

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery<sup>B</sup> of God to you, I did not come with brilliance<sup>C</sup> of speech<sup>d</sup> or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.<sup>e</sup> <sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness,<sup>f</sup> in fear,<sup>g</sup> and in much trembling.<sup>h</sup> <sup>4</sup>My speech<sup>i</sup> and my preaching were not with persuasive<sup>j</sup> words of wisdom<sup>C</sup> but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.<sup>k</sup>

## SPIRITUAL WISDOM

<sup>6</sup>We do, however, speak a wisdom among the mature,<sup>l</sup> but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers<sup>m</sup> of this age, who are coming to nothing.<sup>n</sup>

<sup>B</sup> Other mss read *testimony*

<sup>C</sup> Other mss read *human wisdom*

<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined<sup>o</sup> before the ages for our glory.<sup>p</sup> <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, because if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.<sup>q</sup> <sup>9</sup> But as it is written,

**What no eye has seen, no ear has heard,  
and no human heart has conceived—**

**God has prepared these things for those  
who love him.**<sup>D,r</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything,<sup>s</sup> even the depths of God.<sup>t</sup> <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts<sup>E</sup> except his spirit<sup>u</sup> within him? In the same way, no one knows<sup>v</sup> the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have not

<sup>E</sup> Or *things*



received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. <sup>13</sup> We also speak these things, not in words<sup>w</sup> taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people.<sup>F</sup> <sup>14</sup> But the person without the Spirit<sup>G</sup> does not receive what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated<sup>H</sup> spiritually. <sup>15</sup> The spiritual person, however, can evaluate<sup>I</sup> everything, and yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone. <sup>16</sup> For

**who has known the Lord's mind,  
that he may instruct him?<sup>J,X</sup>**

<sup>F</sup> *Or things with spiritual words*

<sup>G</sup> *Lit natural person*

<sup>H</sup> *Or judged, or discerned, also in v. 15*

<sup>I</sup> *Or judge, or discern*

In 2:6–16 the contrast between God’s wisdom and human wisdom continues but in a heightened sense and with a different focus.<sup>213</sup> Here Paul expands on the hidden nature of God’s wisdom in relation to this age (2:6–9)<sup>214</sup> and in connection to the Spirit (2:10–16). What has been inferred up to this point in the argument is now made explicit, namely, that one’s apprehension of the gospel as the wisdom of God comes only through divine revelation.<sup>215</sup> Simply stated, the wisdom of God cannot be known unless God makes it known. More specifically, God’s wisdom is revealed through the Spirit, who searches the deep things of God (2:10). God’s wisdom is not a matter of human intelligence or discovery but rather of divine disclosure. Paul’s exposition of God’s wisdom in relation to the gospel and the Spirit provides us with one of the truly great trinitarian passages in the New Testament.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>213</sup> This unit is marked by a number of emphatic constructions, including the emphatic placement of σοφίαν (wisdom) twice in 2:6, the use of the emphatic conjunction ἀλλά (NIV, “We do, however, speak ...” and “However, as it is written ...”), the emphatic placement of the personal pronoun ἡμῖν (“to us”) in 2:10, the use of the pronoun ἡμεῖς (“we”) for emphasis in 2:12 and again in 2:16, and the more emphatic reference to the Spirit of God by repetition of the Greek definite article (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ; NIV, “the Spirit, who is from God”) in contrast to the less emphatic “spirit of the world” in 2:12. Garland (*1 Corinthians*, 90) also notes the antitheses expressed in “not/but” language that pervades Paul’s argument.

<sup>214</sup> Picking up the same expression from 1:21. In 2:6–8, there are four occurrences of the term αἰών (age).

<sup>215</sup> This has been implied previously in the claims that the cross is foolishness to unbelievers (1:21, 23–24), that the world did not know God through its own wisdom (1:21), and that Paul proclaimed the mystery of God (2:1).

<sup>216</sup> Note especially 2:10–11, that the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God and the claim, “We have the mind of Christ” (2:16) in conjunction with an Old Testament “Yahweh” text (Isa 40:13), “Who has known the mind of the Lord?”