

Wisdom of God

Lesson 2

I Corinthians 1:18 - 2:16

Introduction

Paul notes some of the problems facing the church at Corinth in vs. 13-17. Before he discusses any of these problems in detail, he compares the wisdom of the world to the wisdom of God.

In this section, Paul lays a good foundation for the epistle by stressing that the things of God can be known by man only when God chooses to make them known. Accordingly, Paul argues that his knowledge of God came by direct revelation. This being true, it would follow that the epistle was not merely a collection of Paul's opinions, but an inspired message. In addition, this section serves as a good introduction by urging the Corinthians to rely on the wisdom of God, rather than their own understanding. As we shall see, their reliance on personal wisdom in many cases led to their sinful lack of unity and harmony.

The Foolishness of the Cross - 1:18-31

1. Note the contrast immediately established in vs. 18-20, i.e. the reaction of men to the cross as foolishness or the power of God.
2. Why did God choose something the world views as foolish in order to save the world (cf. vs. 29)?
3. Based on the things for which the Jews and Gentiles were looking (vs. 22) explain why a crucified messiah was to them, respectively, a stumblingblock and foolishness (cf. Deuteronomy 21:22, 23).
4. Describe those to whom the calling of God had little appeal.
5. Why should we glory in the Lord?

Manner of Paul's Speech - 2:1-5

1. Based on 1:18-31, why would excellency of speech and wisdom be out of place in Paul's teaching?
2. Be prepared to explain briefly what Paul taught if he knew only Jesus Christ and him crucified.
3. Explain vs. 3 by using Acts 18:1-12.
4. Based on your knowledge of Acts give an example of Paul using a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
5. Use vs. 5 as part of your answer in question 2 of the previous section.

Source of Paul's Teaching - 2:6-16

1. Define the word mystery using vs. 7.
2. Why would Christ not have been crucified if the mystery had been known? Why did God not prevent the crucifixion by revealing the mystery?
3. Describe how the things prepared for those that love God were made known. How could you be sure that Paul's message came from God?
4. How does vs. 15 help to explain why the wise of the world tend to reject Christ (1:26-28)?