

1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Continued

1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

To the unbelieving world it would seem as if this type of preaching was foolish. "Foolishness" translates the word from which "moron" is derived.

Every person is in either the process of salvation, which is not completed until the redemption of the body, or the process of destruction. One's response determines which. To the Christ rejecters who are in the process of being destroyed, the gospel is nonsense. To those who are believers, it is powerful wisdom.

To truly understand the magnitude of what Jesus did for us on Calvary, we must study the sacrifice of the un-blemished lamb sacrifice in the book of Leviticus. I will just say a few words here about this, but I suggest you get our study on Leviticus, and study that for depth on this. All sin is punishable by death of the sinner. There must be blood shed to do away with the sin. Jesus became our substitute on the cross. He shed His precious unblemished blood and paid our penalty in full for us.

We are counted not guilty of any sin, because Jesus abolished sin for those who will believe this and accept it for themselves. You can see why the world would not understand this. With His blood, He has saved us, and by His power He has raised us with Him to eternal life.

Ephesians 2:6 "And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:" This is a mystery almost unexplainable, but even now, all Christians are seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:19 "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

It is a very strange thing to me, how it is so difficult for those with great book learning to come to Christ. The analytical mind cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit. We have studied over and over in these lessons, just what wisdom is important. The gift of wisdom from God is to be sought. The accumulated learning that you get from worldly education will never help you receive the gift of wisdom from God. We are told that the Holy Spirit of God must teach us for us to truly understand. What seems to be wise to the world is but foolishness to the Lord. God is not interested in your mind or your intellect, He wants your heart.

"It is written"; (quoted from Isaiah 29:14), to emphasize that man's wisdom will be destroyed. Isaiah's prophecy will have its ultimate fulfillment in the last days when Christ sets up His kingdom and all human wisdom comes to an end.

1 Corinthians 1:20 "Where [is] the wise? where [is] the scribe? where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

Paul was paraphrasing (Isaiah 19:12), where the prophet was referring to the wise men of Egypt who promised, but never produced wisdom.

The scribes and Pharisees had head knowledge of God and His teachings but they missed the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah, because they did not understand the things of the Spirit. You cannot figure out God. You must believe as Abraham did, and it was counted unto him as righteousness.

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

The wise want evidence but the believers have faith in someone they cannot see with their eyes. Fact is the opposite of faith.

A disputer was a Greek word with no Old Testament counterpart, identifying those who were adept at arguing philosophy.

1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

In the Wisdom of God: God wisely established that men could not come to know Him by human wisdom, since it would exalt man. God designed to save helpless sinners through the preaching of a message that was so simple, the "worldly wise" deemed it nonsense.

Human wisdom tends to run a person away from God, rather than cause him to come closer to God. Childlike faith is what it takes to please God. From the human side, salvation requires and comes only through faith.

Preaching the Word of God as the Spirit gives you utterance is the power that causes many to believe. How can you believe, except you have a preacher? I have said it many times throughout these lessons, but the 2 great powers in this world are the written and the spoken Word of God. You cannot study your Bible very long without receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord. You cannot hear the true Word of God preached many times without receiving Jesus as your Savior.

The Word convicts you and saves you. It says: "them that believe". Believe what? That Jesus died for your sins and came to save you. We must believe that He is, and that He saves those who believe.

1 Corinthians 1:22 "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after Wisdom:"

Paul found that the Greeks sought after wisdom, when he was ministering in Athens. This was thought to be one of the foremost areas for learning in the world at that time. They were constantly analyzing every new thing that came along. We know from the teaching of Jesus in the four gospels that the Jews were always demanding signs from heaven.

Unbelieving Jews still wanted supernatural signs, yet they refused to accept the most glorious of all the supernatural signs: the works of God, the provision of salvation through a virgin born, crucified, and risen Messiah. In fact, the sign was a stumbling block to them.

This was nothing new, because Elijah had run into this very same thing. When he called down fire from heaven to devour the offering, it was to prove whether the prophets of Baal were representing the one true God, or whether Elijah's God was the One True God.

1 Kings 18:21 "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD [be] God, follow him: but if Baal, [then] follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

1 Kings 18:38-39 "Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that [was] in the trench." "And when all the people saw [it], they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he [is] the God; the LORD, he [is] the God."

Read all this account (in chapter 18), to get the full impact. God had proved Himself over and over to the Israelites. It was time for faith to operate in these people without a sign.

1 Corinthians 1:23 "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;"

The only true sign and the only true wisdom. This alone was the message Paul would preach because it alone had the power to save all who believed.

The Jews had been for years expecting their Messiah to come and free them from the oppression of the Romans. They were expecting a mighty warrior king like David. They believed themselves to be God's chosen people, and the teaching that all men were brothers was not acceptable to them. The Greeks would not accept any teaching that they could not accumulate the facts and come up with a theory about. The crucifixion of Christ did not fit into either of their theories.

Look with me at the following Scriptures which show how Jesus is their stumbling rock.

1 Peter 2:7-8 "Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner," "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

Even though the Jews had the law, they could not justify this crucifixion of Jesus. They could not go beyond this one point. There would be no salvation without the crucifixion.

1 Corinthians 1:24 "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

To all that are called, the message of the cross, which seems so pointless and irrelevant to man's proud, natural mind, exhibits God's greatest power and greatest wisdom.

Jesus tore the middle wall of partition down, when He was crucified on the cross. There is just one way to be saved, and that is through belief in Jesus. It does not matter whether you are a Jew or any other nationality. It is Jesus who saves. The power was given to Jesus by the Father.

Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Read (Revelation 5:13 and 11:6) in connection with this.

1 Corinthians 1:25 "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

Let us look at this same thing in some Scriptures from Romans.

Romans 11:33-35 "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" "Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"

Romans 11:36 "For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen."

The things that man thought of as weakness or defeat, brought about the greatest victory that man has ever known. Of course, I am speaking of the crucifixion.

1 Corinthians 1:26 "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]:"

We see that this is true. God does not go down and call the king away from his kingship to follow Him and be His worker. He went and got some fishermen, who were unlearned in the law. God did not choose the scribes and Pharisees, or the priest, or high priest to be His apostles either. He chose the simple people who were not burdened down with their own importance. Usually God chooses someone who is very shy in the flesh (like Moses).

God chooses those who would be totally dependent on Him. Those who would not decide on their own what to do, but would seek the will of God in every matter are the ones He would use. God is looking for a few people who will serve Him, in whatever task He has for them to do.

1 Corinthians 1:27 "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;"

God disdained human wisdom, not only by disallowing it as a means to knowing Him, but also by choosing to save the lowly. He does not call to salvation many who the world would call wise, mighty and noble.

God's wisdom is revealed to the foolish, weak, and common. That is, those considered nothing by the elite, who trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. God clearly received all the credit and the glory for causing such lowly ones to know Him and the eternal truths of His heavenly kingdom.

The following Scripture in Luke explains this very well.

Luke 21:15: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

1 Corinthians 1:28 "And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:"

If you are nothing in the sight of the world, you have one qualification that God is looking for. He takes those from complete obscurity (by the world's calculation), and makes them His helpers. The only power, or wisdom, or strength we need is Jesus in us. We do not need a highly educated mind by the standards of the world. He gives us the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

The spoken Word of God created all the earth, and everything in it and around it from nothing.

1 Corinthians 1:29 "That no flesh should glory in his presence."

No saved sinner can boast that he has achieved salvation by his intellect.

If we are truly His, everything we are and hope to be is because He ordained it. That leaves no room for self-glory. The creation is flesh. The Creator is Spirit. Even our salvation is by divine intervention into our affairs.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The redeemed not only are given salvation by God's wisdom rather than by their own, but are also graciously given (by His doing), a measure of His divine wisdom. As well as imputed righteousness (Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21), sanctification from sin (Eph. 2:10), and redemption by God (Eph. 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19). In order that, above all else, the Lord will be glorified (Gal. 6:4).

1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Continued Questions

1. What is the preaching of the cross to them that perish?
2. What is it to those of us who are saved?
3. Where should we study to truly understand the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross.
4. What one word shows that He paid the price for us? He was our _____.
5. What is a mystery that is almost unexplainable?
6. In verse 19 it says: I will destroy the _____ - of the wise.
7. The analytical mind cannot comprehend the things of the _____.
8. Who must teach us the things of God, for us to truly understand?
9. God is not interested in your _____ or your _____, He wants your heart?
10. What kind of knowledge did the scribes and Pharisees have?
11. The world by wisdom _____ _ _ _.
12. It pleased God by the foolishness of _____ to save them that believe.
13. What does human wisdom have a tendency to do?
14. What are the two great powers in the world?
15. What must we believe?
16. The Jews require a _____.
17. The Greeks seek after _____.
18. Why did Elijah call down fire from heaven to devour the offering?
19. What did the people say when the fire came down?
20. Where can you find the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal trying to call fire from heaven?
21. What was a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks?