubting this, and for reasserting that the subjunctive is the better reading.

(1) The first reason is that it is not certain that οὐ μόνον in Rom 5:3 indicates that καυχώμεθα is to be read as an indicative. If nexal negation is in effect, or, perhaps better, if the contrast is between two phrases, then οὐ μόνον is not only possible, but even probable.

(2) The second reason is that, even if Verbrugge were to have shown that οὐ μόνον demanded that the two uses of καυχώμεθα in Rom 5:2 and 3 be read as indicatives, this does not necessarily answer the question of whether to read the indicative or subjunctive in Rom 5:1. Denney states the following: “It is better (reading ἔχωμεν) to take καυχώμεθα in ver. 2 with δι' οὗ, and co-ordinate it with τὴν προσαγωγὴν: ‘through whom we have had our access, and rejoice, etc’. Then the οὐ μόνον is in place.”²⁷ Thus, even if Verbrugge is correct in his approach (and I don't think he is), this does not mean that ἔχωμεν should not be read in Rom 5:1, contra Verbrugge's unwarranted assertion (p. 569).

(3) The discussion by Verbrugge of the “more difficult reading” in Rom 5:1 is thus rendered inconsequential, because he concludes that, as the omega and omicron may have been interchangeable by Paul, Tertius, or a later transcribers, grammatical evidence must prevail, by which he means the discussion of οὐ μόνον in Rom 5:3. This argument is now rendered inconclusive, as noted above. The external textual evidence remains overwhelmingly in favor of the subjunctive reading being original, as text critics, commentators, and even Verbrugge recognize.

(4) One of the reasons that Verbrugge further argues for the indicative in Rom 5:1 is his understanding of the implications of the use of the subjunctive. He offers essentially three arguments against the subjunctive. His first is that “in this section of Romans, Paul appears to be dealing in indicatives rather than in exhortation” (p. 565). This statement unhelpfully mixes the categories of the verbal form

²⁶ This is the proposal I offered in Porter, “Argument of Romans 5” 663; *Studies*, 222–23.

²⁷ Denney, “St. Paul's Epistle” 623.

and the modal function. What Verbrugge means to say is that Paul uses indicatives rather than subjunctives. What he seems to be indicating, if I read him correctly, is that in Romans 5 Paul is making assertions (dealing in indicatives) rather than speaking in uncertainties (exhortations). This is a misunderstanding of the Greek moods. As I stated in my previous paper, “the hortatory subjunctive exhorts the reader or interlocutor to possess what is; it does not call into question what is. Conversely, use of the indicative would not make the effectiveness of the work of Jesus Christ any more certain. It would only indicate the author or speaker’s attitude toward the event.”²⁸ Verbrugge further notes that from Rom 3:21 to 5:21 there are no non-indicative verbs in independent clauses except for one use of μή γένοιτο in Rom 3:31, but that in Rom 6:1 following there are a number of uses of the subjunctive, as well as other non-indicative verbs. What Verbrugge does not note is that the switch from indicatives to subjunctives must begin somewhere. If the instances of καυχώμεθα in Rom 5:2 or 3 are in the subjunctive, then we have two examples there. The shift may well begin, however, with Rom 5:1, which is parallel to Rom 6:1. Although Verbrugge is correct regarding the limited non-indicative forms preceding Rom 5:1, he fails to note other features of a diatribal style from 1:18 following, especially the hypothetical interlocutor addressed in the first person plural, of which use of the first person plural subjunctive Rom 5:1 may well be a part.²⁹ Verbrugge’s last argument (which he considers the most important) is that he does not know of another instance where a subjunctive is linked by καί to a following indicative. This may be true, but it is not necessarily pertinent, as it assumes that ἔχωμεν must be linked to καυχώμεθα as an indicative. As we have already seen, this is not necessarily the case. However, Verbrugge does admit that there are instances where two or more subjunctives are linked. As I have argued above, there is no necessary syntactical argument why that is not the case in Rom 5:1–3.

As a result of this examination of Verbrugge’s arguments, I can see no convincing reason why we should not follow the major text-critical evidence and read the subjunctive ἔχωμεν in Rom 5:1—especially as most of the important arguments Verbrugge raises against it have been satisfactorily addressed by previous scholarship.

²⁸ Porter, “Argument of Romans 5” 664; *Studies* 223, referring to Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (SBG 1; New York: Lang, 1989) 163–78, 321–35.

²⁹ See Porter, “Argument of Romans 5” 664–65; *Studies* 224.