

1 Corinthians Chapter 2

1 Corinthians 2:1 "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 is explaining to them here, that it was not because he was a great orator that they received the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message was pure and simple. The message was Jesus and Him crucified. Paul was a learned scholar, but that was more of a hindrance than a help, in this case.

“Testimony of God”: This was not Paul’s testimony of God, but God’s testimony of Himself (namely, “the Cross”).

1 Corinthians 2:2 "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

“I determined” (literally, “I decided”): The implication is that Paul gave careful thought to his approach, and resolved to lay aside the ornaments of speech and philosophical skill to announce Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Paul’s message and method reflected divine wisdom.

Paul was not interested in their standing in the community or their education. The only way that Paul separated them was those who believe and those who do not believe.

Though Paul expounded the whole counsel of God to the church and taught the Corinthians the Word of God, the focus of his preaching and teaching to unbelievers was Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for sin on the cross. Until someone understands and believes the gospel, there is nothing more to say to them. The preaching of the cross was so dominant in the early church that believers were accused of worshiping a dead man.

1 Corinthians 2:3 "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

Many Bible scholars believe that this was saying that Paul had a nervous disorder. Some type of nervous disturbance in His brain. I do not believe this is what Paul is saying here.

“Weakness...fear...trembling”. Paul came to Corinth after being beaten and imprisoned in Philippi, run out of Thessalonica and Berea, and scoffed at in Athens, so he may have been physically weak. But in that weakness, he was most powerful. There were no theatrics or techniques to manipulate people’s response. His fear and shaking were because of the seriousness of his mission.

1 Corinthians 2:4 "And my speech and my preaching [was] not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:"

I love Paul saying here, that his preaching was a demonstration of the power and the Spirit of God in him. In other words, he is saying that the Holy Spirit of God is speaking through him.

Paul is fully aware, as we should be, that a message he might come up with on his own might not be the one God would have him to bring. He has turned his tongue and his mouth over to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is speaking through Paul.

1 Corinthians 2:5 "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Our faith should not be based on mankind, but should be placed in the power of God. It is not up to men to judge whether your faith is what it should be or not: it is up to God.

1 Corinthians 2:6 "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:"

“Perfect” refers to the morally and spiritually mature (Genuine believers). Paul cannot resist the use of irony here. (In verse 4), he denies the use of wisdom; now he admits to using it, but only among those capable of comprehending and appreciating it (namely, the “perfect”).

We know that the Lord Jesus spoke in parables, so that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not hear. He did not want the world to come to Him with their mind, so He taught in parables so that only His own would understand through the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:7 "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory:"

“In a mystery”: In may be instrumental (i.e., “by a mystery”), modal (“in the form of a mystery”), or local (“hidden in a mystery”). Mystery refers to some work or purpose of God unrevealed until now (Romans 16:25-26). In this case, the reference is to the “hidden wisdom”, which “God ordained...unto our glory”. The purpose of God concerning our salvation was designed by God from eternity and is directed toward the everlasting glory that believers will enjoy in His presence.

We do know that Jesus revealed this “mystery” to the believers. Let me share a couple of Scriptures that will help us understand.

Colossians 1:26-27 "[Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:" "To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

Paul is saying that the very thing they are calling folly, is in fact, the greatest wisdom. This is wisdom of God that He has revealed through the Holy Spirit of God to those who are His followers.

1 Corinthians 2:8 "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known [it], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

“Princes of this world”: The crucifixion is proof that the rulers/Jewish religious leaders lacked wisdom. This is saying; that if they had known for sure who Jesus was, they would not have crucified Him.

A little knowledge of the Word of God is a dangerous thing. If you truly get into the study of the Bible, stay with it. To learn just a little will tend to confuse you. You need an overall view of the Bible, before you start deciding what is right and what is wrong. Let the Word (itself), teach you.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

In our wildest imagination, we cannot come up with the wonderful things the Lord has stored up for us.

Isaiah 64:4 "For since the beginning of the world [men] have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, [what] he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

These words from Isaiah refer to the wisdom God has prepared for believers. God's truth is not discoverable by eye or ear (objective empirical evidence), nor is it discovered by the mind (subjective, rational conclusions).

This scripture also shows the harmony of the Old Testament with the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 2:10 "But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The Holy Spirit that we receive is the earnest of greater things to come. We are not like the rest of the world, if we are believers, we have hope of the resurrection. We are not a permanent resident of this earth, if we are a Christian.

“Revealed...unto us”: Unto us is in the emphatic position in Greek, emphasizing the enormous privilege granted the recipients of divine revelation. The magnificent treasure of God's revealed truth is accessible to the mature believer.

By the Holy Spirit, God disclosed His saving truth. (Matt. 11:25; 13:10-13). The Spirit alone was qualified because He knows all that God knows, Himself being God.

As with the “we's” (in verses 6, 7, 12, and 13), Paul is, first of all, speaking of himself (as in John 14:26; 15:26-27), and in a sense, of believers who have been given the Word as recorded by the apostles and their associates who wrote the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 2:11 "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

It is not possible for man of flesh to fully understand God who is Spirit. We know as much of God as the Holy Spirit of God has revealed unto us.

Verse 11, deals with the doctrine of illumination (a condition of spiritual awareness; divine illumination; "follow God's light"), having to do with human understanding of divine truth.

This is saying that it is not possible for man to know what is in another's heart. Only the Spirit of God knows that.

It is not possible for man of flesh to fully understand God who is Spirit. We know as much of God as the Holy Spirit of God has revealed unto each of us individually.

1 Corinthians 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

The subject of (verses 12 and 13), is the doctrine of inspiration. In (verse 12), Paul talks about the content of inspiration. In (verse 13), his concern is with the communication of inspiration.

The "we" and "us" refer to the apostles and other writers of the Word of God. The means was inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), by which God freely gave the gift of His Word. It was this process of inspiration that turned the spiritual thoughts into spiritual words (verse 13), to give life (Matt. 4:4).

The Spirit of God has brought unto us life, if we are Christians. We are heirs according to the promise of God, if we are believers. The New Testament is the last will and testament of Jesus Christ and it reveals to us what our inheritance is, if we are Christians.

1 Corinthians 2:13 "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."

This perhaps is speaking of the things that the Holy Ghost reveals to man. Physical eyes cannot see into the Spirit. That is why so many times people read the Bible and do not understand what it is saying. The Holy Spirit of God (our school teacher), has to teach us the meaning, or we do not understand. The spiritual things are so far above this earth that they can only be understood by the Holy Spirit. We will find, as we go on in these lessons, that it is the spirit of man that Jesus quickens, not the flesh of man.

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual": The term comparing occurs only here and (in 2 Cor. 10:12), where the meaning is clearly "compare". However, in classical Greek, the term was always used in a sense of "to compound" or "to interpret." Probably the most satisfactory interpretation is "combining spiritual things with spiritual words." After speaking of spiritual "things," (verses 11-13), Paul now speaks of the "forms" in which they are conveyed. Spiritual truth is conveyed in language that is given by God's Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned."

The natural man looks with physical eyes and understands with a carnal mind, so he does not understand the Spirit at all. The Holy Spirit which dwells in us is (if we are true believers), teaches us the things of the Spirit. The physical (carnal), man believes only what he can see, touch, or taste. The spiritual man understands secrets that cannot be seen, touched, or tasted.

“Natural man”: (Literally, “unspiritual man”), is unreceptive. He does not admit the truth into his heart (Luke 8:13; Acts 8:14; 11:1; James 1:21). As spiritual discernment is generated only by the Holy Spirit, the capacity to know spiritual truth is beyond the innate powers of the natural man.

“Spiritually discerned”: The fundamental idea of discerned is that of “examination” or “scrutiny”. It is used only by Paul and Luke, and mostly of “judicial examination” (Luke 23:14); Acts 4:9; 1 Cor 9:3; 10:25 and 10:27). On the spiritual plane, the natural man does not have the ability to sift the facts.

1 Corinthians 2:15 "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Obviously, unbelievers are able to recognize Christian’s faults and shortcoming; but they are not able to evaluate their true nature as spiritual people who have been transformed into children of God.

I believe that this is speaking of a man who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit of God and has the gift of discernment. We must try the Spirits and see whether they are of God or not. We do not judge people lost or saved, but we do make judgments on the actions of people.

Jesus is the final Judge of all. The only Judge the Christian will stand before is Jesus and those making carnal judgments about you should not affect you at all.

The difference between the natural man and the spiritual man is primarily that the spiritual man has founded his faith on God’s revelation. He can judge now both earthly and heavenly things. He can discern what is and what is not of the gospel and salvation, and whether a man truly preaches the truth of God.

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."

Saying that we have the mind of Christ just means that He has revealed to us His will. In the following Scriptures, there is an even better description of what I am saying.

John 15:15 "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

“We have the mind of Christ”: means that Christians possess the Lord’s own understanding, that is, His thoughts, opinions, judgments, plans, and so on. This answers the question that Paul puts in the same verse, “who hath known the mind of the Lord?” The answer is, “We do!” The term we include the apostle Paul and to some extent all true believers. Though believers today are prudent to acknowledge the superiority of apostolic insight into spiritual matters to that of their own.

1 Corinthians Chapter 2 Questions

1. In verse 1, Paul says that he came not with what kind of speech?
2. Paul was a learned scholar, but his message he brought was ____ and _____.
3. How had Paul separated them?
4. What do many scholars believe that verse 3 is speaking of?
5. What does the author believe is the problem?
6. Paul's words were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in what?
7. Who was speaking through Paul?
8. Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the _____ of _____.
9. Who does he speak wisdom among?
10. Paul said he spoke the wisdom of God in a _____.
11. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
12. How long had this mystery of God been hidden?
13. What is the mystery?
14. If the princes of this world had known the mystery, they would not have done what?
15. A _____ knowledge of the Word is a dangerous thing.
16. Where can we find a Scripture in the Old Testament saying the same thing, basically?
17. What does this show about the Old and the New Testament?

18. How does God reveal to the believers what He has in store for them?
19. What is the hope the Christian has that the world does not have?
20. What do we know about God?
21. What is the last will and testament for the believers?
22. Why do many people attempt to read the Bible, and cannot understand what it is saying?
23. What does Jesus quicken in man?
24. The natural man looks with _____ eyes.
25. What does the carnal man believe in?
26. Why must we try the spirits?
27. Who is the final Judge?
28. We have the mind of _____.