

ANSWER FOUR:

GOD'S REVEALED WISDOM

1 CORINTHIANS 02:06–13

Introduction

One of the greatest causes of division is pride, acting superior. Pride is always a serious offense. It tends to categorize people and downgrade them, affecting their initiative and growth. It can eventually doom a person or a whole class of people into slavery. Pride, arrogance, superiority, thinking too highly of oneself — no form or shape of self-centredness has any part in God's church. Yet, an intellectual pride had become deeply rooted in the Corinthian church. And pride — the wisdom of the age — was about to rip the church apart. The fourth answer to division is God's revealed wisdom.

- I. God's wisdom is only for those who seek to be mature before God (v. 6).
- II. God's wisdom is not the wisdom of this age and its leaders (v. 6).
- III. God's wisdom is the wisdom of God Himself (vv. 7-9).
- IV. God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit (vv. 10-13).

I. 1 Corinthians 02:06 Wisdom of God

God's wisdom is only for those who seek to be mature before God. Paul clearly says that he spoke "wisdom among the mature." By "mature" he means those who are concerned...

- about being mature and acceptable to God.
- about being destined for perfection in heaven.

The word "mature" (*teleiois*) means finished, complete. It means fully developed, grown, aged. It means to reach one's end. The person who *longs for heaven* and *seeks to reach* his end by being mature before God is the person who focuses his life upon the wisdom of God. He is the only person who is interested in God and His wisdom. He is the person who speaks, proclaims and talks about the wisdom of God. Men of the age have little if any interest in God and His wisdom. Their desire is to live and walk as they please, not to live and walk in the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is *foolishness to those who are perishing*, but to us who seek to be mature (the saved) it is the power of God.

1 Cor 1:18-21 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

1 Cor 14:20 *Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.*

Rom 1:16-17 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

Eph 4:13-14 *Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.*

II. 1 Corinthians 02:06 *Wisdom of God and Worldly Wisdom*

God's wisdom is not the wisdom of this age and its leaders. The word "rulers" refers to all the leaders of the age: rulers, scientists, philosophers, educators, judges, executives and religionists. It refers to anyone with influence, anyone who thinks about the world and life and who draws serious conclusions about the purpose, meaning and significance of things. (See 1 Cor. 1:19-20.)

1. What is the wisdom of the age and of its rulers? The world's wisdom includes *many* approaches to finding the truth and meaning of life, many approaches to solving the terrible and devastating problems of evil and death in the world. A quick glance at the life-styles, religions, philosophies and psychologies of life immediately show the wisdom of the world. However, the wisdom of the world and of its leaders boil down to two primary positions.
 - a. The wisdom of the age says there is no God; He does not exist. Way back in time, as far back as the mind can go, *some thing* — element, molecule, atom or gas — appeared.
=> From where?
=> By what force?
=> Under what conditions?

There was nothing — no place, no force, no conditions existing. The first *something* just appeared *out of nothing*, and from that first *something*, the worlds of the heavens and earth with their life forms evolved. Therefore, we find ourselves here upon earth, alive, having survived the struggle. Our task is to do our best to conquer all the forces of evil and to build the best world we can. Man's destiny is in his own hands.

- b. The wisdom of the age says God may exist, but He may not exist. We cannot know for sure. If He does exist, He is so distant and far away that men are left on their own. God has no concern about the age. Our task is to conquer the evil and negative forces of life through science, technology, education and the religion of human effort.

We are to use everything at our disposal and do the very best we can to conquer nature, disease, suffering, corruption and death. We are to live a life that is as lawful and full as possible. If there happens to be a God, He would expect us to do this.

2. Note the word “age” (aionos). It means this world, this world that is passing on as fast as the wind which is here and gone ever so quickly. The wisdom of the world and of its leaders is here today and gone tomorrow. Man's ideas about God and truth fade and pass away almost as quickly as man himself does.
3. Note the word “nothing.” It means that the wisdom of the age's leaders are *coming to nothing* — being brought to nothing. Their wisdom is as nothing, as non-existent — all their wisdom will fade away and cease to exist.

Rom 1:22 *Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.*

1 Cor 1:19 *For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”*

1 Cor 2:6 *We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*

1 Cor 3:19-20 *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.”*

Col 2:8 *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*

Col 2:23 *Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.*

James 3:15 *Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.*

Isa 29:14 *Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.”*

Jer 4:22 *“My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.”*

Ezek 28:4-6 *By your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasuries. By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud. Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “Because you think you are wise, as wise as a god.”*

III. *1 Corinthians 02:07–09 The Wisdom of God Himself*

God's wisdom is the *wisdom of God Himself*. And note: God's wisdom is proclaimed as a secret. This does not mean that God's wisdom is strange and mysterious, but rather that it involves facts that cannot be known by man, not by man's natural reason. God's wisdom has to be revealed; it is a mystery in that it can never be known unless God reveals it. No man can penetrate heaven to discover God and truth. If this material age is to know the spiritual world, then God, who is Spirit, has to reveal Himself and His spiritual age.

1. What is the wisdom of God? What is the wisdom preached by Paul, the wisdom that is to be spoken among those who are concerned with being perfect? It is the gospel of God, the good news concerning Christ and Him crucified.

The gospel tells how God went about reconciling the world to Himself and how man is to be reconciled to God. The gospel shows how wise God has been in dealing with man and his world. Therefore, the gospel — Christ and Him crucified — is the secret wisdom that has been hidden by God. It is the very wisdom which every man must possess if he wishes to know God and to live with God throughout eternity. (See *Jesus Christ, Cross*, 1 Cor. 1:19-20.)

2. The leaders of this age do not know the wisdom of God. They do not understand...
 - the origin of God and life.
 - the nature of God and life (the underlying reason why life is as it is).
 - the end or destiny of God and life.

The age and its leaders are at a loss to understand where we have come from, why we are here, and where we are going. There are two clear proofs of this fact.

- a. If the leaders had known the wisdom of God they would not have crucified "*THE LORD OF GLORY*." Jesus Christ is the Lord of Glory, God Himself. He came to earth to save men, and He came not to save them for only seventy short years, but to save them eternally. Yet the leaders rejected and crucified Him. This they would not have done if they had known the wisdom of God.

Thought 1. The leaders in the day of Christ rejected Him. Their rejection symbolizes exactly what most leaders have done and always will do: reject Him. The age stands guilty before God — guilty of rejecting His wisdom (cp. Rom. 3:9-19).

- b. The leaders of the world have never seen nor heard the truth: the truth has never even entered their mind. How do we know this? Because the truth of God is "the thing which God has prepared for those who love Him" (v. 9). The truth and wisdom of God is the riches of His glory and grace — which He sent into the age through Christ — the most glorious wealth and benefits imaginable. But the wealth and gifts of God are found only in Christ Jesus. He came to earth to reveal the truth about man and his age. What is that truth? Man and his age had been created in perfection, but man has corrupted himself and his age through...

- sin
- killing
- deception
- immorality
- theft
- indulgence
- neglect
- power
- selfishness

Therefore, man has to repent and turn back to God if he wishes to live with God. But note how men received the wisdom and truth of God. They rejected and crucified Christ.

=> *Their eyes could not see the spiritual age.*

=> *Their ears could not hear the spiritual truth.*

=> Their hearts could not *conceive the spiritual truth*, the glory of the things God has prepared for those who love Him.

Mat 13:15 *“For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”*

John 1:10 *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.*

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”*

John 8:19 *Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”*

John 9:30 *The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.”*

John 14:9 *Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

1 CORINTHIANS 02:07 SECRET, MYSTERY (MUSTERION)

*No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. **1 Corinthians 02: 07***

A fact or truth that man is unable to discover by himself; a fact or truth that has to be revealed to man. It is a fact or truth that has been hidden and kept secret by God until it was time for it to be revealed. It does not mean something hard to understand or something strange and mysterious as a magical trick. It does not mean that there is something mysterious about God. It means some fact or truth...

- that is known only by God.
- that God reveals to man because He loves man and man desperately needs to know the truth.

There are several important secrets revealed in the Bible.

1. The secret of the gospel, that is, God's wisdom which is *Christ crucified*.

1 Cor 1:23-24 *But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

1 Cor 2:7 *No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.*

Eph 6:19 *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.*

2. The secrets of the Kingdom of heaven. (See Mt. 13:10-11; cp. Mt. 13:1-52.)
3. The secret of Israel's blindness and restoration.

Rom 11:25-27 *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

4. The secret of the believers' resurrection, which will enable them to live an incorruptible life with God.

1 Cor 15:51-52 *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

1 Th 4:13-18 *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

5. The secret of God's will: that He is to gather together and unify all things in Christ — unify them in a spirit of peace and harmony — all things, both visible and invisible.

Eph 1:9-10 *And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, To be put into effect when the times*

will have reached their fulfilment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

6. The secret of the church and of God's universal love: that both Jew and Gentile are included in the church.

Eph 3:4-6 *In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, Which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (cp. v. 7-12)*

Rom 16:25 *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past.*

7. The secret of the church: that the church is the bride and body of Christ.

Eph 5:30-32 *For we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. (cp. v. 22-23)*

8. The secret of the indwelling Christ, of "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Col 1:26-27 *The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

9. The secret of godliness or of Christ; of God coming to earth in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

Col 2:2, 9 *My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ..., For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

1 Tim 3:16 *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

Col 4:3 *And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.*

2 Cor 5:19 *That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

10. The secret of lawlessness and of sin in the age and of man's disobedience to God.

2 Th 2:7 *For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*

Eph 2:2 *In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

11. The secret of the seven stars or local churches and pastors.

Rev 1:20 *The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lamp stands is this: The seven stars are the angels [messengers, pastors] of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.*

12. The secret of Babylon in the end time.

Rev 17:5, 7 *This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH... Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. □*

IV. 1 Corinthians 02:10–13 Wisdom Revealed by God's Spirit

God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit. Note three points.

1. Only God's Spirit knows the wisdom and things of God. Human reason can never discover God and the things of God. This is clearly seen by the man who is both honest and thinking.
- => No person knows what is really going on within a man except the man's own spirit. So it is with God. No man really knows God and the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Therefore, the world does not know God nor the things of God, for they must be *revealed*. They cannot be seen, heard or conceived by the mind of man (v. 9). They are only revealed by God's Spirit.

Thought 1. The one thing that man must always remember is this: he cannot penetrate the spiritual age. No person has ever seen God, no matter what some people may claim. If we are to ever know the spiritual age and dimension of being, God has to reveal Himself. This He did once-for-all in Christ Jesus, His *only* beloved Son.

John 1:18 *"No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."*

John 5:37 *"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form."*

1 Tim 6:16 *Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.*

1 John 4:12 *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

2. God's wisdom (God and the things of God) is revealed to believers. This is the very reason God has given His Spirit to believers: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
 - a. Only the Holy Spirit knows the things of God (1 Cor. 2:11).
 - b. Only the man who receives Christ, who is born again by the Spirit of God, is quickened, made alive to understand spiritual things.

John 3:3, 6 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."... "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."*

John 16:13-15 *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."*

1 Cor 2:12, 15-16 *We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us... The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

- c. Only the believer who sets his mind on spiritual things can understand the mature, deep things of God.

Rom 8:5-7 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

1 Cor 2:9-10 *However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" — but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*

1 Cor 2:15 *The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment.*

1 Cor 3:1-2 *Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.*

- d. The natural man (any man not reborn by the Spirit of God) cannot know the things of God.

1 Cor 2:7-8 *No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

1 Cor 2:11 *For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*

1 Cor 2:14 *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

John 8:43 *"Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say."*

Rom 3:11 *There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.*

Rom 10:3 *Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*

2 Cor 4:4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Eph 4:18 *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.*

2 Tim 3:7 *Always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.*

Psa 82:5 *"They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken."*

Isa 59:10 *Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead.*

Amos 3:10 *"They do not know how to do right," declares the Lord, "who hoard plunder and loot in their fortresses."*

3. God's wisdom is the message taught by the Holy Spirit. The message, God's glorious wisdom and gospel, is not a message of man's wisdom. God's wisdom and gospel is the message of God's Spirit Himself. The Holy Spirit teaches the wisdom and gospel of God. Note that the verse ends with the words "spiritual words." There is no object. This means a glorious thing: the Holy Spirit...
- combines spiritual things with spiritual people.
 - combines spiritual things with spiritual things.

Thought 1. The Holy Spirit guides and directs us, teaching us to compare and combine spiritual things with spiritual things. We use the Word of God to interpret the Word of God. When we seek and read the instructions of God and do not understand something, we use other Scripture references and passages in the Word to interpret what is not clear. The Holy Spirit keeps us from all error as we follow His leadership.

Luke 12:12 *“For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”*

John 14:26 *“But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

1 Cor 2:13 *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*

1 John 2:27 *As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.*

1 John 3:24 *Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

1 John 4:13 *We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

1 John 5:6 *This is the one who came by water and blood - Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ■*