

# **1 CORINTHIANS**

## **Lesson Four: Special Revelation**

**First Baptist Church Chappell Hill, June 27, 2021**

# Learning the Bible Effectively

- Key Question: What was the author's intended message for his original audience? (secondary question, how do I apply it to my life?)
- Focusing on structure
  - 1. Identifying the key verse or lesson of the book.
  - 2. Identifying the units of thought (paragraphs).
  - 3. Interpret verses consistent with the unit of thought they appear in—how does my interpretation support the argument and cohesiveness of the unit of thought?
  - 5. Look for ideas and themes that link the units of thought together.
- It is generally brazen and misguided to think you can just read one verse in the Bible and interpret it in isolation.

# The Gospel and Human Wisdom

**1 Corinthians 1:22** For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: **23** But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; **24** But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

- Here “Greeks” means Gentiles
- Each group has its stumbling block
- Christ was not who the Jews expected (although they should have), so they stumble at a crucified Messiah
- The Greeks stumble at the notion of resurrection which they think “foolishness”
- The the “called” — those that respond to the gospel — Jesus Christ is the power and wisdom of God

# The Gospel and Human Wisdom

**1 Corinthians 1:25** Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. **26** For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: **27** But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; **28** And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: **29** That no flesh should glory in his presence.

- The Corinthians were generally not rich and not noble and not affluent and not the leading intellectuals, yet God saved them
- They believed while many of the rich, noble, affluent and wise in worldly wisdom did not believe
- The “foolish things” is the gospel (foolish to the world)
- No one has reason to boast

# The Gospel and Human Wisdom

**1 Corinthians 1:30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: **31** That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

- Jesus is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption
- Verse 31 quotes Jeremiah 9:24
- This leaves no room for boasting in ourselves; if we boast we boast in the Lord for what He accomplished on our behalf

# Paul's Evangelism of Corinth

**1 Corinthians 2:1** And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. **4** And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **5** That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

- Does 2:2 mean Paul only taught them the gospel? Does it mean Bible teachers should only teach “Jesus Christ, and him crucified”?
- What was the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power”?
- **Hebrews 2:3** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; **4** God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

# Paul's Evangelism of Corinth

**1 Corinthians 2:6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: **7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: **8** Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

- Prior units of thought were 1:14-16 (about who Paul baptized), 1:17-31 (Paul did not baptize many because called to preach the gospel, which is the foolish of God that shames the wisdom of the world)
- How does verse 2:6 link back to 1:17-31?
- Verse 2:6 is the key verse to the current unit of thought (2:6-3:4) and should guide our interpretation throughout
- What is the hidden wisdom of verse 7? See 4:1-5
- What did the princes of the world no know?

# God's Wisdom Revealed

**1 Corinthians 2:9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. **10** But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. **11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

- Quotes from Isaiah 64:4 in 2:9-10
- What can we know about God from natural revelation? See Romans 1:20
- The question in verse 11 is rhetorical — demands an answer of “no one” — no one knows another man’s heart except the man, and none know the things of God except the Spirit of God
- We need special revelation (what is the difference between natural and special revelation?)

# God's Wisdom Revealed

**1 Corinthians 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. **14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. **15** But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. **16** For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- The key to this sub-unit of thought is identifying the “we” in 2:12 (look at 2:6)
- Next sub-unit (3:1-4) says the Corinthians can only handle milk so it is difficult to say they “have the mind of Christ”
- Who is the “natural man” and what can he not do? See 2:6, 10
- Who is the “spiritual” person?

# Milk and Meat

**1 Corinthians 3:1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? **4** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

- Paul brings the unit (2:6-3:4) to a conclusion—the point is that he has wisdom to teach to them but they cannot handle it yet
- There are numerous consequences now and in the world to come to refusing to grow in maturity (in Paul’s words, to become “spiritual”)
- One consequence is the inability to comprehend the deeper truths of God’s Word (see Hebrews 5:10-6:6)
- Note how Paul in v. 3-4 ties it all back to their dis-unity, which results from their carnality (worldliness)