

"...there are contentions among you" – 1 Corinthians 1:10 – 6:20

"...that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men..." [1 Cor 2:1-5]

1) When Paul first came to Corinth and preached the gospel to them, what does he say he "did not come with"? [2:1]

-- However, what *did* he declare to them? [2:1; cp Acts 18:4-11; see also 1 Cor 1:6; 15:1-8]

-- Instead of bringing sophisticated and polished philosophical arguments ("excellence of speech", "wisdom"), what did Paul teach them about? [2:2]

2) What was Paul's demeanor as he taught the Corinthians at the outset? [2:3]

-- To Paul's thinking, does this approach bolster or hinder the message itself? [cp 2 Cor 4:7]

3) Instead of using persuasive arguments ("human wisdom"), what did Paul do? [2:4; cp 2 Cor 12:12; see John 15:26-27; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:32-33; 14:1-3; Heb 2:1-4; etc.]

4) What was the overarching reason for all that Paul did when he "came to" Corinth? [2:5; cp 2:1-4]

"that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" [1 Cor 2:6-16]

1) Even though Paul says he "did not come with excellence of speech" (2:1) or "with persuasive words of human wisdom" (2:4), ironically, what does he say they (apostles) truly speak? [2:6; cp 1:24]

-- Among whom does Paul (and the other apostles) speak these things? [2:6; cp 1:24]

-- However, what kind of "wisdom" is he not speaking? [2:6; cp 1:21]

-- What does Paul say is the condition of those who are "the rulers of this age"? [2:6; cp 1:18]

2) Who is the source of this wisdom that Paul speaks (as opposed to the "wisdom of this age")? [2:7]

-- In essence, why did "the rulers of this age" not know this wisdom? [2:7; cp 1:21]

-- How long has this wisdom existed, even though "wise" men in all their searching had never been able to discover it? [2:7]

3) What does Paul say proves that the "wise" men of this age do not know the wisdom of God? [2:8]

-- What is so ironic about the One they crucified – what does Paul call Him? [2:8; cp 1:25]

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4) Consider the desire of Isaiah in Isaiah 64:1-4 (which Paul very roughly paraphrases in 1 Cor 2:9). In what way have the people of Paul's day received what Isaiah wished Israel could have received? [2:9]

-- However, according to Paul's use of Isaiah 64, what is *not* the way God reveals His *will* for mankind? [2:9; cp Deuteronomy 29:29; Romans 10:17; see also Psalm 19; etc.]

5) That being the case, how does man come to know "the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (2:9)? [2:10; cp 1:21]

-- In practical terms, why is this the best way for man to learn of God's will for him? [2:10]

-- In practical terms, then, why is it impossible for men to discern the will of God apart from God's own revelation of that will? [2:10-11; cp 1:21; Deut 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9; etc]

-- What does Paul say about the things that the Spirit has access to and which He has thus revealed? [2:10; contrast this with the "wise" men calling it "foolishness" in 1:18; etc]

6) What is different, then, about the "wisdom" Paul has received (and which the Corinthians also have received through him)? [2:12]

-- What is the end result of Paul's having received of God's Spirit? [2:12; cp 2:9; Eph 3:1-7]

7) From what Paul writes in 2:13, should we understand that the focus was on his "demonstration of the Spirit and of power", or on his "speech and...preaching" (see 2:4)? [2:13; cp 1:18; 2:1-2]

-- What does Paul specifically emphasize as he describes the results of his receiving the Spirit of God? [2:13; cp this idea in practice with Philip in Samaria, Acts 8:4-13]

8) Why does the "natural" man ("psychikos", focusing only on the carnal, sensual world) not receive, discern, and know the "things of the Spirit of God"? [2:14; cp 2 Cor 4:3-4; 2 Tm 2:24-26; Rm 1:18]

-- Does this mean that only people who possess miraculous spiritual gifts can understand the will of God? [2:14; cp Eph 3:3-5; 5:15-17; 1 Pt 2:1-2; see also Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; etc.]

9) Paul's conclusion here is much stronger in the Greek than in our translations. What does Paul say about the spiritual man, in contrast to the "natural" man? [2:15; cp what he has said in 2:14]

10) Paul once again loosely paraphrases from Isaiah 40, a chapter which concludes speaking of those who "wait on the Lord" and His revelation before acting. (Isaiah 40:13, 31) What does Paul thus say about the discernment of the apostles (and Corinthians) in contrast to the "wise"? [2:16]