

FIRST CORINTHIANS

verse-by-verse



CHAPTER TWO

THE MAIN IDEAS

Key Words: Spiritual Wisdom

Key Verses: v. 2, 9-14

Key Thought: Just as Christian revelation is not upheld by human wisdom, neither can spiritual truths can be understood using human wisdom.

SUMMARY

Continuing to demonstrate the folly of boasting in human wisdom, Paul reminds them of how he came to them. Instead of depending upon excellent speech or persuasive words of wisdom, he proclaimed Jesus Christ and Him crucified, confirming his testimony with a demonstration of the Spirit and power (1-4). This he did that their faith might rest in God's power, not in the wisdom of men (5).

He did proclaim a type of wisdom, however, that wisdom which comes from God (6-9). He describes the process by which God has revealed this wisdom through His Spirit (10-13). Paul then contrasts the difference between the "natural man" (one who depends upon his own human wisdom) who does not receive the things of the Spirit, and the "spiritual man" (one led by the Spirit of God, such as Paul) who has the mind of Christ (14-16).

OUTLINE

I. PAUL'S MANNER OF PREACHING (1-5)

A. HE PREACHED "JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED" (1-3)

1. Declaring the testimony of God without excellence of speech or wisdom (1)
2. Determined not to know anything among them but Jesus and Him crucified (2)
3. Done in weakness, fear and much trembling (3)

B. WITH DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER (4-5)

1. Not with persuasive words of human wisdom (4)
2. That their faith would rest in the power of God, not the wisdom of men (5)

II. THE TRUE WISDOM OF GOD (6-16)

A. THE "HIDDEN" NATURE OF GOD'S WISDOM (6-9)

1. The apostles do speak a sort of wisdom (6)
 - a. Among those who are mature (6a)
 - b. But it is not the wisdom of this age or its rulers, which is coming to nothing (6b)
2. The wisdom of God they speak has been a "mystery" (7-9)
 - a. Ordained before time began, but hidden (7)
 - b. Unknown by the rulers of this age, which is why they crucified the Lord (8)
 - c. Man had not discovered what God has prepared for those who love Him (9)

B. THE SPIRIT'S REVELATION OF GOD'S WISDOM (10-13)

1. Revealed through His Spirit (10-11)
 - a. The Spirit searches for the deep things of God (10)

- b. Only the Spirit of God can know the things of God (11)
- 2. Made known to the apostles (12)
 - a. Who have received the Spirit from God (12a)
 - b. So they might know the things freely given by God (12b)
- 3. Spoken now by the apostles (13)
 - a. Not in words according to human wisdom (13a)
 - b. But in words taught by the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual (13b)

C. THE "NATURAL MAN" VERSUS THE "SPIRITUAL MAN" (14-16)

- 1. The "natural man" (e.g., a philosopher) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God (14a)
 - a. They are foolish to him (14b)
 - b. Because they are "spiritually" discerned (14c)
- 2. But with the "spiritual man" (e.g., an apostle), such is not the case (15-16)
 - a. He is able to judge all things properly (15a)
 - b. No one is able to properly judge him (15b)
 - c. For he has "the mind of Christ" (16)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) How does Paul describe his preaching among them? (1-2)
- 2) How does Paul describe his feelings among them? (3)
- 3) What accompanied Paul as he preached the gospel? (4)
- 4) What six phrases in verses 9-13 help to explain the process by which the hidden mystery of God was made known?
- 5) What phrase teaches the concept of "verbal inspiration"? (13)
- 6) What is said about the "natural" man? (14)
- 7) What is said about the "spiritual" man? (15-16)