

1 Corinthians Study 3

Read CHAPTER 2:1-16

KEY VERSES—

“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (2:4-5)

SUMMARY—

Paul continues his discussion on wisdom from chapter 1. Whereas many teachers among the Corinthians were trying to impress the people with their own wisdom (3:18-23), and the people were being led to division (3:3-4), Paul assures these brethren that he wants nothing to do with such vainglory (4:6-7). Paul did not come with human wisdom (2:1-5), but with wisdom that comes from above (2:6-16). Human wisdom had been responsible for the death of Christ (2:6-8). The wisdom which Paul revealed was unattainable by humans, because it only comes from God (2:9-13). We cannot have more wisdom than God, but we can share in His wisdom by having the “mind of Christ” (2:14-16). The spiritual wisdom that comes from God (chapter 2) far exceeds the worldly wisdom which was alluring them (chapter 1).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) What did Paul bring to the Corinthians (2:1-2)? What did he not bring to them?
- 2) How deep and complicated is the gospel message (2:2)? How profound is it?
- 3) What credentials did Paul have that would impress the Corinthians (2:3-4; cf. Acts 18:9-10)?
- 4) How do such human limitations actually enhance the power of the gospel (2:4-5; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:5-7)? How much skill and ability do we need as teachers in order to make the gospel message more effective?

5) Why does Paul even mention these weaknesses (2:3-5)? With whom is he contrasting himself (1:12-13; cf. 3:4-7; 4:6)? Will anyone take pride in being converted by Paul now, thereby dividing the church over his name?

6) Where was Paul's eloquence—in his speech (2:4; cf. 2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6) or in his message (2:5; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:2,5-7)?

7) What kind of wisdom was this that Paul was preaching (2:7)? What kind of wisdom was it not (2:6,13)?

8) In what sense has God's wisdom been "hidden" (2:7; cf. Ephesians 3:9)? What was Paul given the opportunity to do (2:6-8; cf. Ephesians 3:1-11)?

9) What does the word "mystery" mean in this context (2:7)? Why is it no longer a "mystery" (2:10; cf. Romans 16:25-26)? 1 Corinthians 10 Lessons by Rob Harbison

10) What two things, in each of the following verses, are true about this hidden wisdom of God:
⇒ 2:7—
⇒ 2:9—

11) What proof does Paul give to show that the wise of this world do not possess such wisdom and cannot discern greater spiritual truth (2:7-8)?

12) Does Paul refer to heaven in 2:9? What is he talking about?

13) Which is more profitable—the wisdom that comes from men (2:6-9) or the wisdom from God (2:10-14)?

14) Why is the Holy Spirit a competent revelator of God's wisdom (2:10-11)? Why is He also a necessary part of this process of revelation?

15) Who is taught God's word by the Spirit—Paul and the other inspired writers or all believers (2:10-13)? Can we expect our own personal knowledge and revelation from the Holy Spirit?

16) Is this great wisdom only for the benefit of an elite group of spiritually initiated people (2:12c)?

17) Is Paul claiming verbal inspiration (2:13)? To what degree are the words of Scripture inspired (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)?

18) Who is the natural man (2:14)? The spiritual man (2:15)? Is there any validity to a comparison with those who are mentioned in chapter 1?

19) What frame of reference does the natural man use to try to understand spiritual things (2:14)? In what way does this hinder him? What frame of reference does the spiritual man use to try to understand all things (2:15-16)?

20) Does the “natural” man understand the actions of the “spiritual” man? Why? List some specific examples of things he cannot comprehend.

21) Why is the natural man an inadequate judge of spiritual things (2:14-15)? What makes the spiritual man competent to judge (2:15-16)?

22) What is necessary to understand the spiritual nature of God’s wisdom (2:16)? What stood in the way, at this time, of the Corinthian’s ability to discern this spiritual wisdom (3:1-3)?

23) The spiritual man may be considered uncultured and ignorant of things in this world, but what greater things is he able to understand (2:15)? Why is he able to understand them (2:16b)? What limit is there to even this understanding (2:16a)?