

## 6. The hidden depth of God's wisdom

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Just about all of you have seen icebergs around the North Pole or South Pole in the news, movies, or documentaries. The reason for the bluish color on those icebergs is that out of the spectrum of the sunlight that penetrates into the iceberg, only the blue color reflects back out due to heavy density of the iceberg. Another interesting thing about icebergs is that if you can measure an iceberg 100 feet above sea level, there are at least 600 feet under the surface of the freezing water.

God's wisdom is like the iceberg. To unbelievers, who see only the tip, it is intellectually pathetic, blindingly unrealistic, and desperately purposeless. But those who are saved by God's grace see below the surface to the precious and quiet depth.

### A. GOD'S WISDOM

*1 Corinthians 2:6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*

The portion of the Scripture, we are going to study has a rather unique approach. It gives us a conclusion before and after of the main body portion.

The wisdom spoken of here is a godly insight – perception about people, problems, ourselves, and life – also known as “God's wisdom” in v7, “the things of God” in v11, “the things of the Spirit” in v14, and “the mind of Christ” in v16. And only the mature believers in Christ can possess this wisdom, which should give spiritual babes the incentive to grow. The deeper we swim into Christian maturity, the more wisdom we'll have to live for the Lord.

### B. GOD'S WISDOM AND UNBELIEVERS

Paul gives three reasons why unbelievers can see only the tip of the iceberg from v7 to v9:

#### 1) It is a secret

*1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*

Paul explains that believers “speak the wisdom of God in a mystery”. The original Greek word for “mystery” is “*mustérion*,” which conveys the idea of “secret” better than the general concept of the English word “mystery.” Many of the Bible versions, including my NKJV, with the exception of ESV and RSV, unfortunately use the word “mystery” instead of “secret”.

Let me explain the difference between the two words: A mystery is something that is complex, intertwined, and hard to grasp, while a secret is something that is clear to those who have been informed, while those who have not received a security clearance have no idea. In this case, the security clearance is salvation through Jesus Christ. To unbelievers, God's wisdom is a secret they are not in on; when they listen to believers speaking its language, they hear only unintelligible noises.

#### 2) It is not understood

*1 Corinthians 2:8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Paul goes on to describe God's wisdom as “none of the rulers of this age knew.” The Greek word he uses for “know” is “*ginóskó*,” which refers to “a knowledge born

of deep personal understanding.” The depth of our spiritual perception comes from applying knowledge of God from the Bible in our lives, not just intellectual comprehension of truths about Him.

How do many of you know what HTML stands for? It means “Hypertext Marked Language.” It is a behind-a-scene source code of building a website, like this one that I built long ago. To average people, what you see is a gibberish, but to those who are familiar with HTML or Java script language, it makes sense.

Many people claim to believe in God, but they don’t have the foggiest idea who God is or what He wants for our lives. This understanding goes beyond human comprehension. Only God can enable men to understand the truth about Him when they choose to follow God. So to the unbeliever, “Knowing God” spells, “D-U-H, DUH!”

The Jesus Seminar was a group of about 50 liberal Biblical scholars and 100 laymen founded in 1985. These people got together and decided their collective view of the historicity of the deeds and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth by voting with colored beads. These unbelieving so-called liberal Bible scholars are like lazy scientists – those who might spend years just observing iceberg tips through high-powered lenses but never look below the surface to see what icebergs are really made of. More often than not, they were the very ones used by satan to destroy young people’s faith in God around in colleges and universities, even so-called Christian colleges. For those people, God has this word:

*Galatians 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

Speaking of pure stupidity, here is another one: A few days ago, the Episcopal Church formed a committee to provide a pathway toward revising the Book of Common Prayer to include gender-neutral language for God. Their church leaders called for immediate revisions to correct the “overwhelming use of masculine language” throughout the book, arguing that the language is now a hindrance to spiritual inclusion.

Listen, satan thought that Golgotha where Jesus died on the cross was God’s great defeat. But it turned out to be God’s greatest victory and satan’s defeat. From the time of our Lord’s birth into this world, satan had tried to kill Him, because satan did not fully understand the vast results of Christ’s death and resurrection. Had the demonic rulers known, they would not have engineered the death of Christ. Of course, all of this was part of God’s eternal plan. It was God who was in control, not satan.

### **3) It is not learned**

*1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

The apostle Paul quoted this from Isaiah 64:4. The immediate context relates it to Israel in captivity, awaiting God’s deliverance. The nation had sinned and had been sent to Babylon for chastening. They cried out to God that He would come down to deliver them, and He did answer their prayer after 70 years of their exile. God had plans for His people, and they did not have to be afraid.

Paul applied this principle to the church. Our future is secure in Jesus Christ no matter what our circumstances may be. In fact, God’s plans for His own are so wonderful that our minds cannot begin to conceive of them or comprehend them.

By the way, y'all might have heard this verse quoted concerning heaven. It certainly applies to heaven, but, in context, it is talking about what we have right now because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Unbelievers choose to be blinded to the glorious grace and forgiveness of God that could be theirs if they would only accept Jesus. How many of us really appreciate what we have right here and right now?

### **C. GOD'S WISDOM AND BELIEVERS**

Paul now shares with the Corinthian believers how they, as well as we, modern day saints, can discover the hidden treasures of God's wisdom:

#### **1) The Priority**

*1 Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

God chooses those who trust in Him to be the recipients of His wisdom, as Paul explains in v10: "God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." God reveals His wisdom to believers, not to the unbelieving intellectuals, influentials, or wealthies. We are God's priority, not because what we can do for Him, rather solely based on His grace.

#### **2) The Process**

*1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

Paul goes on to describe God's tool for revealing His wisdom. Paul lays down that the only person who can tell us about God is the Spirit of God. He uses a human analogy. There are feelings which are so personal; things which are so private; experiences which are so intimate that no one knows them except a man's own spirit. Paul argues that the same is true of God. There are deep and intimate things in Him which only His Spirit knows; and that Spirit is the only Person who can lead us into really intimate knowledge of God.

#### **3) The Purpose**

*1 Corinthians 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

God promises to give us the Spirit the moment we are saved. No need to wait to receive Him. Paul tells why God does this for us at the end of v12: "that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." That is the purpose.

*Job 11:6a That He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For they would double your prudence.*

The secrets of wisdom bring the two sides of wisdom – a surface and a depth. The Spirit is given to us that we might know the depth.

One side of wisdom – the surface side – could be called the ministry of the Word. We often understand the Word when it has been preached because it has been explained in a way that ministers to our minds. But God wants more from us. He wants us to experience the other side of wisdom – the deep side – which we could call the ministry of the Spirit. This is where God's Spirit takes the ministry of the Word and plumbs it down under the surface currents to where He can minister to our hearts and souls.

## D. PAUL'S CONCLUSION ON GOD'S WISDOM

At the beginning of today's study, I told you that the apostle Paul gives us his conclusion before and after of the main body portion. Now, we get to see his conclusion one more time:

*1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

According to the apostle Paul, the natural man which means unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. For to him, they are foolishness. Without the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry, unbelievers will never know the riches of the Spirit, because spiritual matters are "*spiritually discerned.*" Unbelievers may grasp them superficially, but they will never know them personally and deeply.

At one time, every Christian was an unbeliever, only desiring what appeals to the flesh. But when we trusted the Savior, the Spirit came in and we moved into the realm of "spiritual" – able to live in the knowledge of the Spirit. As a Christian day by day receives the things of the Spirit, he grows and matures.

*1 Corinthians 2:15-16 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

Maturing Christians are those who have given the Spirit the control of their lives. They still wrestle with sin daily, but they confess it daily, keeping their hearts constantly clean.

Being a believer doesn't necessarily mean that you have discovered the hidden depths of God's wisdom. Even though they are available to all believers, some choose to tread the shallow waters, eyes fixed only on the tip of the iceberg. If you've entered the waters of Christianity, but haven't yet given the Spirit control of your understanding, do so today. But this doesn't come from reading Christian books or devotions. It only comes through trials and tests that the Lord allows us to go through. That's how we grow. Let Him take you to the very depths of God.

One of the marks of maturity is discernment – the ability to penetrate beneath the surface of life and see things as they really are. Unsaved people "walk by sight" and really see nothing. They are spiritually blind. The maturing Christian grows in his spiritual discernment and develops the ability with the Holy Spirit's help to understand more and more of the will and mind of God. The Corinthians lacked this discernment; they were spiritually ignorant.

To "have the mind of Christ" does not mean we are infallible and start playing God in the lives of other people. To "have the mind of Christ" means to look at life from the Savior's point of view, having His values and desires in mind. It means to think God's thoughts and not think as the world thinks.

The unsaved person does not understand the Christian; they live in two different worlds. But the Christian understands the unsaved person because we were there before. V15 does not suggest that unbelievers cannot point out flaws in the believer's life and they often do, but that the unbelievers really cannot penetrate into the full understanding of what the Christian's life is all about.

### ***E. APPLICATION***

Maturing Christians are those who have given the Spirit the control of their lives. They still wrestle with sin daily, but they confess it daily, keeping their hearts constantly clean. If you're a born-again Christian, but you haven't yet given the Spirit the control of your understanding, do so today.