

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians

The Gospel is the Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

1. **The Perception of God's Wisdom** (vs.18-19)

The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the line which divides wisdom and foolishness. Everyone who has not believed in the gospel regard it as some sort of foolishness are under the condemnation of God (cf. John 3:19). All people who believe the gospel (v.21) and are being saved by God see the wisdom and power of God displayed through it.

2. **The Goodness of God's Wisdom** (vs.20-21)

The heights of man's wisdom and achievements are not the basis upon which man can come to know God. The way in which God has chosen for man to come to know Him is contrary any system of man (cf. Rom 1:18-23).

3. **The Standards For Judging Wisdom** (vs.22-24)

Different cultures and religions have their own specific standards for philosophy and verification of what is true. The powerful and saving gospel of Jesus Christ is counter-intuitive to all man-made systems.

A. The Perishing Jew

The Jews who had rejected Jesus and His message had also rejected the preaching of the disciples. Many claimed that they would believe if given a miraculous confirmation from God, but then rejected every sign laid before them (Matt. 28:11-15). The reality of Jesus Christ crucified and risen was a stumbling stone that many would not believe (Deut. 21:23; cf. Gal. 3:13).

B. The Perishing Gentile

The prevailing secular culture in the Roman world, including Corinth, was religiously inclusive and philosophically combative (cf. Acts. 17:22ff). They rejected the Christian gospel because it was contrary to their systems of philosophy and religious inclusion (cf. Acts 19:23-27).

C. The Saved Jew and Gentile

The distinguishing factor about those who are being saved is that they are 'the called' (cf. Rom. 8:28-30). Rather than human wisdom and achievement, it is God's mercy and the work of the Holy Spirit which allows us to see the wisdom of God as we believe and are saved (Titus 3:4-7; cf. John 14:26).

4. **The Verdict of God on Human Wisdom** (v.25)

If God could actually be considered to be foolish or weak, His weakness would crush the mighty and His foolishness would confound the worldly wise.