

1 CORINTHIANS 2

Paul Declared God's Wisdom

VS. 1-5, HOW PAUL PRESENTED THE GOSPEL TO THEM

Paul's message (vs. 1-2)

1. The "And" at the beginning of the passage points back to the preceding point at the end of chapter 1. There, the Corinthians were exhorted to only boast in the Lord. Likewise, Paul could only boast in the Lord.
2. Thus, Paul did not use the tactics of the wise sophists of Greece. "Any use of these means would have exalted them above the gospel, and the Corinthians might have been attracted by these means and not by the gospel." (Lenski)
3. Rather, Paul presented the essential message of Christ & Him crucified!
 - » Remember, Jesus crucified is foolishness to the world! 1:23.
 - » While preaching would begin with telling the audience about Jesus, His death and resurrection (see 15.1-4), to truly preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach all that He wills (cf. Matt. 28.18-20).
 - » "This inspired message did not need modifications by Paul then nor man's changes today. If one has to be drawn by social enticements he will demand these to remain. If one is drawn by the gospel he will stand regardless of the cost." (Robert Harkrider)

Paul's presentation (vs. 3-5)

1. Paul did not win them over by force of personality or dynamic presentation. See also 2Cor 10:10.
 - » "in the second-century *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Paul is said to be 'a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked'" (Tyndale)
 - » Acts 18.9-11 may provide some insight. It would seem that during Paul's time at Corinth he feared that persecution would

come, just as it had in the many other places he had preached. The Lord spoke to him, encouraging him.

2. Paul's message may not have been dynamic, but it demonstrated what was truly important: the Spirit (i.e. Divine revelation) and power (in this context, saving power is more likely than miraculous).
3. Paul's purpose (vs. 5): that their faith would be in God's power!

VS. 6-13, THE WISDOM OF THE MESSAGE

1. In this passage Paul switches from the singular personal pronoun, "I", to the plural personal pronoun, "we". Paul has inspired teachers such as himself, Apollos and Cephas (1.12) in mind.
2. The message is wisdom to the "mature," this is those who would rely only on God's will and not the wisdom of men (6)

It is not the wisdom of this age, but the wisdom of God in a mystery (7-9)

1. Note Ephesians 3:3-5 where the mystery isn't simply the coming of Christ and His crucifixion, but the uniting of Jew and Gentile in Him.
2. It remains a mystery to the wise of this world and those who would rely on worldly wisdom. That was particularly proven in that they crucified the Lord of glory, revealing their complete failure to comprehend God's revelation in Christ.
3. This wisdom had never been seen or heard, but it is what God prepared for those who love Him!

How God revealed it: through the Spirit! (10-13)

1. Note the "us" in vs. 10. Paul still has inspired teachers in mind. An important point should be made here. These Corinthian saints had all received "the promise of the Holy Spirit"

as Peter promised in Acts 2:38. Furthermore, many of them possessed miraculous abilities, but God's will was not revealed directly to every Christian. Rather it was delivered by the Spirit to specific teachers. See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13.

2. So, why should Paul and other inspired teachers be followed over the wisdom of men or our own feelings and emotions? Because only they had the Spirit inspiring them, the Spirit that knows the mind of God!

VS. 14-16, THOSE WHO REJECT & THOSE WHO ACCEPT GOD'S WISDOM

1. The "natural man" does not accept the Spirit given wisdom of God.
 - » "In 1:18 he is one who considers preaching of the cross to be foolishness. He is different from one who is 'perfect, full grown' that receives the word, 2:6. The spiritual versus carnal man is described in 3:1-3 and Rom. 8:5-8. The natural man in this context is one who relies on human reasoning. He refuses to be guided by the inspired revelation of God." (Robert Harkrider)
 - » He does not accept, because it is foolishness to him, see 1:21-23.
 - » Cannot understand because these must be appraised (judged) spiritually, not physically.
2. However, those who are spiritual can appraise the wisdom of God, because they are relying on God's Spirit, vs. 12.
3. Paul concludes by quoting Isaiah 40:13.
 - » God is far superior to man, so no man can know His mind. That is unless God reveals it to him (vs. 11).
 - » Yet, Paul says that "we", i.e. inspired apostles and teachers do know the mind of Christ. Because He revealed it to them.
4. Paul's point is clear: the Corinthian saints should not lean on worldly wisdom or earthly teachers that did not follow the will of God. Such had led to division. They needed to listen to those like Paul who spoke the very words of

God. We would do well to do the same!

5. Sadly, as we will note at the beginning of the next chapter, the saints in Corinth were not mature, but were acting as natural men, see 3:1-3.