

Friedrich (TDNT 3:716) comments, “Christian preaching does not persuade the hearers by beautiful or clever words—otherwise it would only be a matter of words.” Attempts to accredit the gospel in a worldly show of wisdom actually discredit the gospel. [Garland, D. E. (2003). *1 Corinthians* (p. 81). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.]

The gospel always points beyond humans to God and Christ and becomes garbled whenever humans exploit it instead to headline themselves as its stars. Paul’s purpose was simply to give witness to the gospel message, and witnesses need only give their account in plain, simple language (Lightfoot 1895: 170–71). Everything was to focus on the one preached rather than on the preacher (Schrage 1991: 225). This unaffected manner of speech explains why his preaching did not arouse the curiosity and admiration of the highbrows enthralled by intellectual genius. [Ibid. (pp. 82–83).]

Third, Paul believes that humans cannot know God or God’s purposes apart from Christ. Only in Christ do humans have access to unlimited stores of truth, “the deep things of God” (2:10), that otherwise are unattainable to humans. These deep things, which lay bare God’s heart, are not hidden from view but can be perceived only through faith in Christ. This is why the gospel is “veiled to those who are perishing” (2 Corinthians 4:3–4). [Ibid. (pp. 83–84).]

2:6 Paul unequivocally rejects human wisdom (2:5), but he insists that he does speak wisdom among the mature. It is a divine wisdom that the unspiritual cannot recognize as wisdom. [Ibid. (p. 91).]

Paul’s point is that humans cannot unravel the mystery for themselves; it can only be given to them by God. This wisdom can be discerned as wisdom only by those who trust and love God (2:9), not by those who only analyze and debate. In 2:10–13, Paul argues that humans can know it only through the Spirit. Gaffin (1995: 110) concludes, “Believers and unbelievers belong to two different worlds; they exist in not only separate but antithetical ‘universes of discourse.’” Consequently, unbelievers will continue to grope in their own darkness and yet think that they see and understand. [Ibid. (p. 96).]

God’s mystery is not a riddle that men can solve but rather a secret that the human mind by itself is wholly unable to penetrate. God’s wisdom remains hidden until he chooses to disclose it. As 2:9–10 clarifies, God’s wisdom is known to those who love God by revelation from the Spirit. Second, God’s wisdom was predestined before the ages for our glory (2:7b), that is, God purposed before the ages to bring his people to glory through the wisdom of Christ crucified. [Taylor, M. (2014). *1 Corinthians*. (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.) (Vol. 28, p. 89). Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group.]

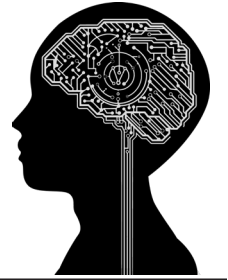
Here, therefore, he is thinking primarily of being unjustly evaluated by non-Christians (or by Christians employing worldly standards), who have no authority to criticize believers for their misbehavior, since they themselves do not accept the standards they employ in making their judgments. [Blomberg, C. (1994). *1 Corinthians* (p. 68). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

At verse 6 Paul’s language and direction



WHERE IS THE WISE PERSON?
WHERE IS THE TEACHER OF THE LAW?
WHERE IS THE PHILOSOPHER OF THIS AGE?
HAS NOT GOD MADE FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD?
(1 CORINTHIANS 1:20 NIV)

WHOEVER TRUSTS IN HIS OWN MIND IS A FOOL,
BUT HE WHO WALKS IN WISDOM WILL BE DELIVERED.
(PROVERBS 28:26 ESV)



alter. From 1:18 he has been painting in vivid colours the contrast between the wisdom of the world and God’s wisdom. He has exposed the emptiness of all man-made and man-centred schemes of salvation. He has effectively emptied such human wisdom of all ultimate value and of any consequent attractiveness. The net impact might well have been the conclusion that Paul was not interested in wisdom of any kind—none except the ‘foolishness’ of the gospel. The single word yet (6, RSV) therefore introduces Paul’s riposte to any such conclusion: yet among the mature we do impart wisdom. [Prior, D. (1985). *The message of 1 Corinthians: life in the local church* (pp. 49–50). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

C. S. Lewis wrote: It is hardly complimentary to God that we should choose him as an alternative to hell. Yet even this he accepts. The creature’s illusion of self-sufficiency must, for the creature’s sake, be shattered. And by trouble, or fear

of trouble on earth, by crude fear of the eternal flames, God shatters it, unmindful of his glory’s diminution. I call this “divine humility”, because it’s a poor thing to strike our colours to God when the ship is going down under us, a poor thing to come to him as a last resort, to offer up our own when it is no longer worth keeping. [Ibid. (p. 44).]

It would be an error, however, to interpret Paul’s word of the cross as in antithesis merely to Jewish or Greek expectations of salvation. It is to the Christian congregation at Corinth that Paul’s word is opposed. The antithesis is thus between two perceptions, two ways of life among “believers,” people of faith, and thus, to judge from history, with no greater prospect of reconciliation than between believers and unbelievers. [Harrisville, R. A. (1987). *1 Corinthians* (p. 38). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.]