

# 1 Corinthians 2:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

## Analysis

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**And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.** Paul explicitly rejects *hyperochē logou* (ὑπεροχῇ λόγου, "superiority of speech")—the rhetorical flourishes prized in Greco-Roman oratory. Corinth was steeped in sophistic culture where traveling philosophers competed for followers through eloquence. Paul's refusal to employ such tactics was strategic: **the testimony of God** (*martyrion tou theou*, μαρτύριον τοῦ θεοῦ) must rest on divine authority, not human persuasion.

This verse establishes the foundational contrast between worldly wisdom and Spirit-revealed truth that dominates chapters 1-3. Paul's deliberate weakness in presentation ensures that converts' faith rests on God's power (v. 5), not the messenger's charisma. His approach anticipates 2 Corinthians 10:10 where opponents mock his "contemptible" speech—criticism Paul wears as a badge of gospel fidelity.

## Historical Context

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Paul first visited Corinth around 50-51 AD during his second missionary journey (Acts 18), founding the church through 18 months of ministry. As a major Roman colony and commercial hub, Corinth hosted competing philosophical schools and valued rhetorical sophistication. The church's subsequent divisions along teacher-

loyalty lines (1:12) likely reflected this cultural obsession with eloquent leaders. Paul's rejection of rhetorical display directly challenged Corinthian social values.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How might contemporary Christian culture prioritize persuasive presentation over biblical substance—and how does Paul's example challenge this?
2. When have you been tempted to trust a teacher's charisma rather than testing their message against Scripture?
3. In what ways does God's "testimony" demand a different communication approach than human philosophies?

## Interlinear Text

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Κάγὼ	ἦλθον	πρὸς	ὑμᾶς	ἀδελφοί	ἦλθον	οὐ	καθ'
And I	came	to	you	brethren	came	not	with
G2504	G2064	G4314	G5209	G80	G2064	G3756	G2596
ὑπεροχὴν	λόγου	ἢ	σοφίας	καταγγέλλων	ὑμῖν	τὸ	
excellency	of speech	or	of wisdom	declaring	unto you		G3588
G5247	G3056	G2228	G4678	G2605	G5213		
μαρτύριον	τοῦ	θεοῦ					
the testimony		of God					
G3142	G3588	G2316					

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 1:17** (Parallel theme): For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

**1 Corinthians 2:4** (Parallel theme): And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

**1 Corinthians 2:13** (Parallel theme): Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

**Exodus 4:10** (Parallel theme): And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

**Romans 16:18** (Parallel theme): For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

**2 Timothy 1:8** (Witness): Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;