

URGENT

1st
century
CIRCA ROMAN



1 Corinthians



1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Paul's Appeal to the Corinthians for Unity

Outline of 1 Corinthians

- I. Introduction (1:1-9).
 - A. Salutation (1:1-3).
 - B. Thanksgiving (1:4-9).
- II. Response to Received Reliable Oral Reports from the Corinthians (1:10-6:20).
 - A. The Problem of Factionalism within the Church (1:10-4:21).
 - 1. Identifying the Problem: Factions Centered on Baptismal Rites (1:10-17).
 - 2. Resolving the Problem (1:18-4:21).
 - a. Clarifying the Message of Divine Wisdom (1:18-2:16).
 - b. Correcting the Factional Human Wisdom (3:1-4:21).
 - B. The Problem of Incestuous Immorality within the Church (5:1-13).
 - C. The Problem of Civil Litigations within the Church (6:1-11).
 - D. The Problem of Sexual Immorality within the Church (6:12-20).

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2. Resolving the Problem (1:18-4:21).

a. Clarifying the Message of Divine Wisdom (1:18-2:16).

(1) **Message: The Centrality of the Cross (1:18-31).**

(2) **Method: Proclamation in the Spirit's Power (2:1-5).**

(3) **Source: God's Secret Wisdom Revealed by the Spirit (2:6-16).**

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Paul shifts his focus from

- **The Corinthians Being Called by God (1:26-31)**

- Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

TO

- **The Preaching of God’s gospel by Paul (2:1-5)**

- And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

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1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Paul identifies in the gospel a principle that governs—

- the **manner** of his speech—not lofty (2:1).
- the **scope** of his message —nothing but Christ (2:2).
- his **posture** of inadequacy—weakness, fear, trembling (2:3).
- his **method** of preaching—Spirit of power (2:4).
- his **ultimate objective**—faith rest in God’s power (2:5).

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Paul knew his audience and God's power.

- When he arrived in Corinth, Paul “**eschewed rhetorical virtuosity.**” (See what Tom Schreiner did here?).
- He was determined to **preach only Christ Jesus.**
- He **shunned inflated and pompous oratory** that bedazzles and tickles the ears of philosophiles, lovers of philosophy.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Paul knew his audience and God's power.

- He did not want the Corinthians to be impressed with rhetoric.
- He earnestly desired that the Corinthians' faith be established by God's power, the gospel.
- He proclaimed Christ crucified, the shame of the cross.
- His message was not aimed at receiving human approval but humble, believing reception.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And I was with you *in weakness* and *in fear* and much *trembling*, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

In this context:

- weakness, fear, and trembling do not refer negatively to a demeanor of anxiety on account of the Corinthians.
- weakness, fear, and trembling refer affirmatively to a holy demeanor on account of God's power, the gospel.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

The gospel of Christ is not just a message; it carries within itself its own method and its own power to establish its own culture.

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Understanding Paul's Use of "Wisdom" in 1 Corinthians

- **Paul uses "wisdom" in two discernible negative senses in relation to the gospel.**
 - "Wisdom" refers to the wrong method of preaching, "not with wise and persuasive words."
 - "Wisdom" also refers to the false ground of faith.
- **Paul uses "wisdom" in two discernible positive senses.**
 - "Wisdom" may refer to God's wise plan of redemption through a crucified Messiah.
 - "Wisdom" also denotes the content of the gospel which is God's wise plan prepared in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

God's Wisdom versus Human Wisdom

God's Assessment

Human Assessment

• **Wisdom**



• **Foolishness**

• **Foolishness**



• **Wisdom**

1 Corinthians 2:6-10a

Yet among the **mature** we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the King of glory. But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

Those with developed
spiritual sensibilities.

1 Corinthians 2:6-10a

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

“The rulers of this age”
refers to ruling human
authorities.

1 Corinthians 2:6-10a

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart **a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.** None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

**A secret and hidden;
a mystery concealed**

Romans 16:25-27

A mystery concealed,
Now revealed.

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, [according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages] but [has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been **made known** to all nations] according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

The prophetic writings in which the mystery was concealed are the same prophetic writings through which the mystery is now revealed.

1 Corinthians 2:6-10a

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. [None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.] But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

The ruling authorities are
spiritually blind.

1 Corinthians 2:6-10a

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

Isaiah 64:4, maybe an
allusion to Isa 65:17 &
Jer 3:16.

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.



**“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”**

**When do we often hear 1 Corinthians 2:9
recited?**

**At Christian Funerals.
Why?**

**Because of a misunderstanding of what Paul
means.**

Paul is NOT talking about “heaven.”

1 Corinthians 2:9

But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

Paul is still speaking about the mystery that was God concealed in the OT Scriptures and has now revealed in and by Christ Jesus—the gospel message.

Isaiah 64:4, maybe an
allusion to Isa 65:17 &
Jer 3:16.

Paul's Use of Scripture

1 Corinthians 2:9

What

no eye has seen,

no ear heard,

nor the mind of man imagined,

what God has prepared for those
who love him.

Isaiah 64:4

From of old

no one has heard,

Or perceived by ear,

no eye has seen

a God besides you, who acts for those
who wait for him

Paul's Use of Scripture

1 Corinthians 2:9

No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
nor the mind of man imagined
what God has prepared for those
who love him.

Isaiah 65:17

Behold, I will create new Heavens and a
new earth.
The former things will not be
remembered,
nor will they come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice
forever in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.

. . . these things God has revealed
to us through the Spirit.

Mention of revelation through the Spirit prompts the next paragraph, 2:10b-16, in which Paul contrasts “the spiritual” person and “the natural” person.

1 Corinthians 2:10b-16

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The Ministry of the Spirit (vv. 12-14)

In Paul & His Ministry Associates

- Receive the Spirit.
- Understand things God freely gives.
- Impart with words.
- Interpreting spiritual truths.

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have **received** not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might **understand** the things freely given us by God. And we **impart** this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, **interpreting** spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

In Those Who Are Taught the Gospel

- Accept the things of God's Spirit.
- Understand the things of God's Spirit.
- Judges all things.

The natural person does not **accept** the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to **understand** them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person **judges** all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Paul's Contrast

The Spiritual Person (One who has the Spirit)

- Receives revelation by the Spirit (2:12).
- Speaks spiritual things through the Spirit (2:13).
- Examines all things (2:15-16).

The Natural Person (One who does not have the Spirit)

- Rejects what comes from the Spirit (2:14).
- Regards spiritual things as foolishness (2:14).
- Inadequate understanding (2:14).

There are two kinds of people in this world:

1. Those who have the Spirit (Spiritual; Christians).
2. Those who do not have the Spirit (Natural; non-Christians).

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