

Sunday, October 18, 2015—I Corinthians 2:7: The Wisdom of God in a Mystery

### Introduction/Review

- Last Sunday in our time together we studied verse 6. In summation we observed the following points:
  - While Paul did not use “excellency of speech (verse 1)” nor “enticing words of man’s wisdom (verse 4)” when he “determined not to know anything” among the Corinthians “save Jesus Christ and him crucified (verse 2)” this does not mean that Paul never spoke wisdom, according to verse 6.
  - Paul was speaking wisdom “among them that are perfect” i.e., spiritually mature. Perfect in this verse does not mean without sin or sinless but mature.
    - I Corinthians 3:1-2
  - The wisdom Paul was speaking among the perfect was not from either of the following two sources: 1) the “wisdom of this world” or 2) the wisdom of “the princes of this world.”
  - The wisdom of “the princes of this world” is a reference to the spiritual entities in the heavenly places that occupy positions of governmental authority that correspond with and impact the earthly seats of governmental authority.
    - Ephesians 2:1-2—Paul refers to Satan as the “prince the power of the air.”
    - Ephesians 6:12—our struggle is with “spiritual wickedness in high places.”
  - Both of these two categories of wisdom: 1) the wisdom of the this world and 2) the wisdom of the princes of this world will come to “nought” i.e., nothing.
- This morning we want to move on with our exposition of the text and consider verse 7.

### I Corinthians 2:7

- **But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:**
- *But*—please note that the first word of verse 7 is a contrast. Paul is contrasting the nature of the wisdom he is speaking among the perfect with the two kinds of wisdom found in verse 6.
- *We Speak*—this verb is the present tense. Once again in Greek this verb is a present indicative which asserts something which is occurring while the speaker is making the statement. In other

words, Paul already knows the contents of this wisdom that he is speaking among the perfect. If he didn't he would not be speaking it.

- *Wisdom of God*—once again the word translated “wisdom” is the Greek word *sophia*. Thus far we have seen this word applied to both man’s wisdom and God’s wisdom.
  - Man’s Wisdom—I Corinthians 1:17, 19, 20, 22; 2:1, 4-6
  - God’s Wisdom—I Corinthians 1:21, 24, 30
- Here in verse 7, Paul is identifying a specific or particular aspect of the “wisdom of God” that he is speaking about.
- *Mystery*—Paul is speaking about the “wisdom of God in a mystery.” Coming from the Greek word *mystērion* the English word “mystery” carries the following relevant meanings:
  - 1) A profound secret; something wholly unknown or something kept cautiously concealed, and therefore exciting curiosity or wonder; 3) That which is beyond human comprehension until explained. In this sense, mystery often conveys the idea of something awfully sublime or important; something that excites wonder. (*Webster’s 1828*)
- So Paul is speaking the wisdom of God as it relates to something that was “wholly unknown” and “beyond human comprehension until explained.” In others words, Paul is speaking about a particular kind aspect of God’s wisdom that was fully outside of man’s wisdom or the princes of this world’s ability know until God revealed it and made it known. This is the wisdom that Paul was speaking among the perfect in verse 6.
- *Even the Hidden Wisdom*—this phrase is elaborating on the nature of this wisdom of God in a mystery. It is the hidden wisdom of God. God hid this wisdom in himself. Not a single entity in God’s entire creation knew about this mystery until God chose to reveal it and make it known.
  - Romans 16:25—“... the revelation of the **mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,**”
  - Ephesians 3:3—“How that by revelation **he made known unto me the mystery;**”
  - Ephesians 3:9—“And to make all *men* see what *is* **the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,** who created all things by Jesus Christ:
  - Colossians 1:26—“*Even* **the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:**”

- God revealed the contents of his secret purpose to the Apostle Paul so that Paul could make it know to the world. It was his knowledge of this secret purpose that Paul was making know among them that were perfect.
- *Which God Ordained Before the World*—God ordained before the world began that Paul would speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. The English word “ordained” means “appointed; instituted; established; invested with ministerial or pastoral functions; settled,” according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*. The Greek word translated “ordained” is various rendered as follows by the King James translators:
  - Acts 4:28—“. . . determined before to be done.”
  - Romans 8:29-30—“predestinate”
  - Ephesians 1:5, 11—“predestinated”
- I Corinthians 2:7—note the phrase “our glory” at the end of the verse. Paul is including the Corinthians with himself in the glory that is revealed via the manifestation of the God’s hidden wisdom.
- Before the world began God purposed to do some things that he never told anybody about. Namely the formation of the church the body of Christ. Recognizing the difference between what God was doing since the world began and what he purposed to do before the world began but kept secret is the key to unlocking your Bible.
- Luke 1:67-73—“since the world began” God had made known to Israel his prophetic plans for establishing a kingdom on the earth.
- Acts 3:18-21—“since the world began” the prophets had been speaking about God’s plan to restore his headship in the earth through the nation Israel.
- Romans 16:25—“since the world began” God has been totally and utterly silent about the mystery i.e., his hidden wisdom.
- Ephesians 3:9—“from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”
- I Corinthians 2:7—is there a difference between what God had been speaking about and making know via his holy prophets “since the world began” and what he elected to keep secret “since the world began?”
- The wisdom of God in a mystery takes one back before Genesis 1:1. The hidden wisdom gives us insight into what God “ordained” and purposed to do “before the world unto our glory.”

- Ephesians 3:1-6—before the world began God in his wisdom purposed to usher in the dispensation of grace during which time he would form the church the body Christ. Herein lays the contents of the wisdom of God in a mystery that was first revealed and made known to the Apostle Paul.
- Ephesians 3:8—Paul calls the contents of what he was preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ because it was hidden and not made known in time past. The prophets never knew the content of what Paul was preaching.
- I Corinthians 2:7—the revelation of God’s hidden wisdom is to the glory of the body of Christ. We will have to wait until next time see that when we look at verse 8.