

Sunday, October 11, 2015—I Corinthians 2:6: Wisdom Among the Perfect

### Introduction/Review

- Last week we started our study of chapter two by looking at verses 1 through 5. In summation we observed the following points:
  - Verse 1—picks up where Chapter 1 Verse 17 left off in terms of Paul describing how Paul conducted his ministry in Corinth. Paul did not use “excellency of speech” or “wisdom” when preaching to the Corinthians.
  - Verse 2—Paul made the determination beforehand not to know anything among the Corinthians “save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” This does not mean that Paul did not know more than the basic message of the cross, rather it means that he chose to limited to content of his preaching among them to basics of “Christ crucified” (I Cor. 1:23).
  - Verse 3—Paul had gone through great personal turmoil in Acts 17 prior to arriving in Corinth in Acts 18. The Lord spoke to Paul while he was in Corinth to reassure him of his purpose (Acts 18:9-11).
  - Verse 4—Paul reliable upon the power of the Holy Spirit to convict the Corinthians of their sin. As I said last week, I believe that Paul’s decision to conduct his ministry in Corinth in this fashion is related to what he knew about the culture of the city as well as his experience in Athens in Acts 17. In Acts 17 Paul never mentions the cross and the outcome was that only “certain men clave unto him, and believed” (Acts 18:34).
  - Verse 5—gives you the purpose and the intent of why Paul operated in this fashion in Corinth. He didn’t want their faith to “stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”
- This morning we want to continue our study of the passages by looking at verses 6 through 8.

### I 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:**
- *Howbeit*—is a translation of the Greek conjunction *de*. According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*, the English word “howbeit” means: be it as it may; nevertheless; notwithstanding; yet; but; however. Therefore, the function of the word is provide further elaboration on what was just said.

- Paul just said that he didn't use "enticing words of man's wisdom" but reliable on the Holy Spirit to be the demonstration of the truthfulness of the gospel (Verse 4) so that the Corinthians faith would stand in the power of God not the wisdom of men (Verse 5).
- Now he says in Verse 6, "howbeit," i.e., however, nevertheless, or notwithstanding "we do speak wisdom among them that are perfect."
- Note the present tense in English on the verb "we speak." In Greek, the verb is a Present Active Indicative which describes something that is occurring while the speaker is making the statement.
- So Paul was actively speaking "wisdom" (*sophia*) but he was only doing it among them that are "perfect."
- *Perfect*—the word "perfect" is not referring to sinless perfection but spiritual maturity. It's not that Paul waited until someone was without sin to speak wisdom unto that person. Rather he waited until they spiritually mature enough to handle the information.
  - I Corinthians 14:20—"in understanding be men"
  - Hebrews 5:14—"full age"
- I Corinthians 3:1-2—in point of fact, the Corinthians were still babes in Christ who needed to feed with milk and not meat.
- I Corinthians 2:6—at this point in his ministry, Paul only spoke about this "wisdom" among those who were spiritually mature, i.e., "perfect."
- *Yet not the wisdom of this world*—the wisdom that Paul would speak among the spiritually mature was still not the "wisdom of this world."
- *Princes of this world*—is an interesting expression that we need to speak sometime understanding.
- First, the English word "princes" comes from Greek word *archōn* which means a ruler, commander, chief, or leader, according to *Strong's Concordance*. The word is used describe human rulers as well as Satan and his minions.
  - Matthew 9:18, 23, 34; 12:24, 20:25
  - John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11
  - Ephesians 2:2—the governmental structures of this earth are under the influence of the adversary.

- Ephesians 6:12-13
- Colossians 1:15-16—there are invisible structures of governmental authority in the heavens that are just as real as the ones people interact with on earth.
- Daniel 10:1-13—this angel was dispatched 21 days beforehand when Daniel first set his heart to understand. The angel was detained by the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” for 21 days. Michael “one of the chief princes” need to come and secure safe passage through the kingdom of Persia so that the angles could come and speak to Daniel.
- Daniel 10:20-21—the angel tells Daniel that when he leaves he will resume fighting with the prince of Persia. When he’s done contending with him, he knows that he will also have to fight with the “prince of Grecia.” Meanwhile, Daniel or Israel has a prince as well namely Michael.
- Ezekiel 28:12-14—who is the prophet addressing here? The human king of Tyre or the real power behind the throne, i.e., the adversary?
- The indication from these verses is that there is political activity in the heavenly places that corresponds with political structures on earth. Furthermore, the principles and powers in heavenly places seem to be able to exert influence over the behaviors, attitudes, and actions of human princes upon the earth.
- I Corinthians 2:6—it’s clear that Paul views “the wisdom of this world” and the wisdom of “the princes of this world” as two different things. Note the phrase “nor of” between “wisdom of this world” and “princes of this world.” In addition, Paul had much to say about the worthless nature of man’s wisdom in Chapter 1, the insertion of “the princes of this world” into the discussion here in Chapter 2 indicates that he views this as a separate category of “wisdom.”
- So the source of this wisdom that Paul speaks among “them that are perfect” is not the “wisdom of this world” nor is it the wisdom of “the princes of this world.”
- *Nought*—Paul says that both of these categories of wisdom “come to nought” i.e., nothing.
- The wisdom that Paul spoke among the “perfect” was the wisdom of God in a mystery according to verse 17. Paul did know the mystery when he went to Corinth, however, he determined not to go beyond the basic message Christ crucified except among them that are perfect.