

The Wisdom of Men or The Power of God; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- I. Paul in Corinth
 - A. During his second missionary journey
 - B. Acts 18 details the events in Corinth



- C. He went to Corinth after he was finished in Athens
- D. Stayed with Aquila and Priscilla because they were both tentmakers by trade
- E. Reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath
- F. He got frustrated with the Jews
 - 1. Acts 18:5–6; 5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. 6 And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”
- G. It was here in Corinth that Jesus gave Paul these comforting words
 - 1. Acts 18:9–10; 9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”
- H. Paul, I think, had a special bond with the church in Corinth
 - 1. Acts 18:11; And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

- I. Paul separates the wisdom of men from the Wisdom and Power of God, which is a good starting point for us
- II. Lofty Speech
 - A. 1 Corinthians 2:1–5; 1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
 - B. Paul was a very well educated person
 1. Strabo, A Greek philosopher and historian (64BC - 24AD) said the school in Tarsus was know to be even better than that of Alexandria or Athens.
 2. Paul was educated as a Pharisee at the “feet of Gamaliel,” Acts 22:13
 3. Paul was well read, he quoted a number of philosophers
 - a) Acts 17:28; for “ ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “ ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’
 - b) Aratus, a Greek Poet, 315BC - 240BC
 - c) Titus 1:12; One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”
 - d) Epimenides; a 6th-7th century BC Greek philosopher and poet
 - e) 1 Corinthians 15:33; Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”
 - f) Menander; A Greek dramatist from the 2nd - 3rd century BC
 - C. There are orators who know the “tricks of the trade”
 1. How to enthrall the crowd with their speech
 2. Maybe use big words to show their education; therefore, their position on the subject must be correct
 3. Use words that evoke the emotion to get a response. Many speakers use this today
 - D. But Paul chose to put all those devices aside
 1. "When the preaching itself is stressed to the degree that it obscures its own content, there is a case of excellency of speech." Coffman
 2. The apostle insinuated that the credibility of the gospel depended neither on its conformity to the philosophy of the Greeks, nor on the eloquence of its preachers, but on the attestation of God, who confirmed it by miracles. James Macknight
- III. Wisdom
 - A. 1 Corinthians 2:6–9; 6 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. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 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”—
 - B. Secret, hidden wisdom of God
 1. It is not of this age or world, therefore trying to find it there is doomed to fail
 2. There are many books that claim to give it to us, if you just buy it and read it
 3. Some people even claim to have it, and will impart it to you if you follow them
 4. Some of those ended in tragedy, like Waco, TX and Jonestown, Guyana
 5. There are only 66 books (written by 27 different authors over the course of about 2000 years) where you can find the hidden wisdom of God
 6. Anyone, in this day, who claims to have this hidden wisdom got it from these books and those claims can be verified by researching these books

C. Demonstrations of the Spirit and of power

1. These words of wisdom were accompanied by powerful signs, miracles, wonders, that people would witness and turn to God
2. Acts 9:40–42; 40 But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.
3. Acts 19:11–12; 11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.
4. Acts 19:19–20; 19 And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

D. The miracles that the Spirit performed were designed to validate the words that were spoken, whether by Peter, Paul, Philip, etc.

E. God saw fit to record all these events so that we too would believe

1. John 20:30–31; 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

IV. Revealed

A. 1 Corinthians 2:10–13; 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 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. 12 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. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

B. Through the Spirit

1. Not of the world, but of God
2. We have been given the gift of the Spirit, the indwelling, the seal of our redemption

C. If we have the Spirit of God, we ought to be able to understand That which God has given us

1. After watching the debate between Bill Nigh and Ken Ham, it was easy to see that one of them was using the spirit of this world to understand the things around him (that which God has given us)





2. Looking at the lion's skull, the world will tell you he is a meat eater because of his forward facing eyes to hunt prey and his fangs for tearing into meat.
 3. Yet look at the Koala and the Panda bear, both with forward facing eyes and mean looking fangs and teeth, but both of these animals are vegetarians
- D. Interpreting Spiritual Truths
1. Paul tells us that the natural man cannot accept the things of God
 2. How many of us have run into that, someone who is sold into the idea that man's wisdom is as far as it gets, there is nothing else higher than that
 3. Yet we understand that there is a wisdom not of this world, given to us by God so that we can spiritually discern the things that are spiritual
- E. God has given us a choice
1. Either we understand the world through God's eyes
 2. Or we understand the world through the world's eyes
- V. Wisdom or Power
- A. Paul refused to use "lofty speech" but let God speak through him
 - B. He let God's words permeate his person
 - C. He chose the power of God over the wisdom of man