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1 Corinthians 2 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that the message of Christ was never built on human philosophy or impressive speech, but on the power and wisdom of God revealed through the Spirit.

† The wisdom of God cannot be discovered by human intellect alone, it must be revealed by the Spirit of God.

† This chapter explains why many people in the first century rejected the gospel, they were judging spiritual truth with natural

reasoning instead of spiritual understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:1

When I first came to you, brothers and sisters, I didn't arrive with impressive speech or clever philosophy while announcing the testimony of God to you.

† Paul reminds them that the gospel was not presented as Greek philosophy or rhetorical debate, which was common in Corinth (Acts 18:1-11).

† The message of Christ stood apart from the culture of intellectual pride that dominated the Greek world (Colossians 2:8).

† Clement of Alexandria noted that the apostles did not depend on rhetorical skill but on the truth revealed through Christ, showing the contrast between divine revelation and human wisdom.

1 Corinthians 2:2

I made the decision to focus on only one thing while I was with you, Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

† The cross was the center of Paul's preaching, because it revealed God's plan of redemption and covenant fulfillment (Galatians 6:14).

† In the fulfilled perspective, the crucifixion began the process that culminated in the covenant transition that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Hebrews 8:13).

† Irenaeus wrote that the preaching of Christ crucified was the foundation of apostolic teaching throughout the early church.

1 Corinthians 2:3

I came to you in weakness, in fear, and with trembling.

† Paul isn't describing doubt in the message, but humility in himself, recognizing that the power came from God, not from his personality (2 Corinthians 12:9).

† The early apostles often faced persecution and danger while preaching the gospel (Acts 20:23).

† Eusebius records that the apostles endured suffering and

hardship as they spread the message of Christ throughout the Roman world.

1 Corinthians 2:4

My message and my preaching were not delivered with persuasive words of human wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and power.

† The gospel was confirmed through the work of the Holy Spirit and miraculous signs in the early church era (Hebrews 2:3-4).

† These demonstrations authenticated the apostolic message during the time when the new covenant was being revealed.

† Tertullian wrote that the early church saw the power of God working among believers, confirming the truth of the gospel message.

1 Corinthians 2:5

This happened so that your faith would not rest on human wisdom but on the power of God.

† True faith isn't built on philosophy or persuasive arguments but on the revealed truth of God (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

† The gospel overturned the pride of Greek intellectualism by revealing wisdom that came from God alone.

† Justin Martyr explained that Christian faith rests on divine revelation rather than philosophical speculation.

1 Corinthians 2:6

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, but it's not the wisdom of this age or the rulers of this age who are passing away.

† Paul distinguishes between worldly wisdom and the wisdom revealed by God.

† The rulers of that age included the Jewish leadership and Roman authorities who opposed Christ and His apostles (Acts 4:5-7).

† Their authority was temporary and would soon pass away with the end of the old covenant age in AD 70 (Matthew 24:34).

1 Corinthians 2:7

Instead, we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom that God prepared before the ages for our glory.

† The mystery refers to God's long-hidden plan to unite Jews and Gentiles through Christ (Ephesians 3:3-6).

† This plan was foretold by the prophets but only fully revealed through the apostles.

† Irenaeus wrote that the mystery of Christ had been concealed for generations but revealed in the time of the apostles.

1 Corinthians 2:8

None of the rulers of this age understood it, because if they had understood it they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory.

† The Jewish leaders and Roman authorities failed to recognize the Messiah (Acts 3:17).

† Their rejection fulfilled the prophetic plan that Christ would suffer and be rejected (Isaiah 53:3-5).

† The crucifixion became the turning point of covenant history, leading toward the judgment of Jerusalem and the full revelation of the new covenant.

1 Corinthians 2:9

But just as it is written, things that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind has imagined are the things God has prepared for those who love Him.

† Paul references prophetic language describing the blessings of God's redemptive plan (Isaiah 64:4).

† These blessings were revealed through Christ and the new covenant kingdom.

† Early Christian writers frequently used this passage to describe the spiritual blessings revealed through Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:10

But God has revealed these things to us through His Spirit, because the Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God.

† The apostles received divine revelation through the Spirit

during the formation of the New Testament church (John 16:13).

† This revelation allowed them to explain the fulfillment of prophecy and the meaning of Christ's work.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that spiritual understanding comes through the Spirit who reveals God's truth.

1 Corinthians 2:11

Who knows a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit within them, in the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

† Paul uses a simple analogy to explain divine revelation.

† Just as a person's inner thoughts are known only to themselves, God's thoughts must be revealed by His Spirit.

† This explains why spiritual truth cannot be discovered through human reasoning alone.

1 Corinthians 2:12

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand the things freely given to us by God.

† The apostles were given the Spirit so they could understand and teach God's revealed plan.

† The message of the gospel was therefore revealed truth rather than human invention (Galatians 1:11-12).

† Tertullian argued that Christian teaching came from divine revelation preserved by the apostles.

1 Corinthians 2:13

We also speak these things not with words taught by human wisdom but with words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual truths with spiritual words.

† The apostles communicated the gospel using language guided by the Spirit.

† This is part of the foundation for the authority of apostolic teaching preserved in Scripture.

† Early church leaders repeatedly affirmed that the apostolic

writings carried divine authority.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, because they appear foolish to him, and he cannot understand them because they must be spiritually discerned.

† Many in the first century rejected the gospel because they judged it through worldly reasoning (1 Corinthians 1:18).

† Spiritual truth requires spiritual understanding that comes through the Spirit of God.

† This explains why the message of Christ was rejected by many religious leaders of that time.

1 Corinthians 2:15

But the spiritual person evaluates all things, while he himself is not properly judged by anyone.

† Believers who understand spiritual truth can discern the difference between God's wisdom and worldly wisdom.

† Their understanding comes from God's revelation rather than human approval.

† The early church often faced judgment from the world while standing firmly on the truth revealed by God.

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who has known the mind of the Lord so that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

† Paul quotes Isaiah to emphasize that God's wisdom surpasses human understanding (Isaiah 40:13).

† Through Christ and the Spirit, believers are given insight into God's revealed will.

† This doesn't mean believers become divine, but that they understand God's revealed purposes through Christ.

Historical References

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the wisdom of God revealed through Christ surpassed the philosophy of the Greeks and revealed the true knowledge of God.

† Irenaeus explained that the apostles preached the wisdom of God hidden for generations but revealed through Christ and His cross.

† Eusebius recorded how the early church spread this message throughout the Roman Empire despite persecution.

How it applies to us today

† Believers today must remember that truth comes from God's revelation, not from cultural trends or philosophical systems.

† The gospel still confronts human pride because it teaches that salvation comes through Christ alone.

† We should seek spiritual understanding through Scripture rather than relying on human reasoning.

† Just as the early church trusted God's wisdom over worldly wisdom, we must do the same in our generation.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul avoid impressive speech when preaching?

A: Because the power of the gospel comes from God, not human persuasion (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

Q: What is the mystery Paul referred to?

A: God's hidden plan to redeem humanity through Christ and unite Jews and Gentiles in one body (Ephesians 3:3-6).

Q: Why did the rulers of that age crucify Jesus?

A: Because they did not understand God's wisdom or recognize the Messiah (Acts 3:17).

Q: Why do some people reject spiritual truth?

A: Because spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned and cannot be understood through natural reasoning alone (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Q: What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?

A: It means believers understand God's revealed will through

the teachings of Christ and the apostles (Philippians 2:5).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

- † 1 Corinthians 2
- † Clement of Alexandria, Stromata
- † Irenaeus, Against Heresies
- † Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History
- † Tertullian, Apology

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