

2:1-2: *And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

When Paul taught the gospel his presentation of it was not based upon eloquent speech. Polished presentations were not the motivating force in converting people at Corinth or anywhere else in the first century world (compare Col. 2:4, especially the end of the verse). The Expositor's Greek Testament (2:775) describes the idea as: "The manner of Paul's preaching was determined by its *matter*; with such a commission he could not adopt the arts of a rhetorician nor the airs of a philosopher: 'I came not like a man eminent in speech or wisdom, in proclaiming to you the testimony of God.'" Rienecker and Rogers (p. 390) offered this excellent quote: "In his proclamation Paul placed no reliance upon eloquence or wisdom but it does not mean that he did not employ any kind of speech or wisdom. It is just that these were not prominent in his evangelism." This opening verse may imply that some at Corinth had come to the conclusion that the real "proof" of someone being from God or inspired was the ability to speak eloquently or have persuasive speech. After all, if a person were truly speaking for God, how could such a one *not* speak in this way? See again what is said in 1 Cor. 1:18-28, especially verses 27-28.

Paul had been trained and trained well. He was able to quote from Aratus (Acts 17:28), Epimenides (Tit. 1:12), and Menander (1 Cor. 15:33), but he did not rely upon these kinds of sources for his message (verse 13). He specifically denied using "excellency" of speech. *Excellency* (*huperoche*) is found only here and 1 Tim. 2:2 where it is translated "high place" (ASV) or "authority" (KJV). Classical writers used this word "to describe the peak of a mountain, the top of a beam, an excess of money, a rank that exceeds another" (CBL, GED, 6:365). Here it means Paul did not use "wisdom." The word *wisdom* (*sophia*) referred to the *content* of speech. Rienecker and Rogers (p. 390) defined this word as "wordy cleverness." Of the 28 times that Paul used this word, at least 15 of these places are in the first three chapters of this book. The description of Paul's preaching reveals his unwillingness to preach the currently popular "success in life formula." Paul taught people about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 10:10) because he wanted people to know about the Messiah. This was his subject, and his teaching style was not nearly as eloquent as some of the professional orators known to the Corinthians.

Another important word is "proclaiming" ("declaring," KJV). This term (*katangello*) is a verb and it is most frequently used in the book of Acts. In the First Corinthian letter it is found only in this verse and 9:14. It meant to authoritatively proclaim a message to people. This word is specifically used when describing other things in the New Testament: proclaiming the resurrection in Acts 4:2; the word of God in Acts 13:5 and 15:36; the way of salvation (Acts 16:17); the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14); the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26); and the person of Christ (Acts 17:3; Phil. 1:16, 18). At the end of 1 Cor. 2:1 Paul spoke about the "testimony" (*marturion*) of God. The gospel is viewed as God's witness. As MacKnight (p. 146) wrote, "I declared to you the thing which God hath testified." God has given His witness (in many ways) that Christianity is true (compare Mk. 16:15-20; Heb. 2:3-4).

The information in verse 2 continues the thought. Instead of being concerned with the prevailing philosophies, Paul focused on Christ and the crucifixion. He said he had "determined" (*krino*—a common verb often translated "judge") to do this. Paul used this term quite extensively in this book as well as his epistle we call Romans. Gromacki (p. 28) commented on how "Paul had determined that his content would be a simple, clear, and frank presentation of both the person of Christ, including His redemptive work, involving the death and resurrection ('and be crucified')." On this same page Gromacki pointed out from the book of Acts how "Paul 'reasoned' (*dielegeto*, Acts 18:4), 'persuaded' (*epeithen*, Acts 18:4), and 'testified' (*diamartyromenos*, Acts 18:5). This was no mere statement of facts; his message conveyed spiritual, Biblical, and logical arguments. Logic, divine not human, can and must saturate our sermons."

While only Jesus and His crucifixion are mentioned in 2b, these items are a synecdoche (a part of something is stated and this part represents the entirety of something). Stated another way, Paul preached about the Lord's crucifixion along with other subjects such as the resurrection, a final judgment, righteous living, what sin is, etc. The point is that Paul was an apostle and he refused to compromise the message so the gospel would have "more appeal" to the masses. How does Paul's example compare to what is

currently being preached in pulpits throughout this country and the world? For information on the crucifixion of Jesus, see section 44 of the Gospels commentary.

Gromacki (p. 28) cited Grosheide in regard to the prepositional phrase “*among you*.” This additional author said the phrase “cannot mean that Paul chose a special manner of preaching for the Corinthians, but it indicates that what he did at Corinth he did everywhere else and the Corinthians should know that.” Paul “was consistent. His message remained the same even though he adapted his methods of presentation to his audiences.”

2:3-5: *And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of 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.*

When Paul came to the Corinthians the *content* of his teaching was different from the other ideas and teachings circulated in the first century. The *means of presentation* was also different. Paul came to the Corinthians in “*weakness, fear, and in much trembling*.” He may have literally trembled like Belshazzar (Dan. 5:6), or he may have used these expressions to indicate his anxiety while at Corinth. Non-Christian philosophers were typically haughty and overly self-confident. While arrogance and exaltation of self were commonplace, these qualities did not typify Paul’s style (Acts 18:9-10).

Paul’s *weakness (astheneia)* has been defined as his “unimpressive appearance” (Kittel, Abridged Edition, p. 83). Compare, too, 2 Cor. 10:10. It is also possible to understand this literally. He had traveled for a considerable time and a very far distance (Acts 15:40-18:1). During this time he had been beaten and jailed in Philippi (Acts 16:22-24), driven out of Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:1, 10, 13-14), and mocked at Athens (Acts 17:32) before arriving at Corinth. His “*fear*” (*phobos*) was “fear, dread, terror” (Thayer, p. 656 and compare Acts 18:8-11). The word “*trembling*” (*tromos*) usually described “a trembling caused by fear” (CBL, GED, 6:317). For a vivid illustration of this word’s usage see Mk. 16:8. In 1 Cor. 2:3 *trembling* (and notice that it is modified by the word “*much*”) may be understood as Paul’s “sense of personal inadequacy when preaching the gospel in Corinth” (CBL, GED, 6:317). Some commentators understand these words to describe something like emotional frailty or fear of men and circumstances. While these explanations are possible, the way Paul described himself is also presented in a positive way in verses like Phil. 2:12 and Eph. 6:5.

Facing a “friendly audience” is difficult for many; coming to a strange place and speaking to people who live wicked lives is an especially daunting task for even the bravest person. Paul may have had some concerns, but he was courageous enough to accomplish the task (for some examples of Bible characters who were bold and courageous see the commentary on Acts 9:22). MacKnight (p. 147) noted how Greeks “valued their teachers in proportion to the skill which they shewed in setting off their opinions by the beauty and harmony of their language. No wonder, therefore, if the apostle, knowing the humour of the Greeks, explained the doctrines of the gospel to the Corinthian philosophers, rhetoricians, and people, with fear and much trembling.”

Even if a group of people welcomes the message, a teacher bears great responsibility (and is thus concerned) because he is presenting a message from God. Other verses in the New Testament show us how Christians tried to communicate the gospel. Apollos (Acts 18:25) sought *accuracy* when he preached (compare Jer. 23:28). Speakers for God are likened to *stewards* (1 Cor. 4:1-2) and therefore use *wisdom* (Col. 1:28), *zeal* (2 Cor. 5:14) and *sincerity* or *integrity* (2 Cor. 2:17). Paul was able to do what God needed done because God was with him and he had the truth. God’s presence and the truth allowed him to do great things and such is still true for our day and time. Today many believe “*persuasive words*” will attract and hold people, but this is the “blind leading the blind” (Mt. 15:14) and offering “smooth words that beguile innocent hearts” (Rom. 16:18). *Persuasive (peithos)* is translated “*enticing*” in the KJV; this term is found only here in the New Testament and it was associated with the type of swaying speech used by salesmen and debaters.

The vision recorded in Acts 18:9-10 must have greatly encouraged Paul because he preached the word (Mk. 16:15) and confirmed the gospel with miracles (Mk. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 2:5b). Paul actually said

(verse 4) that his preaching came with a “*demonstration*” (*apodeixis*), a very powerful word found only here in the New Testament. This term was used to describe legal proofs brought forward in a court of law. “Just as Paul maintained that God’s existence is substantiated by the created world (Romans 1:20), he also considered that the truth and genuineness of the gospel are proved (*apodeiknumi*) by the spiritual power and the signs which follow apostolic preaching” (CBL, GED, 1:355).

The reference to “*Spirit*” and “*power*” reminds readers of verses like Jn. 16:8 (Jesus said the Holy Spirit would help the apostles to convict the world of sin and this was partially done by miracles). Towards the end of the Roman letter (Rom. 15:19) Paul again spoke about the Holy Spirit and power. At Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:5) we find he used these same two items to present his case there. Paul did not want the Corinthians’ faith or anyone else’s to rest in the “*wisdom of men*.” He wanted Christians and all others to be grounded in the truth, and as already indicated, part of this grounding was accomplished by the performance of miracles. If Paul had not used supernatural signs (since the Bible had not yet been written)—if he had “persuaded the Corinthians by clever reasoning and grounded Christianity upon their Greek philosophy his work would have perished with the wisdom of the age” (Expositor’s Greek Testament, 2:777). Compare verse 6. We may also infer from faith *standing in the power of God* that heaven does not want people to have a superficial faith. If this is how people begin their Christian life, this is a state from which we need to help them move on to maturity (compare 1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Paul also did not believe in the modern theory of truth being relative or he might have been in error about some part of his teaching. When he came to Corinth he preached; he claimed his teaching was true and he did not compromise the message. Bengel (2:174) suggested “speech” in verse 4 involved private teaching and “preaching” was public proclamation. Paul’s firm and definitive approach in evangelism is what we must follow today. “Paul personalized his recollection for the Corinthians by the phrase **while I was with you**. The Corinthian church could not deny that they had come to Christ through a gospel that did not employ human wisdom” (Holman, 7:26).

Two more helpful points come from Allen (p. 36). “The basis for division at Corinth was worldly wisdom which expressed itself in following men. Since Paul did not preach worldly wisdom, he was not responsible for the divisions.” Also, the “success in converting others does not depend solely on our skills as teachers and preachers. The power is in the message!” In the past people just had “Moses and the prophets” to use (Lk. 16:29). We now have the “sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet. 1:19). Because of what we have, we should be fully committed to Christ (compare Heb. 2:1-3).

2:6: *We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought:*

In the previous verse (2:5) Paul condemned worldly wisdom (“*wisdom of men*”). Barclay (New Testament Words, p. 264) defined this as “the kind of wisdom which knows well how to get on in this world and how to amass the treasures of this world, but has no knowledge of things that matter.” Here Paul added to his point to insure he was not misunderstood. Paul made it clear that not all wisdom is bad. There is a type of *wisdom* in the realm of Christianity that is true and important. This is the “*wisdom of God*.” This *wisdom* stands in contrast to the *wisdom of men*. Paul said he and others “*speak*” (a present tense verb) of this wisdom. This *wisdom* is for mature Christians. Those who are interested in this *wisdom* are called “*full-grown*” (*teleios*). This term has the sense of “wholeness and completeness.” Jesus used this word in Mt. 5:48 and Mt. 19:21. James used this term to describe the saved in Jas. 3:2. The Hebrew writer expressed a similar thought in 5:12-14. There are some parts of the Christian life that involve “full grown” wisdom and it is possible to be a *full grown Christian*. When a person reaches this state three things are usually true. The individual has grown so far in the faith his or her growth is noticed by others (Christians and non-Christians). Such a person has the ability to regularly apply the Bible to daily life and God’s word literally becomes the person’s “handbook for daily life.” A third key is developing the knowledge and skills to teach others (Heb. 5:12-14). Being full grown does not mean a Christian is incapable of learning more and more. Christians never reach a state where their spiritual growth (in all areas) cannot continue (Phil. 3:12). Those who are not *full grown* (1 Pet. 2:2) typically find some parts of

the Bible (Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation for example), as well as some parts of the Christian life, to be especially challenging (Lk. 9:23).

Paul realized the “*rulers*” (*archon*, civil rulers in government) usually have little interest in the gospel (*wisdom*). Thus, they are not familiar with God’s *wisdom* and they are “*coming to nought*.” That is, it is like the rulers of this world are being gradually robbed of their power. With each passing day they get closer and closer to the time when their authority will cease. More information on the word translated *nought* is found in the commentary on verse 7.

Paul made a clear connection between God’s *wisdom* and the rulers of this world. If the civil leaders of our world will not endure (last), what about their *wisdom*? Human wisdom will eventually lose all power and control over the minds of men. One example of this happening is Communism. This philosophy and system of government lasted for many years in some countries but was eventually abandoned. Other kinds of *wisdom* in the world will eventually perish too. Think of past conclusions drawn in the fields of science, medicine and philosophy. Many who were regarded as “great thinkers” were eventually proven to be wrong in one or perhaps virtually all areas. The only *wisdom* with enduring value and success is the gospel. The gospel will always stand the test of time, but wisdom from the world will change, die, and ultimately be a complete failure.

Part of the failure is based on what our “higher power” tells us to seek. Worldly wisdom is what many use to guide themselves and it tells men to pursue power, wealth and pleasure (things that are temporal). Christianity encourages men to seek what is heavenly and everlasting (Col. 3:2). What would really help men and nations (the word of God) is often openly spurned and rejected. Jeremiah (2:13) described people who chose “wisdom” from a source other than God as using “cisterns that cannot hold water.” Such is also true of our modern world. All efforts ranging from fighting terrorism to creating peace will ultimately fail because God’s wisdom has been rejected. Nations and governments that have turned against God have declined and fallen. History proves this and no current or future nation can exempt itself from divine judgment if it relies upon worldly wisdom.

2:7: *but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, (even) the (wisdom) that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory:*

Before Jesus and the New Testament, the *wisdom of God* was a “*mystery*.” The word *mystery* (*musterion*) described something unknown to man; without divine help this information would be beyond man’s comprehension. This term “is based on an ancient word which conveyed the idea of shutting the mouth. The Biblical use is that which was once silent is now vocal. Scriptural mysteries are divine truths once unknown and unspoken by men in the past ages, but now proclaimed and understood by yielded believers” (Gromacki, p. 33). When Paul concluded the Roman letter (Rom. 16:25-27), he praised God for revealing the *mystery*.

The only way any man can know God’s *wisdom* (i.e. understand God and the way man is to live) is through divine revelation (the document we now call the Bible). If God had not revealed His plan of salvation to the world, no human being would know about it. Since man would not know that such information existed, no one would understand or obey it. The information promised in the Old Testament (part of the wisdom) has finally been revealed (Jude 3). “The greatest divine secret of all time is the now-revealed mystery of Christ who has come to redeem the world through His death on the cross” (CBL, GED, 4:230).

Paul seems to have enjoyed speaking about God’s *mystery*. He took pleasure in telling people about how the *mystery* has been explained (Eph. 3:1-5). That is, God had a plan to redeem man. This plan was executed through Christ, and it brings all those who are saved into one body. Before people became aware of this plan it was a secret (Paul said it was *hidden*. This term is explained below). Compare 1 Pet. 1:10-12. For some additional information on the various “ages” (periods) God used to bring Jesus into the world, see the commentary on Heb. 1:2.

At the end of this verse Paul revealed another important truth. God’s “*mystery*” (the plan for man’s salvation) was “*foreordained before the worlds*” (the KJV says “*ordained before the world*”). Before

things were created (Gen. 1:1) God had a plan to save mankind (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). Man, his world, and even time itself were part of a master plan before he came into being (i.e. God decided beforehand to carry out a plan to save man after he fell into sin). In the NASB verse 7 uses the word “*predestined*.” For information about predestination, see the commentary on Rom. 8:29-30. After the creation God kept His plan “*hidden*” (*apokrupto*, this word is found in other places like Col. 1:26). This term may be understood as “concealed” or “kept secret.” Though certain parts of this plan were sometimes revealed (1 Pet. 1:10-12), a comprehensive understanding of God’s scheme was not made known until the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

God finally revealed His concealed plan for “*man’s glory*.” In the end God’s plan gives man what he could have never otherwise achieved—salvation. Paul’s statement may also be correlated with the end of verse 6. Rulers will “*come to nought*” because they reject God’s plan. The word “*nought*” (*katargeo*) means that through Christ hostile powers are “*deprived of their power*” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 2:267). God’s people are “*coming to glory*” because they believe in and accept God’s will; the unsaved are slowly but steadily being obliterated. Everyone in the world is on one of two paths.

The information in this verse may have been designed to contrast Christianity with some of the false religions in the first century. The Expositor’s Greek Testament (2:778) said, “The Hellenic ‘mysteries,’ which flourished at this time, were practiced at night, in an imposing dramatic form; and peculiar doctrines were taught in them, which the initiated were sworn to keep secret.” There were few similarities between the gospel and the false religions; there is also a very different *ending point* for both types of faith.

2:8: *which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:*

All the “*rulers*” (“*none*”) were unaware of something (the KJV says, “*princes of this world*.” Paul previously used this word in verse 6). What didn’t these men know? They failed to understand God’s *mystery* (the plan of salvation). They were “all blind to the significance of the rise of Christianity” (Expositor’s Greek Testament, 2:779). If the rulers of the world had grasped God’s plan they would not have killed Jesus. Jesus made this same point in Lk. 23:34 as did Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 3:17). “Not one of the officials responsible for the illegal trials of Christ (Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod Antipas) perceived the real identity of Christ, nor did they understand the significance of His presence in their midst. Some of His followers, including the apostles and Mary, did; but this wisdom was hidden to the lost rulers” (Gromacki, First Corinthians, p. 34). Some of the best and brightest minds failed to grasp the truth about the gospel, and now more than 2,000 years later, little has changed. Is it not the case that most earthly rulers still do not understand New Testament Christianity? Ignorance was not the total explanation for Jesus’ rejection (there were other factors such as hate and envy), but ignorance was a large factor. In spite of how men viewed and treated Jesus, heaven’s plan worked and those who opposed the Lord were responsible for their actions just as people today are.

The expression “*Lord of Glory*” was another way of saying “*Jehovah*.” It affirms the Lord’s deity. “God is depicted as ‘the God of glory’ (Acts 7:2) and ‘the Father of Glory’ (Eph. 1:17)” (Gromacki, First Corinthians, pp. 34-35). Jesus was both human and divine, but the *wisdom of the world* often refuses to recognize His deity and sometimes even His humanity. The Corinthians could not find glory through worldly wisdom or worldly power. It must come through Christ. Furthermore, “Paul dealt the Corinthians’ pride a severe blow by telling them that their pursuit of human wisdom placed them in the same company as the people who **crucified the Lord** they claimed to worship” (Holman, 7:35).

2:9-10: *but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. 10 But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

Paul apparently went back to the Old Testament for this quotation (“*but as it is written*”), though there is no Old Testament passage that has these exact words. Many believe Paul combined several verses to form this quotation (Isa. 52:15; 64:4; 65:17). We do know that Paul used this technique when he wrote to the Romans (see Rom. 3:10-18; 11:26-27).

A large number of people (and this includes several preachers) believe these verses refer to heaven. This passage has been used to affirm our “eyes and ears cannot adequately describe heaven. The place God has prepared for the saved is beyond human comprehension and description.” While all of these ideas are certainly true, this is not what Paul meant. The context (compare verse 7) describes a “*mystery*” (God’s plan for salvation). The *mystery* is the thing men could not *see and hear*. That is, men did not understand God’s plan to redeem the world. The *wisdom* contained in the gospel cannot be perceived by man’s senses. Even though eyes and ears can be used to read and hear about Christ’s death, only God can tell us the significance of the cross. Without *wisdom* from God (i.e. the information now contained in the Bible), Christ’s death is nothing more than a tragedy. Man’s intelligence, if unaided, cannot figure out the *mystery* of the gospel no matter how hard he tries.

Notice that Paul described both man’s senses and rational thinking. We use our *eyes and ears* to *sense* things. Our “*heart*” (our innermost part) is the basis for rational thought. “**Eye has not seen** it, for it is not a color. **Ear has not heard** it, for it is not a sound. It **has not come up into the heart**, for it is no earthly thought” (The Church’s Bible, p. 41). We cannot have knowledge of heavenly things and plans without communication from God. The 10th verse is further proof that Paul did not describe heaven. About 700 years prior to Paul, Isaiah referred to what the eye had not seen and the ear had not heard as a “great light” (Isa. 9:1-8). This prophecy is quoted in Mt. 4:16 and further described here in First Corinthians as *things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man*. Here Paul again described the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10) that we now commonly refer to as the “New Testament” or the “gospel.”

Before looking at verse 10 a final point deserves attention. God has prepared spiritual things (in this case Christianity) for *those who love Him*. This reminds readers of what Jesus said in Mt. 19:29 (“*And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life*”). What Paul told the Corinthians reminds readers of Eph. 1:3; all spiritual blessings will go to the saved.

In verse 10 Paul said God has “*revealed*” what the “*eye saw not*” and the “*ear heard not*” (verse 9). In other words, the gospel was hidden for a long time, but the Holy Spirit has now *revealed* the information that is in this chapter called a *mystery*. The word *revealed* (*apokalupto*) has the sense of uncovered or disclosed.

Paul said this *mystery* (what we now call the New Testament) was *revealed* “*to us*” (the apostles). Just as Jesus had previously promised, the Spirit revealed the truth to the apostles (Jn. 16:13-14). These men then taught the *mystery* (the gospel) to others. They also wrote it down so it would be preserved for and understood by the people now living. We also know that God the Father communicated with men prior to Jesus (Heb. 1:2), and Jesus also gave information to men (the apostles—Heb. 1:2; Mt. 11:27). For some information on how the Bible has been transmitted down to the present time, see the commentary at the end of Heb. 4:12.

When Paul said the *Spirit* is involved with “*searching*” (*ereunao*) He did not mean the Holy Spirit discovers information or searches for information about the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is deity (Acts 5:3-4) and is therefore omniscient (all knowing). Paul meant the things of God need to be revealed to man and the Holy Spirit is the revealer. Since He is deity He knows “*all things*,” even “*the deep things of God*.” Because the Holy Spirit knows all, He has been able to reveal all the things man needs (i.e. how to become a Christian, how to stay saved, and how to convert others. See a similar point explained in the commentary on Heb. 4:13). The word *searching* means the Holy Spirit has provided us with a “deeper understanding” (Kittel, 2:657) of God. It means the Holy Spirit *penetrates* everything associated with deity. According to what Paul said in Rom. 11:30-31, we need help in this area! The Holy Spirit offers this help through the book we now call the Bible.

It must be understood that the Father and Son are also capable of “*searching out the deep things of*

God.” The fact that this expression is specifically applied to the Spirit does not mean the other members of the Godhead are incapable of this activity. Scripture sometimes presents one member of the Godhead as doing something, but this does not imply the remaining members of the Godhead are incapable of doing the same thing. This principle is even seen in the secular realm. If we say a wife pays the household bills, this does not mean her husband is incapable of doing the same thing.

At the end of this verse Paul made an unusual statement about God. He said there are some “*deep things*” in God’s nature. This may describe the innermost secrets of God’s will, especially in relation to man’s redemption (salvation). One of the things near and dear to God’s heart is Christianity. This truth (which is an innermost secret) has been revealed through (by) the Spirit. If people reject God’s divine revelation (i.e. the Bible), they have no hope. All who reject the word will be lost (Jn. 12:48). *Deep things* (*bathos*) is also applied to Satan in Rev. 2:24. There will be much about God and the devil that we never know in this life, but we know the most important points: Both are far more powerful than man, both seek man to side with them, both will exist throughout eternity, both have strong convictions about sin, and both view the world as “ground zero.”

2:11-12: *For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God.*

In verse 11 Paul said there are certain things only we know. There are some feelings, thoughts, reflections and motives so private no human knows about them but us. We have experiences so unique that only our spirit is aware of them. No other person can look into our hearts and dig out our most intimate feelings and thoughts. A similar thing is true of God the Father (compare Rom. 11:33-35). Some things about God are so private or beyond our comprehension that Paul said in verse 11 we can only know them through the Holy Spirit. In first century times, the Holy Spirit was communicating His message through the apostles and other inspired men. What the Spirit wanted to communicate was received by the time the first century ended (Jude 3), so now the Spirit’s communication continues through the information He gave (i.e. He communicates information to man through the Bible). Paul refers to this process in this chapter (the apostles received this information, 10a), and they wrote it down for us to have and use (verse 13).

When we consider what Paul said we must shake our heads in disbelief at many of the practices in the religious world. People “invent new things for worship” and then boldly claim the new additions please God. Paul explicitly says men cannot have much insight about God (and this includes how to acceptably worship Him) *unless they have divine help* and, as explained by the apostle himself, this aid *comes through the Scriptures*. When worshippers offer things to God or use methods that are not based upon the Bible, they engage in action that is elsewhere called “will worship” (Col. 2:23). Jesus once described these practices “the doctrines and precepts of men” and said they result in “vain worship” (Mt. 15:8-9—see this subject discussed in section 21 of the Gospels commentary). Since mere men cannot know what pleases God without divine revelation, how dare they offer worship they think or believe is acceptable. We must speak and act only as the “oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). We must “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). If we cannot find Bible authority for our beliefs and practices, we must modify what we believe and practice to match what the Bible teaches.

The reference to “*spirit of the world*” in 12a may be understood in one of two ways. This expression may refer to Satan. The Bible says the devil is the “*prince of this world*” and the “*god of this world*” (Jn. 12:31; Eph. 2:2). This explanation views the wording as a contrast between the devil and the Holy Spirit (i.e. inspired men like Paul were guided by the Holy Spirit when they penned letters such as this one). This view further says both forces (Satan and the Holy Spirit) are personal and literal; they are in an ongoing battle and thus in fierce competition for the souls of men. If this is what Paul meant, it is the only time he used the word *spirit* to form a contrast with Satan. If this explanation is correct it means Christians are associated with God, not Satan.

The other plausible explanation is that the phrase means “human reason; the human frame of mind.” If

this is correct Paul meant the apostles did not use the human wisdom and philosophy commonly found in Greece. Instead of using human wisdom, the apostles used the *spirit from God*. They were under the Spirit's influence and they *freely received* information from God (12b). This explanation is preferred because of what follows in verse 13. Jesus once said, "freely ye received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). The apostles lived by this principle and we must as well.

2:13: *Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words).*

The *words spoken* by Paul were not in "man's wisdom" (this is another reference to the philosophers who were commonplace in the first century). Paul's words came from the "*Spirit*." The Spirit "*taught*" (*didaktos*, instructed) in words, and some of the Spirit's words were given to Paul (there is a difference between *teaching and dictating*, and here we find the apostles were not "robots that received dictation"). These *words* included some intimate facts about God (verse 11) and things that had not been previously revealed when the Old Testament system was still the right way to serve God (verse 9). For us, these *words* make up the Bible and especially the New Testament. Paul taught what the Holy Spirit supernaturally taught him and our duty is to teach what the Holy Spirit has recorded through the inspired writers—nothing more and nothing less (2 Jn. 9).

The way the Spirit communicated these truths to Paul is stated at the end of this verse. The Spirit combined "*spiritual things with spiritual words*." The Holy Spirit worked with and through Paul so he used the right words and ideas to describe Christianity. If God had not explained things like Jesus' life and death, and had not used just the right words, the significance of the Lord's life and death may very well have been distorted or not known. For information on the word translated *spiritual*, see the commentary on 1 Cor. 3:1-4 and 9:11.

The Holy Spirit communicated to Paul and the other writers (Jn. 16:7-14) the exact words man needs to right his relationship with God. Those familiar with the Greek language can readily attest to the fact that Koine Greek (the language of the New Testament) was an ideal language to use because it was so precise. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the right words when they spoke about the gospel (Mt. 10:20). He also gave them the right words when they penned letters to Christians and congregations (1 Cor. 14:37). These facts are some of the reasons Christians accept the Bible as a book without error; every word in Scripture is considered to be true and reliable.

Since the Bible was created with supernatural help from God, every passage and even every word deserves the closest scrutiny. Because of how God constructed His word we may use the prepositions, verb tenses, and other grammatical constructions to form conclusions and help us determine what is right and wrong. Even Jesus treated the Scriptures in this manner (Mt. 22:32). Jesus proved the resurrection by the tense of a single verb! The 13th verse in 1 Corinthians 2 clearly affirms that the Bible writers were inspired. Wiersbe (First Corinthians, p. 576) said "it is very important to note that these spiritual truths are given in specific *words*. In the Bible, we have much more than inspired thoughts; we have inspired *words*."

Wiersbe also (same page) said, "The successful Christian learns the vocabulary of the Spirit and makes use of it. He knows the meaning of justification, sanctification, adoption, propitiation, election, inspiration, and so forth. In understanding God's vocabulary, we come to understand God's word and God's will for our lives. If the engineering student can grasp the technical terms of chemistry, physics, or electronics, why should it be difficult for Christians, taught by the Spirit, to grasp the vocabulary of Christian truth?"

This question caused Wiersbe to further observe, "Yet I hear church members say, 'Don't preach doctrine. Just give us heartwarming sermons that will encourage us!' Sermons based on what? If they are not based on doctrine, they will accomplish nothing! 'But doctrine is so dull!' people complain. Not if it is presented the way the Bible presents it." The KJV has the word "*holy*" in italics because it is not in all the manuscripts. While the Holy Spirit is certainly being described, the word "*holy*" is not in all copies of the Greek text.

In this single verse we read about two key responsibilities of the Holy Spirit and the Bible. The Holy Spirit has revealed the word of God and has inspired men to accurately record that information. A third work of the Holy Spirit has been to “confirm” this word (Mk. 16:20). Supernatural signs were given to the apostles to prove to people that the information being revealed by the Holy Spirit really was from God.

2:14: *Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.*

Those who believe in Calvinism frequently use this verse to argue that man is completely or totally depraved. This doctrine (which was popularized by Augustine, 354-430 A.D.) says each person “inherits sin” and cannot come to God without some type of supernatural intervention by God. Stated another way, man is so sinful and helpless he is even incapable of belief until God supernaturally opens his heart and creates faith. Based upon these conclusions other incorrect doctrines logically follow.

If only God can “open the door” to a person’s heart (and this requires a supernatural act), then a logical conclusion is that no man can *shut the door* since it was supernaturally opened by God. This second part of the doctrine is usually described as *unconditional election*. Unconditional election means a saved person is picked by God for salvation and will remain saved no matter what his personal will (desire) is. A person’s choice or lifestyle does not matter. According to Calvinism, those who are lost are damned even though they might want to be saved. A person Calvinists classify as saved may not want salvation, but because God has “chosen him” (the third part of this belief system), he will be saved even though this goes against his will. When Calvinism speaks of choosing people to be saved or lost they often use the word *predestination* (for a Biblical study of predestination, see the commentary on Rom. 8:29-30). Calvinism incorrectly understands predestination as God arbitrarily choosing who will be saved and who will be lost, and man having no say-so in the process.

Another key element in Calvinistic thought is “limited atonement.” Rather than teach that Jesus died for all people, Calvinism says Jesus died for “just the chosen” (some have referred to this part of doctrine as the “frozen chosen”). According to this belief, since Jesus just died for a certain number of saved people, His death was *limited* and the number of saved people is literally “frozen” at a precise figure.

Given all the preceding points, it is only logical for Calvinism to also teach “irresistible grace.” If a person is “one of the “frozen chosen,” then it is said he or she cannot resist the grace of God (he or she will respond and eventually submit to the “call of God”). Since people are locked into one fate or another by God, Calvinism finally affirms “perseverance of the saints.” All the “frozen chosen” will persevere (none of this group can be eternally lost no matter what they chose to do during their lives. Their salvation is guaranteed no matter how they live). Each of these false ideas may be dealt with individually and then the total error can be summarized.

Calvinism has been said to have “thousands of components,” but its basic parts may be summarized by the preceding points. Many have chosen to explain as well as refute this teaching with an acrostic (“*tulip*”). The *T* stands for “total depravity,” the *U* represents “unconditional election,” the *L* is for “limited atonement,” the *I* represents “irresistible grace,” and the *P* stands for “perseverance of the saints.”

Calvin was only 26 years old in 1536, when the first edition of his “Institutes” (this is similar to a “catechism of the Christian faith”) was published, but his influence continues until this day. Nearly every non-Catholic group has, to one degree or another, adopted some information (theology) from him. This is hardly surprising because religious leaders and reformers from all over Europe trained at his academy and his doctrines were then taken far and wide. Although this religious doctrine has become very popular, it did not exist for the first 300 years of Christianity.

Total depravity is the first part of the doctrine and this terminology means Adam’s offspring inherit a “depraved nature” as well as the “actual guilt” of sin. These ideas are usually associated with verses such as Ps. 51:5; Calvinists affirm that no part of man has been left untouched by sin. Based on the belief that

man is totally corrupt, it is thought he cannot truly love, discern, or choose things that please God. Stated another way, Calvinists do not believe people have the ability to understand or obey the truth of the gospel. Calvinistic supporters base their beliefs on verses that are understood to describe “inherited guilt” or man’s inability to do certain things. This system of belief says man has just enough freedom to be accountable for his sins.

Passages such as Ps. 51 are commonly used to support Calvinism, but these passages do not prove what is commonly alleged. While it is certainly true that David faced the consequences of sin (Ps. 51), he did not “inherit guilt.” In fact, the word “inherited” in the Bible is never associated with moral qualities. It is a legal term associated with transmitting property from one generation to the next (Gen. 31:14; Job 42:12-15). Rather than describe the “universal problem of sin,” Ps. 51 deals with David’s *personal guilt* over his sexual sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-5). David’s guilt over his adultery was so great he said, “*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned*” (Ps. 51:4). David had certainly sinned against Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, but his guilt was so overwhelming he said he was only guilty of sinning against God.

The fact that David said he had “only sinned against God” (Ps. 51:4) proves he was using figurative language (i.e. he used hyperbole—an exaggeration for emphasis. Compare Job 31:18). Just as a child might say, “Everyone is doing this” and that means “two or three people,” so David used highly figurative language. Notice how he also said, “in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5). If “original sin” is taught in Ps. 51, David’s mother was an adulteress. Readers should also notice the repeated emphasis on “me” and “my” in Ps. 51. These personal pronouns are significant for they also tell us David was describing his personal problem—the fact that he had sinned and God knew about it (2 Sam. 12:7—“thou art the man”).

Ezekiel specifically dealt with this subject and he said sin is *not* inherited by people (Ezek. 18:20). Were it true that babies are depraved and stained by sin, Jesus’ comment about “little children entering into the kingdom of God” (Mt. 18:1-4) is indeed very strange. If a mother uses illegal drugs her child may suffer the *consequences* of this action but not the *guilt* of the behavior. At the end of Joshua’s life Joshua told fellow Hebrews to “choose” the God they would serve—the true God or a false God (Josh. 24:15). When Stephen was preaching by inspiration, he said men could “resist” God—something Calvinism says men cannot do (Acts 7:51). Paul said Christians can “fall from grace” (Gal. 5:4, ASV), something Calvinism denies. For more information on why *total depravity* is wrong, see the commentary on 14:20.

Rather than reading about *unconditional election* in the Bible, God’s word says apostasy is possible. The loss of salvation is why the Corinthians were warned about going “beyond what was written” (1 Cor. 4:6), and why John said continued forgiveness is *conditional* (1 Jn. 1:7, 9). Much of the Hebrew letter is directed to the subject of apostasy (compare Heb. 6:4-6). Other passages that refute this point are found under the “perseverance of the saints” section below.

Calvinism is an especially dangerous doctrine because it teaches Jesus did not die for all (*limited atonement*). One of the most well known verses in the Bible (Jn. 3:16) says the atonement was not limited to a certain group or number of people. Saying the atonement was limited makes God is a respecter of persons when the Bible says He is not (Acts 10:34). Believing in a limited atonement means God will **not** save all who obey Him, something denied by Heb. 5:9. Such a belief also casts reproach on the Scriptures such as the entire book of John (Jn. 20:30-31). John’s gospel was written to induce belief. This would be unnecessary if God supernaturally creates faith in the hearts of men. Another important verse is Eph. 5:17. This passage says God’s will can be understood; this was why the Lord said the great commission must be preached to every person (Mk. 16:15-16 and Mt. 28:18-20).

When those in the first century fulfilled this commission, hearts were touched by the word of God, not a supernatural act (Acts 4:4). Faith comes by listening to the word of God (Rom. 10:17), not a supernatural act on the human heart. Jesus spoke about “any man” coming after Him (Mt. 16:24-26). Peter said God wants “all men to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Paul wrote of all men “coming to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4) and everyone confessing the name of Christ (Rom. 10:13). Calvinism leads one to the conclusion that God is weak, lazy, or not all loving. The Bible teaches that God is all powerful, God is all loving and He is not lazy. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19a).

Calvinists like to point out how Jesus gave His life for “His sheep” (Jn. 10:15), but they fail to observe that Jesus did not use the word “only.” Jesus did die for those who would embrace Him, but He also died for the world that would reject Him. Jesus died for “our sins” (1 Jn. 4:10), but this is only part of the story. Earlier in this book (1 Jn. 2:2) John said, “*and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*” Compare, too, Acts 10:43; Rev. 22:17; Tit. 2:11.

Concerning *irresistible grace*, several passages demonstrate that God’s grace is resistible. According to Rev. 3:20, Jesus is pictured as “standing at a door and knocking.” He is not knocking down the door; His efforts can be resisted because man has free-will. When Jesus spoke about the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He said the Jews had been resistant time and time again (Mt. 23:37). In 2 Tim. 3:8 Paul spoke of both Old Testament and New Testament characters who resisted the truth (grace and truth go together; both can be resisted). Calvin’s doctrine says the Bible is not powerful enough to save man. Because Calvinism affirms man is so immersed in sin and requires a special or supernatural intervention by God, God’s word is not powerful enough to bring sinners to salvation. Contrast this view with the Scriptures: “The gospel is God’s power to salvation to *everyone that believes*” (all people can be saved, and God’s word is the power for this action, Rom. 1:16). People are “brought forth” by “the word of truth” (Jas. 1:18). It is the “implanted word that saves the soul” (Jas. 1:21). In 1 Cor. 1:21 Paul said God saves people through the “foolishness of preaching.” God “opened the heart” of Lydia (Acts 16:14a), and Luke explained how this was done: “giving heed to the things spoken by Paul” (16b). Lydia had a “good and receptive heart” (Lk. 8:15) and she was converted by the power of the gospel.

God’s grace is said to be for all people (Tit. 2:11) instead of “only the elect.” Paul also said that God’s grace requires people to receive instruction (Tit. 2:12) instead of coming through a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. Grace is available, but it is conditional (Gen. 6:8 + Heb. 11:7). Today people may access God’s grace (Eph. 2:8), but this is conditioned on being obedient (Heb. 5:9) and this obedience includes baptism (1 Cor. 12:13). After accessing God’s grace a person must “continue” in it (Acts 13:43). God wants us to “stand” in His grace (Rom 5:2), but some choose to “fall away” from it (Gal. 5:4).

The *perseverance of the saints* is the final point of this error and it is sometimes based upon the Bible’s teaching of adoption. Calvinists have sometimes contended that once a person has been adopted into the family of God, he or she cannot be cast out. No matter what a saved person does (rape, murder, blasphemy—any moral defect or the acceptance of any erroneous doctrine), a Christian cannot lose his salvation. Support for this position is based upon Lk. 15:11-24 (a wayward son was still considered to be a son). It is pointed out that Jesus said the wayward son was “dead” and “lost,” but he was still a son.

It is true that the son was still called a son. What is overlooked is that the child had left home and had forfeited his blessings and fellowship with his father. As long as he stayed away in a “far country” (and this fact in and of itself implies apostasy), he was a son who had no future inheritance. Such is also true in the spiritual realm. People who live in sin (1 Cor. 6:9), and this includes Christians and non-Christians, will “not inherit the kingdom of God.” Christians were told to avoid “walking by the flesh” (Gal. 5:16) because this way of life will exclude them from heaven (Gal. 5:21). We must abide in and by the faith to “inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12).

Another *perseverance argument* consists of verses affirming saved people are “sealed” (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). Christians are *sealed*, but this seal can be broken (Jude 20-21). Paul said we can *grieve* the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and even “quench” Him (1 Thess. 5:19). If the *perseverance of the saints* doctrine is understood for what it really is, it means Christians who surround themselves with sin are not fit for “church membership” and must be withdrawn from (1 Cor. 5:1, 13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14), but these same people are fit for *God’s eternal fellowship in heaven!* Every passage dealing with the subject of faithfulness and apostasy shows that unfaithfulness and apostasy (falling away) are possible. Compare 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Heb. 3:12; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:1-5; Rom. 14:13; Mt. 18:7; Gal. 5:4 (ASV).

Paul spoke of people become Christians (Gal. 3:26-27), but then warned that they could be “severed” from Christ (Gal. 5:4, ASV). A person can be “in Christ” (Jn. 15:2) but choose to leave (Jn. 15:6). The Hebrew writer warned of becoming “enlightened” and “tasting of the heavenly gift” (Heb. 6:4-5) and then “falling away” (Heb. 6:6). For more information on why Calvinism is wrong see the commentary on 14:20.

All the preceding information showing the error of Calvinistic thought is consistent with the verb translated *receiveth* (*dechomai*) in 1 Cor. 2:14. Here this word describes “acceptance of the facts” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:292). All people can accept the facts of the gospel. In several places, and this is one of them, this word describes people receiving the word of God. For other examples of this see Acts 8:14; 11:1; 1 Thess. 2:13; Jas. 1:21.

Those who believe in Calvinism often use 1 Cor. 2:14 to affirm man cannot know God or even believe until God performs a supernatural act and then a person is “elected” to salvation. Since the preceding paragraphs prove Calvinism cannot be right (and Jesus affirmed this point as well in Mt. 13:3-7), what does verse 14 mean? The expression “*the natural man*” tells us.

The word translated *natural* (*psuchikos*) is an adjective; it is found six times in the New Testament (here, the word is used twice in 1 Cor. 15:44, 1 Cor. 15:46, Jas. 3:15, and Jude 19. In Jude 19 it is translated “*sensual*”). In each passage the word is used negatively. The person who is a *natural man* is controlled by the flesh and lives according to the world. He or she does whatever he wants and, just like animals, fulfills whatever urges he or she has (see Jude 19 and the commentary on this verse).

The highest level of life for mankind is Christianity (*spiritual*, verse 15). The lowest level of human life is the *natural* level (verse 14). Those who chose the way of the *natural* man are like animals. They have no interest in the things of God and thus do not understand what is spiritual (“*receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*”). Such people believe the gospel is *foolishness* (compare 1:18). This type of person cannot know the things of God because he or she refuses to investigate God and Christianity (compare Acts 17:27). They are like deaf men who pronounce judgments on music. Such people are not willing to “put away filthiness” and “receive with meekness the implanted word” that saves souls (Jas. 1:21). Neither are they willing to “hear God’s words because they are not of God” (Jn. 8:47).

Other people are in between the extremes of *natural* and *spiritual*. There are those who behave better than animals and are somewhat interested in Christianity, but still do not obey the gospel. Many live in this “middle category,” but this type of life will not save them. Only those who seek the highest level of life (the *spiritual* level in verse 15) will be saved.

Paul understood that Christ and Christianity must be “*spiritually judged*.” That is, the information in and about the gospel must be learned. People must be willing to listen to the facts of the gospel (Rom. 10:14-15). If those who are lost are not willing to accept the revelation God has given they will not make a proper evaluation of spiritual things (i.e. the Bible). They will be *natural men* (people who are ignorant of God’s plan and very often hostile to it). The word *judged* (*anakrino*) is used three times in verses 14-15 (it occurs twice in verse 15). This term was used to describe Pilate’s examination of Jesus (Lk. 23:14) as well as the Bereans’ examination of Scriptures (Acts 17:11). The noun form of this word (*anakrasis*) is used in Acts 25:26 to describe a pre-trial examination (a judicial questioning). This suggests an interesting image: People who are completely opposed to the truth are even unwilling to give the gospel a “pre-trial hearing” on the wisdom of God. Thayer’s definition for the word (p. 39) is “*to judge of, estimate, determine* (the excellence or defects of any person or thing).”

2:15-16: *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

In verses 13 and 15 Paul used the word “*spiritual*” (*pneumatikos*). This word, which is also used in 1 Cor. 3:1, means “pertaining to the spirit” or “spiritual” (such a person is guided by the spirit of God—the Bible. A similar point is found in Eph. 5:18). Brown (3:706) noted that Paul used this word 24 times in his writings and 15 of these times are in the First Corinthian letter. Additionally, this term appears to be “introduced at key points” in the letter “(2:13-3:1; 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44-6)” (ibid). It often occurs in contexts involving his opponents. For a fuller study of the word *spiritual*, see the commentary on 1 Cor. 3:1-4; 9:11.

Because the *spiritual* person has accepted and obeyed the facts of the gospel, he or she is qualified to pass *judgment* on “*all things*” (for information on the word translated *judgeth* see the commentary on verse 14). This does not mean a Christian is qualified to make every decision in life. Rather, it means

because a Christian is guided by the right source (God's revelation), he or she is in the best position to make choices. God wants us to use His word in this way on a regular basis because *judgeth* is a present tense verb. While the world struggles to really know what is right and wrong, what is truth and error, what should be punished and what should not, God's people have a guide for what is right and wrong and this source has come from an authority higher than any man, nation, or group of nations. Additional information about making judgment may be found in the commentary on Mt. 7:1 (section 14 of the Gospels commentary).

Since God's word is right, people who are guided by this source and make decisions in light of it will be able to best function in the world. On the other hand, non-Christians who do not rely upon or do not fully rely upon God's word will usually not fair as well. A simple illustration of this is kindness. Under what circumstances should we be kind? The world struggles to answer that question, but the Bible makes the matter easy: we are to be kind to all.

Because non-Christians do not use or do not completely live by what God has revealed, they cannot "*judge men.*" Stated another way, unsaved people are ultimately incapable of judging a child of God. Non-Christians cannot really judge Christians because the unsaved operate by a completely different standard. Those who are *spiritual* are not truly understood or appreciated by those who are *natural*. How can the unsaved understand what salvation means and Christianity is like until this way of life is experienced? How can people who are outside the grace of God judge someone who stands in the grace of God (Rom. 5:2)? How can a person never forgiven of all his or her sins by God understand complete forgiveness through Christ?

Verse 16 proves the point made in verse 15. No one has ever "*instructed*" the Lord. Neither has anyone "*known the mind*" of God. This is a quotation from Isa. 40:13. No man can know the mind of God without divine revelation, so no one has the ability to teach (instruct) God. This is clear, and it explains the second point. If men cannot instruct God because they do not know the mind of God, how can the unsaved judge Christians who *have the mind of Christ*? If the *natural people in life* do not base their lives on the information used by Christians, how can they possibly sit in judgment of those who do? Only fellow Christians (1 Cor. 5:1-5) and God (1 Cor. 4:3-5) are qualified to perform any judgment of the saints (those who are saved).

Having "*the mind of Christ*" means many things. Included in this is obedience to God and being unselfish (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus' mind was one that radiated forgiveness (Lk. 23:34; Mt. 12:32) and had perfect balance. He helped the sick and poor, showed gentleness to those genuinely ignorant of spiritual truths, commended those who were doing right, and severely denounced those who would not believe or turn from what was wrong. Jesus' mind was filled with the need to obey heaven's will (Jn. 8:29) as well as thinking about Old Testament Scriptures (Mt. 4:4, 10; 21:13; Mk. 7:6; 14:27). His mind concentrated on the unsaved (Lk. 19:10) and was also certainly full of love. He had a mind directed to thankfulness (Mt. 11:25) and prayer (Lk. 5:16; 22:44). His mind was even calm when it was time for Him to die (Lk. 23:46). Certainly His mind was directed to what was eternal and heavenly (Jn. 17:14), and this meant a mind dedicated to finding and saving sinners (Lk. 15:2). Jesus' mind was filled with compassion (Mk. 8:2). How does our mind compare with that of the Lord's?