

GOD'S WISDOM AND MAN'S WISDOM

BIBLE TEXT : I Corinthians 1:1-31; 2:1-16; 3:18-23..

LESSON 389 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Corinthians 1:17-31

¹⁷ For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

²⁰ Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

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.

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Missionary

The Apostle Paul visited the city of Corinth on his second missionary trip. There he found some people who wanted to hear about Jesus. As Paul preached to them, many of the Corinthians were saved (Acts 18:8). Paul stayed there over a year and a half to teach the Word of God to them. When it was necessary for Paul to go to another city, he left a group of Christians who made up the church at Corinth. Paul could not go back to visit and to help them as much as he would have desired, but he wrote to them to encourage them. These letters of Paul to the Christians at Corinth are known as First and Second Corinthians. Not only were these letters a help to the people of Corinth but they are also a blessing to God's people today. Paul's greeting at the beginning of the letter includes the "church of God, which is at Corinth" and "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Called of God

God calls people to follow Him. He calls them from the path of sin and wants them to walk in the way of holiness. Those who are saved are "called to be saints." God's people live for the Lord. Their lives are changed and are different from the lives that they once lived. Of God's people it was said: "The LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself" (Deuteronomy 14:2); peculiar — not odd, but a "special people" (Deuteronomy 7:6). God's people are chosen to be a "holy nation" (I Peter 2:9).

Without the Lord one cannot live such a life as God requires. Jesus not only saves a person from his sins, but He also gives one grace and power to live for Him. Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

Enriched

The Lord not only calls people to live for Him but He also blesses them. "In every thing ye are enriched by him": made rich, increased in beauty, stored with valuable materials, improved! In every way their lives are better when they serve the Lord. Their lives are good, and filled with many blessings. There is a spiritual beauty about those who serve God. He promised to "beautify the meek with salvation" (Psalm 149:4). The Psalmist records a prayer of Moses: "Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us" (Psalm 90:17). We are encouraged to worship the Lord in the "beauty of holiness" (Psalm 96:9). When people serve the Lord, their lives are enriched to win souls for Him and to bear the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22).

Sanctified

Paul wrote this letter to "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." When the Lord was here on earth, He taught His disciples about sanctification. Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: they word is truth" (John 17:17). Not only did Jesus pray for those disciples but He also included all who would believe on Him. Sanctification is spiritual experience available to those who are saved. Salvation has been likened to a tree being cut down;

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.

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.

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

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.

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.

⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the

sanctification is compared with the roots of the tree being removed. The tree represents the sins committed. The roots represent the sinful nature inherited from our fore parents. After one is saved he can be sanctified through the Blood of Jesus, by faith and deeper consecration.

Being One

A reason for being sanctified is to be "one" with the Father and Jesus, the Son, and one with one another (**John 17:21** ²¹ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.); being "one" -- working together as one body and one church, having unity: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God (**Ephesians 4:4-6** ⁴ *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;* ⁵ *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,* ⁶ *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*).

Satan, the enemy of our souls, does not like sanctification, or holiness. He does not want to see God's people have the bond of unity -- the spirit of being one. Often Satan tries to bring a division among God's people. But we want "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" with "all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2, 3).

Following Men

Word had come to Paul that there was a division among the people at Corinth. Paul warned them to be watchful and to keep their eyes upon Jesus. Some of the people were following one minister and some another. Paul told them that they must follow Christ. Paul told these people of Corinth to follow him only as he followed Christ (**1 Corinthians 11:1** ¹ *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*). He said, "Let no man glory in men."

Paul reminded them of what he had preached when he was among them. He had preached about Jesus and His death on the cross. Paul's message had been simple but it had been in the spirit of God and in power. Paul had not used big words or flowery speech. He did not preach with the wisdom of men or of the things that men had done. Paul preached about Christ and what He had done.

God's Wisdom

There is a difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men. The wisdom of God comes from above and is not understood by those who are not saved. God counts those people wise who think about spiritual things, those who pray, who seek God and who prepare for Heaven. Unsaved men consider people wise who have much worldly knowledge, who plan for many years ahead and who lay up wealth for old age. The Lord said: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

Trusting God

Those who are saved enjoy hearing the Word of God. They love the sermons about Jesus and His cross. They treasure their salvation and the blessings that God has given them. They know that only through obedience to God can they ever be happy and be prepared for the glories of Heaven.

To the "natural" mind of man (unsaved) it seems foolish to trust God. People are taught to depend upon themselves and to work for those things, which will exalt themselves. Jesus said: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he

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.

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.

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possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Jesus spoke a parable to warn us about trusting in the things of this world.

A Foolish Man

Jesus told of a rich man who had such a large crop that he had no place to store it. All his barns were full and he had enough to last for many years. This man wanted to keep it all for himself. He planned to build bigger barns and enjoy his wealth. He had thought only of this life. He had taken no time for spiritual things. At a time when he least expected it, he died. He had laid up treasures on earth but he was spiritually poor in that he was "not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

To the people of the world this rich man appeared to be acting wisely in laying up provisions for old age. But he did not live to be old. From God's viewpoint, he had acted foolishly because he had failed to lay up treasures in Heaven.

A Wise Man

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, too. He was a follower of Jesus and "waited for the kingdom of God" (Luke 23:51). He gave his own new tomb for Jesus' burial. Probably some people thought that he was foolish to do such a thing; but he was really wise, as God looks at it.

Stephen

Stephen is another man who was rich and wise in spiritual things but who seemed to some to be foolish. Stephen was one of the first to be martyred — to give his life for the cause of Christ. He had been one of the disciples who was chosen to be a deacon to help with the church work. Stephen was "full of faith and power" (Acts 6:8). He did great wonders and miracles among the people . . . they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Some people did not like his preaching and his miracles, so they had Stephen arrested. They had false witnesses testify against him, which "stirred up the people." Perhaps Stephen would have been able to ease out of this situation with a promise that he would preach no more. So far as worldly wisdom is concerned, that would have been the thing to do. But Stephen had the wisdom that comes from God.

Stephen's Death

Stephen, before the council, rebuked them for their unbelief in Jesus. Stephen told them that they had received the Law but they had not kept it. Because he preached about Jesus and pointed out sin in the lives of the people, Stephen was stoned to death. Stephen lost his life on earth but he gained many spiritual riches. His death was very impressive because of the presence of the Lord. Undoubtedly, those who witnessed Stephen's trial and death could never forget the radiance of his face, for it shone "as it had been the face of an angel."

Before he died, Stephen had a vision and "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." He died with a prayer of forgiveness on his lips. Stephen went to be with Jesus, where many rewards were awaiting him.

To Know Jesus

Paul said: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." To Paul, the important thing in life was to know Jesus. Paul had friends. He made his living by making tents. He was well educated for his day. But the first thing in Paul's life was Jesus and the cause of Christ. This was the wisdom, which God gave to him.

We have a choice to make. We can have the wisdom of God or the wisdom of man. Let us make a wise choice and follow Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did the Corinthians live?

2. Why was Paul interested in them?
3. What was causing a division among them?
4. About whom did Paul preach?
5. What brings a unity and oneness among God's people?
6. Who can be sanctified?
7. Why should one be sanctified?
8. According to the memory verse, what is the beginning of wisdom?
9. Name an example in the Bible of a person who had the wisdom of man.
10. Name an example of one who had the wisdom of God.