**I Corinthians 1:18-31**

**To The World: Foolishness**

Introduction

1. Have you ever tried to put God in a test tube? Have you ever tried to figure God out?

2. I Corinthians 1:18-31 *Wisdom* is the key word in this passage. The Greeks loved, *wisdom.*

There is a contrast between the world’s way of thinking and God’s. The Corinthians were

buying into the thinking, the test tube of the world. **It’s easy to do!**

3. Never is the difference more telling than when we come to the cross and salvation. Paul

wants to challenge the Corinthians to not do it like the world. Their way is not His way,

and it will fail!

**I. CONTRASTED WISDOM 1:18-25**

With the cross as the springboard from v. 17, Paul begins to compare.

1. ***The Cross 18***
2. The Corinthian believers were trying to live the Christian life on the basis of unsanctified common sense, which has self as its goal…self-preservation, self-seeking, self-serving.
3. The message of the cross cuts to the heart of self-centeredness. At the cross, “I” die!
4. The message of the cross is self-renunciation and self-resignation.
5. 2 groups are contrasted in this message:

\*To those who are *perishing,* the *preaching of the cross* is *foolishness. Foolishness* comes from word which we get our word, moron. *The preaching of the cross* is stupid. \*To those who are *saved*, *it is the power of God.*

**5.** All men are either in the process of being saved or perishing. There are only two

groups. Which group are you? *Preaching* is the Greek word, *logos. The word*

*of the cross*…that God became Man, and that One man could die on a piece of

wood, on a lonely hill, in the nondescript land of Israel and thereby determine

the eternal destiny of every person who ever lived (to the perishing) is moronic,

stupid.It allows no place for man’s merit, man’s attainments, man’s

understanding or man’spride. It is absolute nonsense to the unbeliever, to the

lost. God’s whole redemption story seems foolish to the perishing.

1. *To us who are being saved, it is the power of God!*
2. ***The Creed 19*** *For it is written*
3. Isaiah 29:14 is quoted to emphasize that the wisdom of men will be destroyed.
4. The prophecy had an immediate fulfillment. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was planning on conquering Judah. The Lord told the prophet not to worry. The king’s plan would fail. Judah was solely saved by God’s power with no human help. He destroyed 185,000 Assyrian men of the Assyrian army with **one angel!**
5. God continually told Israel He would fight for her. All she had to do was trust and obey. **That’s foolish!** Man is inclined to solve his own problems with his own strength and power. So it is with salvation, man has his own method or the lack of it!
6. Man’s own efforts hinder God in His work rather than help, and fail in the end!
7. ***The Challenge 20***
8. Paul asks one question with three parts: *Where are all the smart people that have the answers?* *Where is the scribe? Where is the debater?* (Greeks loved to debate philosophy, events, life).
9. How much closer are we to eliminating poverty, hunger, ignorance, prejudice, crime, hunger, immorality, violence? Our advances in knowledge and technology have not really advanced us.
10. Don’t you see...the wisdom of wise men is folly. The brilliance of man cannot appreciate the plan of God! It is not self-promotion, self-confidence, man’s goodness and achievements that allows us to enter the narrow way that leads to heaven and forgiveness.
11. ***The Conclusion 21***

With all the supposed wisdom of men, they have never been able to know God!

1. *In the wisdom of God (knowing God)…the world by wisdom (their intelligence) knew not God.*
2. Man by his own wisdom could never know God!
3. God does it His way! *It pleased God by the foolishness (from the world’s eyes) of preaching to save them that believe.* The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. The One who died to save us from sin. Those who hear and *believe (rest your full weight on an object, roll your burden of sin, take refuge in)* are *saved!**Saved* from what? Hell…*Saved* for what? Heaven. This is God’s way. Have you believed?
4. ***The Called 22-25***
5. **Two Cases 22, 23** What about this glorious, good news? *To the Jew, they seek a sign* (God does not fit into their test tube.)  *To the Gentile, they seek after wisdom.* They have their own intellectual approach. (God does not fit into their test tube.)*But we preach Christ crucified…to the Jew and stumbling block to the Gentile, it is foolishness.*
6. **Two Choices 24, 25** *But unto them who are called (Jew and Gentile) Christ the power of God…Christ the wisdom of God. v. 24 Because* what the world considers *foolishness and weakness…God is wiser than man. God is stronger than man.*

**II. CONTRARY WISDOM 1:26-31**

He takes nothings and nobodies to make them somebody, so He will get all the credit!

1. ***God’s Relegation 26-28***
2. **God Called 26** *Look at your calling…*let’s say you were to pick a team, who would you select? *Not many wise…not many mighty…not many noble…*Look at the membership of the Corinthian Church. They had very few who were famous, wealthy, highly educated, powerful or influential when they believed. Who is Billy Graham? He was a nobody from the hills of Carolina.
3. **God Confounded 27** God threw them a curve. In human thinking, strength is strength, weakness is weakness and intelligence is intelligence. In God’s economy, some of the seemingly strongest things are the weakest and the weakest the strongest. Some of the seemingly wisest are the most foolish.

The simple believer knows forgiveness, love, grace, life, hope, God’s Word, God’s riches. **He can see eternity!** The unbelieving PhD may know nothing of any of these! *The things that are not, to bring to nothing…things that are nothing…*The world measures greatness by standards…intelligence, wealth, prestige, position…the things which God puts at the bottom!

1. **God Chose 27, 28** Notice what He chose: *foolish things…weak things…base things…despised things…things which are not (worthless) to bring to nothing the things that are.*
2. ***God’s Reason 29-31***
3. **God’s Glory 29** *Than no flesh should glory in His presence…*No man will ever boast before God. It’s the world’s nobodies that are this world’s some bodies! To this world, foolish, weak, base men can do nothing. God does it! He has done everything!
4. **God’s Grace 30** *They are in Christ Jesus.* They receive *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption* and they are all from Him! Poor insignificant people become rich through Him.
5. **God’s Goal 31** *He that glorieth let Him glory in the Lord* He does it all. All we can do is say, *Thanks!*