

## 1 Corinthians 2:1 – 3:15

1 Corinthians is a letter that was written by the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth approximately 56 A.D. Paul himself tells us why he had first gone to Corinth, and who sent him-

- **1 Corinthians 1:17** “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...”
  - What is “the gospel”? **Matthew 4:23** “and Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”
  - And for Paul, what was his gospel? **Acts 20:24** “... so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more... 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

**To the scriptures...**

2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

- Paul addresses this letter to “brethren”, a title used for Christians—people who comprise the church, the body of Christ, members in God’s family. By this title we must assume that this letter was meant for the Christian—*those people who are already saved and possess eternal life* (salvation of the spirit, a salvation that cannot be lost).
- The church at Corinth was comprised mainly of Gentiles, whom Paul went to preaching “nothing...except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”. This is in reference to the message of the gospel of grace—Jesus died for our sins as our Passover Lamb, believe on that and you will be “saved”. (again, spirit salvation, an unsaved person becoming “born again”). All unsaved people must begin at that point.

**Back to the scriptures...**

3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. 6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

- Paul speaks “wisdom” to those who are “mature”. What is this “wisdom”?
  - This wisdom is not of men (verse 5), nor is it “of this age” or “of the rulers of this age”.
  - This wisdom is not of this world, “for the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God:—**1 Corinthians 3:19** – WHY?
    - Because Satan is the god and ruler of this world—John 14:30 and 2 Corinthians 4:4
  - Go back to the previous chapter—**1 Corinthians 1:30** “But by His (God’s) doing you are in **Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God**, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption...”
  - Jesus says in John 8:23 that He is “not of this world”.
  - Then Jesus says in **John 18:36** that His kingdom “is not of this world...”
  - **And what did Jesus preach? the gospel of the kingdom—Matthew 4:23**
- This wisdom is all about Christ Jesus, His ministry and His purpose. *All having to do with the kingdom of God*—and specifically the kingdom of the heavens.
- Why does Paul only speak the wisdom among the mature?
  - **Hebrews 5:11-14** (This is also a letter to *the church*)  
 “Concerning Melchizedek (a King-Priest who Jesus is compared to) we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary (or *beginning*) principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for **the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.**”
  - The wisdom is solid food, teachings about Jesus and his kingdom—things which are not of this world, and things which are for the mature Christian, the Christian who has their senses trained to discern good and evil.

### Back to the scriptures...

7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

- Why is this "wisdom" spoken in a mystery, and why was it "hidden"?
  - Because had the rulers of this age—SATAN AND HIS ANGELS—known about Christ Jesus, His death & resurrection and resulting righteousness and sanctification for His church—SATAN AND HIS ANGELS would not have crucified Him! (that's what it says!)
  - Satan knew the scriptures. He knew that man was to take his position one day, for that was why man was created in the first place (Genesis 1:25). He wanted to stop it, and He tried at every possible point in time. So Satan killed Jesus, through the leaders of Israel, thinking that he had won. But he didn't understand that which God had hidden in the scriptures...that which foretold of the Christ's suffering and His entering into His glory. All of which was (and is) necessary in order to form His bride who will one day be at His side when He takes the kingdom from Satan.
- Notice that this "wisdom" was predestined "*to our glory*"!
  - **Colossians 1:25-27** "Of this church I (Paul) was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of **the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the **hope** of glory."

### Back to the scriptures...

9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 For to us God revealed them...

- Verse 10... FOR TO US GOD REVEALED THEM—"things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard"!

- What is it He has revealed? THE WISDOM, THE MYSTERY (verse 7)
- Who is “us”? THE CHURCH

### Back to the scriptures...

10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

- These things about “the mystery”, the “wisdom” that has been hidden, are freely given to us by God, by the Spirit. It is the Spirit who teaches and guides us into all truth (John 16:13)
- And we speak these things about the mystery/ the wisdom, “combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words”.
  - Verse 13 should literally read, “*comparing* spiritual things with spiritual things”. The word “compare” means to judge one thing in connection with another.
  - Where do we find “spiritual things”? **2 Timothy 3:16** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God (literally “God-breathed”—Spirit and breath are from the same word), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
  - We must compare those things *from the Spirit* **to** the words *from the Spirit*—we must always go to the Word of God. ALWAYS! And when we go to the Word of God and need interpretation for the Word of God (a spiritual thing), where else can we go than to the Word of God? *Spiritual must be compared with spiritual*. In other words, Scripture interprets Scripture.

### Back to the scriptures...

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet

he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- The word “natural” in verse 14 is literally the word “soulical”. This is referencing the unsaved man, the man who does not have the Spirit of God within him.
- This “natural” man cannot understand spiritually things. In other words, the Word of God is foolishness to him. Sure, he can understand the letter of the law, but he cannot understand the spirit of it—the deeper things of God. He would need the Spirit of God (which is only for the saved man) to understand these things.
- *This would mean that the Word of God is written to saved people, for saved people.*

### Back to the scriptures...

3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men?

- Paul says that he couldn’t talk to his brethren (members of the church at Corinth) as he should have been able to because they were FLESHLY. That means that they were acting according to the flesh, not the Spirit—**even though they were saved**—and he couldn’t give them solid food. Remember what the solid food is? Back to our Hebrews passage—
  - **Hebrews 5:11-14**  
“Concerning Melchizedek (a King-Priest who Jesus is compared to) we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary (or *beginning*) principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for **the mature**, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

- Notice how the “solid food” is connected with the “word of righteousness”. And Paul, in his letter to Corinth, connects it to “wisdom”.
- In the Corinthians passage, verses 3 and 4, the brethren were jealous and there was strife because they were following men rather than following the Spirit. They were following their flesh, and not the Spirit.
  - This is what Paul says about that in his letter to the church in Galatia-- **Galatians 5:16-17** “But I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”
  - And because of that, Paul calls them “mere men”. What an insult! The brethren, the members of the church, are not mere men—we are “partakers of a heavenly calling”, a “higher calling”, and the recipients of what scripture calls “so great a salvation”!

### Back to the scriptures...

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

- The word “opportunity” isn’t in the original language.
- *What* is the reward? **Colossians 3:23-24** “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.”
  - Where is the inheritance? **Ephesians 5:5** “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” *It’s in the kingdom of Christ.*
- *When* will “each receive his own reward” (which is the inheritance, which is in the kingdom of Christ)? **Revelation 22:12** (Jesus speaking) “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.” And **2 Timothy 4:1** “I charge thee therefore before

God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and His kingdom”.

- Jesus will bring the reward with Him when He comes back, and when Paul associates the return of Christ with His kingdom. Can you see how all of this fits together?

### Back to the scriptures...

9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. 14 If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Verse 9 literally reads, “ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s landworker, God’s building.”
- In verse 13 it says that “the day” will show “each man’s work”. What day? THE DAY OF THE LORD...THE 7<sup>th</sup> DAY... THE DAY OF REST...YET FUTURE.
- Our work will be tested by fire—and if all of a man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss **but he himself will be saved**. This goes back to the salvation of our spirit—a salvation that cannot be lost. What CAN be lost is the reward of the inheritance, a future salvation (of the soul) that will be determined when Christ comes back and judges His church. This is what is being described—The Judgment Seat of Christ.
- **2 Corinthians 5:10** “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, **whether good or bad.**”