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A1202 – January 8, 2012 – 1 Corinthians 1:10-3:23
Preaching The Gospel & Growing In Wisdom

We are studying the first inspired epistle to the Corinthians and we have completed the first three chapters. I noted last week that Paul uses a literary device in these chapters called *inclusio*. *Inclusio* is where the author starts and ends with the same expression or idea. They are like bookends or brackets around a section of material. The opening bookend in 1 Corinthians is in 1:10, 11 and 12 where Paul exhorts them to unity in Christ because they were dividing up among their favorite teachers. The closing bookend is in 3:21-23 where Paul repeats the same rejection of dividing among favorite teachers and repeats the admonition to unity in Christ and God.

Today I want to review 20 basic teachings that can be gleaned out of the material inside this *inclusio*. I've learned that when you teach material verse by verse, even though you may cover every noun, verb and participle, people miss the theology. So we're going to march over familiar territory and draw out the theology. It relates to two primary areas. One is personal evangelism, preaching the gospel and the second is spiritual growth or how to grow spiritually. There are about 10 things you should know about personal evangelism and 10 things you should know about spiritual growth.

So starting on the personal evangelism side, just as an introduction, before we get to those things, know that every believer is a personal evangelist, not just the pastor. It is your responsibility to preach the gospel to people you know and not to drop them on my doorstep. They don't know me and they don't care what I'm saying because I have no credentials with them. The people in your life are the people that God has put in your life for you to evangelize. And you are to evangelize them and if they come to Christ then I say bring them to church so they can be a part of a vibrant group of believers who are studying the word of God so they can grow. So understand first of all,

that from the standpoint of the NT, personal evangelism is a responsibility of every believer, not the pastor, not the seminary professor, not Campus Crusade for Christ, YOU are to evangelize. It could be your children, your parents, your friends, your co-workers, but this is your job, you are an ambassador for Jesus Christ. It's nobody else's fault so don't blame me.

Now starting in 1:17 the major topic of preaching the gospel is introduced. Paul says, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." implication? Water baptism is not necessary for salvation. If it was Paul couldn't have said that. Paul's mission was to preach the gospel, but not in a certain way, "not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void." So there is a proper way to preach the gospel and there are improper ways to preach the gospel. Improper ways make the cross of Christ void, they make it void of saving power. Paul says I didn't come to preach the gospel that way because nobody can get saved that way. Therefore the subject is how to vs how not to preach the gospel. And there are certain things Paul says you must know about men and about God that dictate how you should preach the gospel. It's the doctrine of man and the doctrine of God that determines how the gospel should be preached. So let's start.

The first thing you must know is this. Know that your friend, left to his natural self, will interpret the gospel as foolishness. Don't be surprised and don't have a temper tantrum. Verse 18, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." See, you can preach the gospel to your friend and he'll say, why that's foolish, what does a man on a cross dying have to do with my salvation, that's a stupid story. The reason he interprets the cross that way is because he is totally depraved, that's the doctrine lurking here. The doctrine of total depravity teaches that all men sinned in Adam and are by nature sinners. It does not mean we are as bad as we may be. Your friend may be a very moral person, he may do a lot of so called good, community service, family man, but by nature he is a sinner in Adam. And as a sinner in Adam he is dead in trespasses and sins, hostile to God and an enemy of God and has short accounts with God. And so when you preach the gospel to your friend understand he is hiding from God and he will interpret the gospel as foolishness. You need to know that when you present to him the gospel he's not going to be impressed like you are, so don't be surprised when you preach and he thinks you're off your rocker. He's not rejecting you, he's rejecting

Christ. So the first thing you must know is that your friend, left to his natural self, will interpret the gospel as foolishness. That comes quite natural to the natural man.

Second, know that your friend is perishing, he is destroying himself. Verse 18, “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.” He is on a highway to hell. Verse 19, “For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.” Your friend is going to hell, make no bones about it, this is not a joke. God gave him His only begotten Son as a substitutionary blood atonement to satisfy His own restitutionary justice and as long as your friend has not believed the gospel he is thoroughly rejecting it. And then what does he have to satisfy God? He has nothing. He stands condemned. He who has not believed is condemned already because He has not believed in the only begotten Son of God. So you need to really consider where your friend is. He is in a state of perishing, present tense, ongoing action, he is in a continual state of perishing. Always he is perishing because you never know when he is going to die and when he does die there are no more opportunities, no second chances to believe the gospel, that opportunity is lost.

Third, know that for the first 4,000 years of history God gave the human race the opportunity to come to know Him but they didn't even know the right questions to ask or what they were looking for. You want to talk about lost. When you don't know what you're looking for or what to ask, you're really lost. And your unbelieving friends are really, really lost. Verse 20, “Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” Alright, they had no answers God says. Neither the Greek philosophers nor the Jewish theologians have answered anything or come to know anything. Verse 21, “For since,” and that word means a space of time, it means God gave the world time to find Him. But what does Paul go on to say, “in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God,” all that time and they didn't find Him. In the first 4,000 years of world history no one found God. Socrates didn't find God, Plato didn't find God, Aristotle didn't find God. Well, who then did come to know God? Answer: “God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” Those who believe the word of God. And yet even they who believe were not searching for God, God came searching for them. Verse 22 explains why people don't find God unless God

searches for them. “For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;” Why don’t people find God? Because they’re not looking for Him. They are looking for other things. Why? Because they’re depraved in Adam. They’re totally depraved and just like Adam, they’re hiding from God in the bushes. So while Jews and Greeks were asking wrong questions and searching for the wrong things notice what Paul and others were preaching, verse 23, “but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,” because if you’re looking for something over here and I tell you the gospel and you say, that’s not what I’m looking for, that doesn’t interest me. Yes, I understand you’re not looking for it, I understand you’re not interested in it. The natural man left to himself doesn’t look for Christ, never has and never will. But I’m going to tell you the gospel anyway because the gospel is the answer to the right question and the right question is, how can a man get right with God? God gave the human race 4,000 years to try and find out the answer to this question and they didn’t ask it and they didn’t look for it. So I’m here to tell you what the right question is and what the answer is, through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fourth point; know that for a person to believe the gospel they must be called by God. It’s not true that anyone can believe the gospel; there’s no natural ability in the will of man, infant baptism doesn’t change that, Christ’s cross doesn’t change that. Man is dead in transgressions and sins. No one can come to the Father unless the Father draws him. Now it is true that whosoever will and the gospel should be preached to all men, but it’s not true that whosoever can believe. Man is unable to come to God of his own, he needs, he requires the mercies of God and the initiating call of God to believe. And if these don’t occur then you can preach till you are blue in the face and that man will never believe in Christ. Now you can take this truth one of two ways. One way people most commonly take it is to get upset about this. Why that’s not fair of God. How can God send people to hell if they can’t even believe? They say it’s not fair that all men don’t have the natural ability to believe. Why I will tell you frankly I think that is one of the most arrogant and blasphemous lines of questioning ever devised by man and it is coming from the flesh. You are trying to dictate to God what is fair and what He should and should not do. Who are you, oh man! to question God, “The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it?” I think you would do much better to ask why God graciously calls anyone at all since He is not obligated to call anyone. Now then the other approach is to be

excited that God calls some and to say, I am going to preach the gospel and there are going to be people who respond. I do not know who they are but God has decided to call out some as the gospel is preached and therefore this function I am doing of preaching the gospel is necessary for men to believe, men whom God calls. That is a truth very important to know and to stimulate evangelism.

Fifth thing to know in personal evangelism; know that the gospel is wiser than man's greatest ideas. Verse 23, "but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Now this might encourage you. Sometimes as you evangelize they start coming up with objections to the gospel, what about the speed of light, what about the radioactive decay rates, what about science? Oh you mean scientism, the worship of present processes, the making infinite the finite. Alright, well know there is an answer to all these objections and that in the grand scheme of things, all of man's greatest projections, greatest imaginations are a joke compared to the gospel. So don't be dismayed if someone says, well, the Bible can't be true because of x, y, z. Why that's nothing more than your friend stating, "I don't believe." So what's new, you knew that to begin with, but saying the Bible can't be true because of x, y and z doesn't justify your unbelief, it simply states your belief in something else. But all those something else's are foolishness compared to the gospel. The gospel is infinitely wise because it solves every problem, every question, by rooting it in the infinite Creator-Savior Jesus Christ.

Sixth, however, you should also know that God does not call many of the intellectual, political and social elite. They're learning power and position actually become stumbling blocks to believing the gospel. Verse 26, "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are..." Most people that respond to the gospel are average people. The reason it's that way is because that's the way God designed it. So you should know that most people who will respond to your

ministry will not be politicians, professors or socially elite. There will be some and Christ died for all and we should pray for them, but as far as response is concerned, most of them will not respond. That doesn't mean don't preach to them, it just means don't be surprised if they don't believe.

Seventh, know that God has chosen the gospel to be the means of saving men so that no one can boast before God. Verse 29, "so that no man may boast before God." That's why God chose the gospel message. Because people think they are smarter than the gospel message. They haven't thought it through, nor are they going to because at the heart of depravity is that I boast in self. So a message that brings all boasting only to God is antagonistic to man's flesh. The point is that God would use the gospel message to call forth men and this thing called the cross, which is a base and despised thing to man, this would demonstrate the power of God in salvation so that He gets all the glory.

Eighth, know that God is the reason a person is in Christ. Ultimately it's not our faith, it's God's work of opening our eyes and calling us by His mercies. Verse 30, "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." See God did something before our faith, there is His work of calling us to Himself prior to our faith, and while faith is important, ultimately the reason we had faith was because of this work of God. If it was our faith that put us in Christ then we would have something to boast about but because it was God who put us in Christ then let us boast in the Lord alone. So if you are preaching the gospel to your friend you will tell him like Paul, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, that is perfectly legitimate, but if he believes he will discover later on that the reason he believed was because of God's work beforehand.

Now then we come to number nine, know that we must proclaim the gospel starting with God's testimony in the Scriptures and not starting with a human technique or human reason. First of all, we should not try to use a clever argument that has no substance to it. For example, we should not use poor archaeological research to try and win people to Christ. A group out of China has claimed to have found Noah's Ark. This is not the case, this is a hoax and until careful analysis is done confirming the discovery of Noah's

Ark such claims do more to damage the cause of Christ than argue for it. Such claims should not be used. On the surface it may appear to have substance but on closer examination it is false. While Noah's Ark is an important piece of evidence its discovery would not prove the Bible is true anyway. It would merely confirm what is already true. As far as human reason is concerned, we should not use the traditional theistic arguments for the existence of God and then try to move from there to the Christ of the Bible. It is illegitimate to frame an argument starting with human reason and make abstract universals. For example, the teleological or design argument. All design implies a designer. The universe manifests design. Therefore the universe must have a designer. That designer is God. Now will you believe in Him? This is illegitimate argument because you have assumed what the unbeliever has assumed in the first place, that the universe is all that there is and that if God exists then he is part and parcel of the universe. You violated Scripture by making an abstract universal, "All design implies a designer." If that were the case then the unbeliever could simply say, then God has a designer, who designed Him? And you have been easily checkmated. So we do not start our gospel proclamation with clever arguments or human reason. We start with the self-authenticating God of Scripture who tells us who He is and who man is and what sin is and what Christ did for us and that is how you give the gospel. As an aside, this does not mean that we cannot speak about politics or economics or nature. All those are valid topics to discuss. It only means that when we discuss those topics we insist that they be spoken of in terms of the word of God, in terms of what God has said about them and about which only He has knowledge and our knowledge is therefore derivative of His. We might say, we can talk about mathematics with an unbeliever, but on this subject we would insist that the unbeliever give an account for mathematics within his own worldview. That is, why does 1 not change into 2? And do irrational numbers really exist and if they don't then why do we need them? How does your worldview account for such things? Then we show that the God of the Bible and the Christ of Scripture are the necessary pre-condition for any and all subjects and in fact we can't even have a discussion if the Bible isn't true. Paul says as much in 2:1, "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech" that's clever arguments, "or of wisdom," that's human reason, "proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That means all thoughts about all subjects were taken captive to the Scriptural

story which finds its' zenith in Christ and Him crucified. Verse 3, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." That is, I preached the Scriptural story. We may have started talking about the aristocracy of Rome but I used it as a lead in to the gospel!

So the bottom line in these first nine truths is that you are to preach the Scriptural story, you are to start with divine revelation, you are to insist upon the coherence of the Scriptural story and it's accounting for all things. You are to start with Creation and the Creator-creature distinction, then move to the Fall and man's dilemma and then to the Flood and the formation of the present continental pattern and man's habitation as a creature of God and his rebellion against God and worship of the creation rather than the Creator, and on to the story of Israel as the vessel through whom the Scriptures came and through whom the Messiah would come, starting with the Call of Abraham, moving on to the Exodus, the Conquest and Settlement, the Reign of King David, the Golden Era of Solomon, all the way down to the Birth of the King, the Life of the King, the Death of the King and the Resurrection of the King. All this is the necessary framework or context for preaching the isolated message of the cross. So you preach the cross in the context of God's plan for history because that's where the cross gets its meaning. If you don't do this and you preach an isolated gospel, you de-contextualize the gospel and allow your friend to supply the meaning from his own fleshly categories. The apostle Paul tried that and failed and you can read it for yourself in Acts 14 and Acts 17. In Acts 14 they started worshipping him and Barnabas and in Acts 17 they thought Jesus was another god Paul was trying to add to the Pantheon of Athens. In both cases the gospel was not clearly communicated and in both cases Paul saw what happened, analyzed this failure and corrected it by doing exactly what I'm telling you to do, he contextualized the cross inside God's grand plan for history and preached a clear gospel by which men were called out because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. So we've got to discipline ourselves to preach the gospel in the context of God's plan for history, not according to clever arguments, not according to human reason, but according to God's plan for history, that way He gets the glory for calling men to Himself. We can in no way improve on the gospel story. It is the wisdom of God!

Alright, now let's move into the second phase of our lesson today and this has to do with growing in wisdom. Once we have, by God's grace, been called out and placed in Christ through faith in Him then the issue is no longer how do I get right with God but how do I grow in Christ? All believers are supposed to grow in Christ. God has saved us so that He could grow us. But there are mechanics of growth.

So number one is know that solid biblical teaching is not foolish but it is God's wisdom, inaccessible apart from God revealing it through apostles and prophets and now preserved in Scripture. You could, after all that Paul has said, confuse God's wisdom with man's foolishness. But it's not. The striking fact is that you cannot know anything correctly apart from the God of Scripture. Verse 10, "For to us" apostles and prophets, "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." Scripture is the repository of divine wisdom, great things that the world thinks are foolish but which are wise God has made known to us through apostles and prophets and these truths are for us and for our children. Now will we deprive ourselves and our children of such riches when they are ours for the taking? You cannot grow spiritually apart from this book. It is utterly impossible.

But, number two, know that the natural man will reject solid biblical teaching. That should be obvious. If you speak to him the basic gospel message and he rejects that then what do you think he's going to do when you start telling him the great truths of Scripture? He's going to think you are off your rocker and you'll be maligned and cast in with the flat earth society. So know that. Don't be surprised and don't get upset. Verse 14 says, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." That last word means "inaccessible." Just like the gospel is inaccessible by man, when left to himself, so the deep truths of Scripture are inaccessible. So don't let that bother you, you just go on telling them.

Number three, know that the spiritual man readily examines solid biblical teaching. The spiritual man is the mature man, he's an advanced believer. Verse 15, "But he who is spiritual examines all things," all things being Scripture, "yet he himself is examined by no one. ¹⁶For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." In other words, the mature believers know the word of God, he knows what the standards for living life are and so it doesn't bother him when someone comes along and judges him from some other set of standards? Who cares? Those standards aren't founded on God's word, so they don't count; they are a lot of hot air and baloney talk, someone's opinion. Don't let it bother you. If you're really a spiritual man then when people criticize you and your conscience says I'm following the word of God here, it won't bother you. Brush it off, move on.

The fourth thing you should know is that the fleshly new believer is not ready for solid teaching. Now here we're talking about new converts, new converts just like little babies need a specific diet to grow up. And you don't start them with advanced solid teaching, you start with milk, basic teaching. 3:1, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*." There's a pedagogy to the curriculum. Lesson one, lesson two, lesson three and you build lesson upon lesson. This is how the NT makes room for a basics class for new believers. I'd like this hour to be the most basic hour because this is where we hit the once a week believers. It ought to be, in my humble opinion, the most basic theology. But I've got to teach the NT this hour which is the most advanced theology in the entire Bible. People this hour, many of them, people who visit, people who come in off the streets, are not ready for this level of teaching because they don't have the basics of the OT. And the NT presupposes you know the OT. So trying to understand the NT without the OT is like trying to understand calculus without algebra. It doesn't make any sense. But the point is that new converts need milk doctrine to grow not solid food, that's for the mature.

The fifth thing you should know is that it is a disgrace for a believer to have had time to grow to receive solid teaching but not be able to handle it. In other words, here we get to the problem of progress. The NT expects all believers to grow from infancy to mature adulthood. The problem is when they don't the NT gets quite abrasive. It's like a child still wearing pampers

when he's 7 years old. There's been a failure to grow to control your bowels. And it's a serious problem. Verse 2b-3, "Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly." meaning time passed and you still can't receive solid food. This is a disgrace. There is a responsibility to grow up in the Christian life. Some Christians say, well, I'm only responsible for what I know and therefore I'm not responsible for what I don't know and so I'm just not going to learn all this doctrine because that increases my responsibility. But the problem with that argument is that there is a responsibility to grow. And there are repercussions for not growing in the realm of temporal discipline, loss of rewards and so forth. So know that if you're not growing up and you're still a little baby believer after years of being a believer, that is a disgrace and you look like a 15 year old in diapers.

Alright, number six, people won't like this one but the Bible says it, know that quarrelling among believers is a sign of immaturity. If you can't solve your problems around Christ, well, you're like a couple of kids that can't solve their problem over a toy. Verse 3, "For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?" And today we have churches full of these kinds of Christians. They'll quarrel over the color of the carpet, the arrangement of the flowers, the side the pastor parts his hair on, they'll argue about anything. And they're a bunch of brats, immature believers. And they need a swift kick in the rear.

Number seven, and this one is sobering because it gets us out of the cult mentality, the cult mentality is to focus in on one person and isolate yourself to that one person, know that the person through whom you believed was appointed by God to be the one through whom you believed. Verse "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, and each as the Lord gave." Now I understand that the person who shared the gospel with you through whom you believed may hold a special place in your life. But one of the things you have to learn after you come to Christ is that the reason you came to Christ through that person is not because of that person, it's because God assigned you to that person. So then that kind of knocks the person off the pedestal that you may have put them on in your own mind. The whole point is not to get so loyal to one person or teacher that you cut yourself off from all these other gifted teachers that God has given the church,. Why limit yourself to this one person when God has given many gifted persons to the church? It doesn't make sense. It's like having 25 bank

accounts and you're only drawing out of one. Why short yourself. Oh well I don't like him. Well, get over yourself.

Number eight, know that the only issue for believers is how to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. That's it, there's nothing else. Are you building by the Spirit or by the flesh? Are you building on the foundation, verse 12, "with gold, silver, precious stones," things of an imperishable quality, things of the Spirit, or "wood, hay and straw," things of the flesh, things that have no value before God. Only the things of the Spirit are going to be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ. And all believers will attend this judgment. And if any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, that is, he won't receive rewards, but he himself will be saved, that's eternal security, of course salvation can't be lost but rewards can be forfeited. You have opportunities give to you each and every day. God has prepared good works for you to do every day so that you would walk in them. So when you do them, by the filling of the Spirit then that will be rewarded. When you don't do them and you walk by the flesh then there's no reward; there's loss of what was a potential reward. So it's very serious to know that the only issue now, as a believer, is how you are building on the foundation that has been laid, Jesus Christ. Salvation is not the issue, sanctification is the issue.

Number nine, know that our local church is a temple that the Holy Spirit indwells. "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?" This is not saying you, the individual believer are a temple. You are, that's taught elsewhere, but here the local church is a temple. Therefore it's very serious if one of the members of our church starts bringing worldly teaching or methods into our church, starts accommodating to the world's philosophy, the world's way of thinking and starts trying to influence our church in that direction. That's why sound teaching is such a serious thing, that's why the elders have to be on guard, that's why there's such a thing as church discipline. All these things are critical to keeping the church a pure, holy dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit. The church is the place where God meets the world and He meets them on His terms, not the world's terms. So we should keep the teaching in the church pure.

Number ten and this is what will happen to the one who tries to corrupt the local church with worldly wisdom, know that there is discipline and loss of rewards for believers who corrupt solid teaching in the church with worldly

wisdom. These are the people who bring all the world's ideas into the church. Boy, the world just knows so much and we need to emend the Bible here with this terrific information, or boy, we need to re-interpret Genesis because the world knows more about the universe than God does. That kind of thing. God says in verse 17, "If any man destroys" or corrupts, "the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are..." Fredericksburg Bible Church. We are a temple of God and the world has no place in the temple of God.

Lastly, number eleven, know that the world has no wisdom at all because all wisdom is sourced in God and therefore the wisdom of the world is on the way to destruction. Verse 18, "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "*He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS*"; ²⁰and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS." The world has nothing to offer you so far as knowledge is concerned because the world doesn't know anything. The world has a lot of learning but it's all in the wrong paradigm and therefore it is not a subject of knowledge, it is a subject of human speculation, vain imagination. The Christian has the corner on the market of knowledge because God has revealed to us the true state of affairs and every fact and interpretation of every fact is governed by Him as a part of His plan. We need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and realize that the word of God is the ultimate, final, absolute and comprehensive authority for all of life. When we realize this we will be on our way to becoming mature believers. For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov 1:7); the world and its wisdom are foolishness.

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