# 1 Corinthians 2:6-13: The Wisdom of God

## 1 Corinthians 2:6

6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

### Wisdom among the Mature

Wisdom is knowledge applied - it is the reflection of spiritual truth having a deep impact on those who are being conformed to the image of Christ.

So who are the mature listeners?  Are they in Corinth or is the clarification that Paul is trying to make one between those who are setting their minds on things above versus those who are carnal? Ephesians 4:11-16 paints a picture of God’s purpose inside of the body to both provide agents of maturity for the individual as well as the body.

The wisdom of the earth, and especially in the Corinthian church, was passing, a cultural prop for popularity and it had no bearing on their lives.  It was the lack of understanding the truth in tandem with application that made the Greeks scratch their heads about Christianity. The Greeks were enamored with new things (as was evident in Paul’s engagement on Mars Hill), but they were not interested in the application of those things on a practical level.

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" – T.S. Eliot[[1]](#footnote--1)

*Has man gotten any wiser since Paul wrote this?*

Wisdom from God comes from an omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal being. God is able to speak from outside of time and space. Mankind is at best able to speak to what a few minds can hold at one time and even then it is not inclusive of all time and space. God can say and know that there are or are not unicorns in all of the universe within all of eternity past on into the future – man cannot do that because of his finite nature. God is not passing away.

## 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

### A Mystery of God

There are multiple mysteries that Paul talks about in the New Testament:

* The Mystery of Godliness: 1 Timothy 3:16
* The Mystery of Christ in You: Colossian 1:26-28
* The Mystery of the Church: Ephesians 3:1-11

This particular mystery is about God’s wisdom being revealed – a wisdom that could not be deduced, derived, or extrapolated without God’s specific revelation. The Christian faith was the antithesis of the Greco-Roman faiths because it was certain, it had a God who was not part of a sinful being (He is wholly other), and He was revealing Himself and His truth in a clear and understandable way that redeemed all without discrimination. The secular views of the mythological gods were fickle, selfish, and embodies human flaws. They had mysteries, but none of them were rooted in an eternal plan.

The mystery cults of the secular world were completely isolated from the other religions, which caused division between all sorts of groups, and it built a sense of superiority into the religious sects.  Every time Paul confronts these concepts in Acts he’s open and clear with the listeners so that they’re shocked by the inclusive, liberty-giving, gracious, and Holy Spirit empowering lives that Christianity promotes.

*How would the pagans embrace mysteries?*

### Predestined

The New Testament is replete with reminders of *God’s plan*, through Christ, to deliver man from sin and to create the church [John 17:24, Ephesians 3:11, 1 Timothy 1:9, 1 Peter 1:20]. God’s intent was for His sovereign will to be executed at a precise time in history with a precise outcome for His glory [Ephesians 1:6], the propitiation for sin [Romans 3:25], and man’s salvation [1 John 4:9-10]. Furthermore this predestination was unto a conformity to His image as outlined in Romans 8:29-30.

*Why is it significant that God predestined the church?*

### The rulers of this age

Pilate asks, “What is truth?,” in John 18:38. As a ruler from a pagan culture he embodies a very sad reflection of political wisdom at that time. He is not interested in justice or truth, but appeasing the masses. His embrace of relativism led to the Roman punishment of Christ being crucified on the cross. His involvement was pivotal, but his apathy is disheartening every time we read it.

Paul had aligned himself with the rules of this age as Saul. When he speaks on this topic it is from experience. Christ’s rejection of the established traditions in favor of the proper application of the Law caused great tumult and hatred from the Jewish leadership. They demanded the crucifixion for both its outcome in death, but also its embarrassment: Deuteronomy 21:23 - cursed is anyone hanged from a pole. No true prophet could be cursed in the leaders’ eyes.

### The Crucifixion of Christ

So after this arrogance in assuming God’s plan, will, and purpose for His Son, Paul calls the rulers out for their responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ. Accept that it was God’s will that His Son be crucified.

*How else could this have come about if Israel had accepted Jesus as the Messiah instead?*

We can’t speak with the wisdom of God on this – as His wisdom saw to the outcome that we know so well – but it is possible that among many possibilities that the crucifixion could have happened any number of other ways due to the Roman empire not tolerating any sort of ruler rising up. They might have marched in and crucified Christ as a political move. Christ would then be resurrected and other biblical prophecies would have been fulfilled in other ways.

Paul’s focus is on the foolishness of the rulers, however, so the crucifixion, which had to happen for God’s wrath to be poured out on sin, was imminent.

## 1 Corinthians 2:9

9 but just as it is written,"THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

Isaiah 64:4 in the Septuagint is written much like this citation. We find here that Paul is using this verse to further explain the unanticipated mystery aspects of the church. The skeptical mind of the Jew embraced the idea that the church was not God’s people because they were God’s people. However, there is a quality of God’s love that is so foreign to them because they loved their ethnicity over God’s word and God’s revelation that they did not recognize the messenger. Instead, Paul begins the transition from earthly wisdom versus heavenly wisdom as a principle to God’s implementation of His intent in wisdom on a very personal level.

## 1 Corinthians 2:10-13

10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

### The Spirit’s Work in Revelation

Peter writes, “for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” in 2 Peter 1:21. In this we see that the Spirit has for all of history given very specific revelation as an agent of God’s message. God cares about revealing His message, preserving the meaning and intent of His message, and He delivers it with precision and clarity through the Holy Spirit to the human recipient so as to reveal truth. Not truth sourced in earthly understandings of truth, but truth as defined in a heavenly source.

### The Spirit’s Work as Part of the Godhead

The heavenly source of truth, revealed through the Spirit, comes from a relationship that is only possible through the super-natural quality of the triune Godhead. Only God can search the infinite depths of the Godhead. Only God can then take the infinite richness of this truth and translate it into the concepts and forms that our finite minds can both understand, but then believe.

*What impact does the Spiritual nature of the message have on our lives?*

This both validates the truth of the message, but brings weight and power to the message so that we as believers can trust it, believe it, and in many cases live it.

### The Spirit as a Counselor in Salvation to the Thoughts of Man

The thoughts of man are hardly as deep as the thoughts of God, but they are the thoughts borne from being created in God’s image. The Spirit penetrates the thoughts of mankind and can bring us God’s thoughts so that we may think them after Him. The Spirit counsels us (John 16:7) and gives us God’s wisdom.

The Corinthian church would not be fraught with division if the thoughts of the Godhead were their thoughts, but instead they were living with an earthly, carnal focus. Paul is reminding them of the opportunity to abide and rest in their life in Christ.

### Spiritual Thoughts and Spiritual Words

In case the fleshly state of the readers were still of any esteem in their own hearts and minds Paul calls them out on his source as a messenger (God the Spirit), and puts forth a message combining spiritual thoughts and spiritual words. When confronted with this reality the Corinthians would have to be responsive and meditate on the truth presented.

The Greek literally suggests the combination of the spiritual with the spiritual. It leaves out room for the flesh as a source of wisdom and leaves out any chance for the Corinthians to give themselves importance in determining truth, specifying truth, or claiming personal responsibility: the Spirit is God and the Spirit is in revealing life to the readers in Corinth. Division cannot exist in this truth, but the Corinthians have to believe it.

1. This is an intriguing quote, but T.S. Eliot was not a theologian, have discernment in looking at his larger works. [↑](#footnote-ref--1)