

4. Human intellect vs. God's wisdom

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I did some research regarding the latest and the greatest human scientific achievements. Here are 3 of them:

- Scientists successfully edited the first human embryo ever in the U.S. – Taking advantage of the revolutionary gene-editing technique, “CRISPR”, a gene linked to heart conditions was successfully “deleted” from a human embryo.
- Scientists at the European Organization for Astronomical Research (ESO) found the best candidate planet for extraterrestrial life so far. This super-Earth named LHS 1140b was found in the habitable zone for human beings. But don't plan on moving out there any time soon, because you don't like your neighborhood. It is about 40 light-years from earth.
- Quantum computers are, unarguably, the next great evolutionary step in the development of computing techniques. Their successful creation will be a paradigm shifting achievement – one that will alter the future of humanity and revolutionize operations across a broad spectrum of applications. Y'all understood that, right? I have no idea what I just read, but it sounds impressive.

Human intelligence and technical achievements are quite astounding. This is not isolated to the 21st century. It goes way back – back to the Tower of Babel in Genesis. *Genesis 11:1-9 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” 5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

As you noticed they had one language and one speech. The Lord didn't have to demolish the tower, rather He simply confused their language by making them speak multiple languages and they could no longer communicate. One guy said, “Enchilada,” and the other guy said, “Domo arigatogozaimashita.” Hasta la vista, Babel!

Now humankind is able to speak in the same language again – the Internet. Everyone who uses the internet, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media should be thankful to Al Gore who invented the internet. He also made a profound statement, “A zebra does not change its spots.” Of course, his Global Warming theory is absolutely foolproof. I just puked in my mouth.

As human intelligence increases, people have created every false conception of God imaginable. Not only have they worked to make their deities compatible to the human mind, but they have set up their intellects – and therefore themselves – as gods.

The late atheist Ayn Rand, summed up that concept, “And now I see the face of god, and I raise this god over the earth, this god whom men have sought since men came into being, this god who will grant them joy and peace and pride. This god, this one word: I.” Ayn Rand was for sure on the wrong side of God and is regretting her decision in hell.

In 1 Corinthians, we find the believers at Corinth playing for the wrong side. The Corinthian Christians were an arrogant bunch. They tucked their thumbs under their spiritual suspenders and bragged about incidental things, like who baptized them. They didn’t realize that the baptizer didn’t mean anything to God, but only to them. It only fanned their ego.

This pseudointellectualism had to be stopped and replaced with the wisdom of God. They needed to come face-to-face with the meaning of the cross.

A. THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Christ’s death is central to salvation – a process that begins with justification, advances by sanctification, and climaxes in glorification. Here Paul speaks directly to the second phase – the process of sanctification, where we are delivered from sin’s power through the life of cross-bearing.

The Greek word “sozo” has a continuing tense, so it means “being saved” indicating a process – a daily death to self. How can we explain this “daily death to self”? Does it mean that we are supposed to have suicidal thoughts all the time? Certainly not.

In Luke 9:23-24, Jesus defines the meaning of dying to self for us:

Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”

In the Roman Empire, the prisoners were sentenced to die by crucifixion had to carry at least a section of their cross through the city to their place of execution. This practice demonstrated to all observers that the condemned rebels had finally submitted to the state.

In submission to the Father, Jesus carried His cross to Golgotha and was crucified on our behalf. Following Him requires a similar crucifixion – the death of our stubborn wills and selfish desires. Are you shouldering your personal cross? If not, my brothers and sisters, pick it up. Carry it daily. Nail your selfish desires to that cross. Only then will you experience a truly resurrected life.

B. THE HUMAN INTELLECT AGAINST GOD’S WISDOM

1 Corinthians 1:19-21 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God,

the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

The apostle Paul is quoting Isaiah 29:14. He shows that in spiritual matters, God opposes the wisdom of man. He will destroy the wisdom of the wise, not bow down before it.

The Gentile intellectual, the scribe, the debater, the Greek philosopher, they have all one thing in common: They are utterly lost. They don't have a foggiest idea about their future or eternal destinies. We cannot know anything about our future. Human intellect is worthless in changing the destiny of individual future. You may disagree and argue that we as the intelligent human beings, can carry our own destinies. But how do you know that you are going to have another breath in your lung and another heartbeat five minutes from now? You absolutely don't.

Brilliant astronomers chart the orbits and shapes of the planets. But their telescopes never lead them to God. Astronauts, some of the finest and brightest specimens of humanity, explore other planets. But they don't discover God.

At the early stage of space exploration in 1960s, Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet astronaut was circling around the orbit of the earth. Khrushchev, the first Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union boasted after that achievement, "Gagarin, who flew up to space, and yet, even he didn't see God anywhere." A Christian in America answered him back later, "Step outside of his spaceship without his space-suit. He will meet God." By the way, that Soviet astronaut was a devout Christian, but he didn't tell anyone.

What is the difference between human intelligence and God's wisdom? Human intelligence is gathered information, but it is limited to the generation, cultures, and civilizations. But God's wisdom is much different. It transcends generations, cultures, and civilization. Wisdom can be defined as "applications of God's holiness in all we say, do, and think".

If you are merely looking for human intelligence, all you have to do is get on Google. Just about anything you want to know can be obtained in a matter of a few nano seconds. I don't know anything about Quantum Physics. I typed that in Google, within 0.44 seconds, it provided me 154 million links that will lead to more information than I can possible comprehend and need.

When it comes to human intelligence, not many can compete with the late Stephen Hawking who was a scientist and author. When he, as a theoretical physicist and cosmologist, spoke, people listened. Hawking changed the way scientists think about the universe. His prediction in the 1970s that black holes can emit energy was proven to be spot on. But when it came to wisdom, I cannot say that he had much, because he was not wise enough to take care of his eternal destination before his death this year.

Our world boasts of its knowledge, and it seems that there is more knowledge than ever before, but there also seems to be less wisdom. God's wisdom is found in God's Word, yet the kings and rulers do not want the Word of God.

I like what one of my favorite British preachers, Charles Spurgeon said:
"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know

a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as the knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom."

C. THE CROSS – THE CONFUSION TO HUMAN INTELLECTS

1 Corinthians 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

1) The Jews

Matthew 12:38-41 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

The Jews asked for signs to verify the Gospel of Jesus. They demanded a victorious Messiah, heralded by miracles, who would conquer their enemies and restore the glories David's kingdom. Instead, the Jews were presented with a man who refused to give them the signs they sought and, their king, wound up naked on a cross, laid in a borrowed tomb. No white horse; no shining armor and sword. The Jews refused to believe that this Jesus was their long-awaited Savior, because He didn't meet their Savior standard that was set by themselves.

2) The Greeks

On the other hand, the Greeks "searched for wisdom." They looked for a proud philosopher/king who would satisfy their intellectual curiosity. Instead about a divine ruler who humbled Himself to be born a Jew, grew into manhood virtually unrecognized, and spent three years speaking mysterious parables and healing all kinds of illnesses. He ended his brief ministry betrayed by His own people and executed by crucifixion – the most despised form of capital punishment used by the Roman Empire. This whole matter of the life of Jesus was nothing more than a joke to the Greek humanistic mindset.

D. THE CROSS – THE ONLY WAY TO SALVATION

1 Corinthians 1:23-25 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Crucifixion was not only a horrible death; it was a shameful death. It was illegal to crucify a Roman citizen. Crucifixion was never mentioned in polite society, any more than we today would discuss over dinner the gas chamber or the electric chair.

With that in mind, what do you think of the cross? Do you trust that Jesus' death and Resurrection – what appear to be foolishness to the majority of the world population – are the very power and wisdom of God? Or do you sit with arms folded across your chest, skeptical and demanding a convincing sign, an irrefutable argument, before you'll consider turning to the cross for salvation? Remember: God's foolishness is wiser than our wisdom; and His weakness, stronger than our strength. So lay down your pride, take up your cross and be saved and follow Him.

Tell me if you can find one religion around the world of which gods died for its followers' sins, so that they may become righteous and holy at free of charge, without any demand. You should not add or subtract anything from this simple Gospel mes-

sage. Because it is too simple, humans want to add their own effort, so that they can be a part of salvation. God doesn't want you and me to be a part of the way of salvation. It is all about Jesus.

E. THE CROSS AND US

1) We must surrender our wills to the Savior Jesus and allow His Spirit to transform our minds so we can become fully aligned with God.

We may need to abandon some of our expectations, demands, and rationalizations, but we never have to violate sound reason in order to believe.

2) How do we die to our sinful selves? By daily turning our backs on our self-centered wills and kneeling before the crucified Messiah, synchronizing our every thought, word, and deed with His will.

And since God is life, what have we really got to lose?

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.