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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

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**WISDOM AMONG THEM**

**THAT ARE PERFECT**

**1 Corinthians 2:1-16**

***I 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."***

And (v. 1) takes up the thought of 1:18-25 that God’s “weakness” is stronger than the world’s strength. Paul emphasizes the futility of mere human wisdom by considering the example of his own ministry and preaching. As a result of the influence of Greek rhetoric in Paul’s day, a heavy emphasis was placed on a speaker’s mastery of philosophy and oratorical skills. However, when Paul preached to the Corinthians, it wasn’t with brilliance of speech or wisdom that is, he didn’t speak with eloquence because his goal wasn’t to impress people. 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 particular case. Paul was a Pharisee and had been taught in the school of Gamaliel. With all that learning, he had not come to Christ, until the Lord appeared to him. Many of the things he had believed before had to be unlearned, and that is difficult. In some cases, impossible. His power and prestige had gone by the wayside when he became a Christian. Now, his message is simple and to the point. He just declared the Lord Jesus to them.

***I Corinthians 2:2-3***

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

***3 "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."***

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. Many Bible scholars believe that this was saying that Paul had a nervous disorder. Some type of nervous disturbance in His brain. His weakness could have been the infirmity of his flesh. The fear and trembling had to do with desiring to please God. Paul wanted to be sure and bring the Word of God in its purest form to these people. On the contrary, he acknowledges that he actually preached in weakness and fear. More than his delivery, Paul was focused on the content of his message: Jesus Christ and him crucified.

***I Corinthians 2:4-5***

***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:"***

***5 "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."***

Paul is saying 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’s confidence was not in his own intellect, training, abilities, or background. Rather, Paul was confident in the Spirit’s power that accompanied his message so that the Corinthians’ faith would be in God’s power and not human wisdom. Paul placed his entire dependence on the message itself (which was from God) and the power of the Holy Spirit to make that message effective. No matter how brilliant the spokesperson, he or she cannot achieve what only divine sovereignty can accomplish. 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. 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.

***I Corinthians 2:6-7***

***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:"***

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

To be sure, Paul wasn’t rejecting wisdom or suggesting that God despises it. After all, the Lord doesn’t celebrate ignorance! Instead, the issue has to do with one’s source of wisdom. Believers whose life perspectives have been nurtured by the Spirit of God are mature; on the other hand, the rulers of this age do not use divine truth as the reference point for their lives. 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. 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***

***26 "[Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:"***

***27 "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.

***I 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."***

This is just saying; that if the world had known for sure who Jesus was, they would not have crucified Him. They would not have sealed their doom if they had realized who He was. A little knowledge of the Word of God is a dangerous thing. Paul’s message was based on God’s hidden wisdom in a mystery—that is, something that was previously unknown but which God had since revealed. God’s plan to bring salvation to humanity for our glory had been established before the world began because he knew what would be needed in history to redeem sinners. But the rulers of this age didn’t comprehend God’s wisdom; otherwise, they would not have crucified Jesus Christ. In their attempt to destroy this Jewish rabbi, they were actually furthering God’s plan of redemption. In his glorious sovereignty and providence, the Lord is able to use unbelievers to achieve his purposes. Don’t put God in a box. His infinite wisdom is more than we can grasp through our finite human logic and understanding. 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.

***I 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."***

Spiritual wisdom is made possible by means of the personalized work of God in our lives. Quoting from the prophet Isaiah, Paul explains that for those who love God, he is able to make known things that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived. This is not a reference to heaven but to God’s work in the life of the believer. It indicates that God can help believers understand things that they cannot learn through natural means. 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."***

***I 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."***

There is nothing concealed from God that He does not know. Even the thoughts of man are understood by God. Spirit is capitalized and is speaking of the Holy Spirit 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. This is the desert that we must cross to get to that glorious, promised land {heaven}. God reveals these things to us by the Spirit. This is called illumination. Though God has revealed to us his inspired, written Word, believers need illumination to give us understanding. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, within the mind of a Christian that causes him to supernaturally learn, understand, and apply the things of God. It is the voice of God through the Word by means of the Holy Spirit becoming personalized to you. Illumination does not involve new revelation; rather, it involves God giving a believer understanding of the meaning and application of Scripture in the midst of his own experiences.

***I 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."***

Paul is saying, “No one knows my thoughts better than I do; no one knows your thoughts better than you.” In the same way, then, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit. Therefore, we are dependent on the Spirit to enable us to make a spiritual connection with God. When this happens, God illuminates his Word so that it becomes relevant to specific circumstances. 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.

***I Corinthians 2:12-13***

***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."***

***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."***

The spirit of the world can’t help you, for spiritual truth isn’t taught by human wisdom. Worldly thinking doesn’t have access to the things of God. Using it to discern them is like trying to connect your television to a signal when you don’t have the right equipment. All you get is static. 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. 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 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 that Jesus quickens, not the flesh of man.

***I 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."***

This is just what we were saying above. 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. Similarly, a person without the Spirit (an unbeliever) cannot receive what comes from God. It appears to be foolishness to him because it can only be evaluated spiritually. The great news is that this divine insight is freely given to us who believe. God earnestly wants to personalize his revelation to you through his spiritual illumination.

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

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 be of God or not. We do not judge people lost or saved, but we do make judgements on the actions of people. Jesus is the final Judge of all. The only Judge the Christian will stand before is Jesus. All of the people who are making carnal judgements about you should not affect you at all. Jesus is our Judge. Yet it requires being a spiritual person so that you may evaluate everything from a spiritual perspective. Though all believers have received the Holy Spirit, not every believer operates as a “spiritual person” because it requires evaluating things in accordance with Scripture and with openness to the Spirit’s illuminating work. Such a person cannot be evaluated by anyone—that is, it will be obvious to those who don’t know God that a spiritual person doesn’t approach life like everyone else does.

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

Paul poses a rhetorical question (quoting again from Isaiah): Who has known the Lord’s mind, that he may instruct him? The answer is obvious: no one! God doesn’t need an education; he certainly doesn’t need human counsel. On the other hand, we definitely need his instruction and perspective. That’s why he’s given believers the mind of Christ, the capacity to think Christ’s thoughts after him, so that we will live life as we ought. 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 trying to say.

***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."***

**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. Paul's words were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in what?
4. Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_.
5. Who does he speak wisdom among?
6. Paul said he spoke the wisdom of God in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
8. How long had this mystery of God been hidden?
9. What is the mystery?
10. If the princes of this world had known the mystery, they would not have done what?
11. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of the Word is a dangerous thing.
12. How does God reveal to the believers what He has in store for them?
13. What is the hope the Christian has that the world does not have?
14. What do we know about God?
15. What is the last will and testament for the believers?
16. The natural man looks with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ eyes.
17. What does the carnal man believe in?
18. Why must we try the spirits?
19. Who is the final Judge?
20. We have the mind of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.