

Who Is Smarter Than God? 10/4/20

I Corinthians 2: 1—8 (1— 16)

INTRODUCTION — One of the COMPLAINTS made about TELEVISION for YEARS has been— “IT TRIES TO DUMB DOWN EVERYTHING!” EVEN the “SPLATTER COMEDIAN” GALLAGHER commented on this sad state of affairs: “I wish there was a CONTROL on the TV so you could turn up the INTELLIGENCE. They have one marked brightness, but it doesn’t work, does it?”

THE PEOPLE of this WORLD have for CENTURIES looked for the the ACQUISITION of INTELLIGENCE, KNOWLEDGE, and WISDOM. Everybody thinks wisdom is good to have! So it was in GREECE in New Testament times. AWARE that the Greek people of CORINTH — the CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS to whom he wrote this letter— were GREATLY INFLUENCED by the GREEK PHILOSOPHERS of their country, the APOSTLE PAUL wanted to tell them that their FAITH in CHRIST depends NOT on HUMAN WISDOM— but on the POWER and TRUTH and WISDOM of GOD, which is FAR GREATER and WISER than HUMAN wisdom.

I. THE WISDOM of THIS WORLD :

1. MANY PEOPLE in this world look for WISDOM in the ACQUISITION of KNOWLEDGE — the MORE you KNOW, the WISER you are.

2. The APOSTLE PAUL knew that the GREEK PHILOSOPHERS held high this “ACQUISITION of KNOWLEDGE” as a WAY to BUILDING WISDOM — and that this ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE was done through OBSERVATION and by the ASSUMPTIONS that each philosopher made, of what is REASONABLE and SENSIBLE . There were over a DOZEN noted Greek philosophers, but the greatest— the ones of whom you have probably heard — were SOCRATES, and his student, PLATO , and PLATO’S student, ARISTOTLE.

3. The Greek people GREATLY RESPECTED these philosophers, even when they didn't understand them!! And they were PROUD that Greek philosophy was (THEY THOUGHT) the WISEST and MOST INTELLIGENT way of thinking in the world!!

Contrast this to:

II. THE WISDOM of GOD :

1. The WISDOM of God, however, is CONTRARY to the wisdom of this world. IT IS BASED, not on what HUMANS consider reasonable and sensible, but on the FAR SUPERIOR Knowledge and UNDERSTANDING of God. Gaining knowledge is fine, in God's sense of wisdom, but God is not bound by HUMAN ideas of what is reasonable and sensible.

2. NOT THAT GOD'S TRUTH is UN—REASONABLE and NOT – SENSIBLE — FAITH in GOD is NOT SUPPOSED to be IRRATIONAL and SILLY !

3. BUT God knows that just “ LEARNING MORE THINGS” and getting MORE KNOWLEDGE DOES NOT NECESSARILY mean a person will be SMARTER or WISER — instead, do you remember Psalm 111:10 — “The FEAR of the LORD is the BEGINNING of wisdom.”

4. The APOSTLE PAUL knew all that the Greek philosophers had taught — he had GROWN UP in a Greek city, and had studied all these Greek thinkers and philosophers!!

5. BUT, more importantly than that, PAUL was a STUDENT of the BIBLE — and he knew the source of TRUE WISDOM— “The FEAR of the LORD”

6. So PAUL taught that OUR FAITH should NOT be based on “wise and persuasive words” (v. 4), but on God's power — on “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (v. 2)

7. Human Wisdom is TOO FINITE — too limited to GRASP BY SHEER INTELLECT the insights of “The WISDOM of GOD.”

8. THAT IS WHAT PAUL said in v. 8 - “None of the RULERS of this AGE UNDERSTOOD [God’s wisdom], for IF THEY HAD, they would not have CRUCIFIED the LORD of GLORY.”

9. TRULY UNDERSTANDING the ONLY TRUE GOD takes something more than JUST BEING SMART— it takes FAITH.

10. When it comes to understanding the claims of the Christian faith, and the truths of God that might not make sense to some in this world, read what PAUL wrote further on in this chapter: (read vv. 11b — 14.) PAUL wanted believers to know that it takes SPIRITUAL INSIGHT to understand some of the truths of God. SO — when you come across some Biblical truth that you don’t quite “GET” — pray for God’s Spirit to make it clearer to you.

III. WHAT YOU CAN DO: TWO THINGS:

1. Dealing with YOUR OWN skepticism or uncertainties: — SKEPTICISM is OK in many ways — it keeps us from being GULLIBLE !!

— The boy in the movie “The CHRISTMAS STORY” - when it came to believing in his friend that “YOUR TONGUE WILL NOT STICK to the METAL FLAGPOLE in the FREEZING WEATHER!!” —> it would have been a little WISER to be SKEPTICAL about his friend!!!

— SKEPTICISM keeps us from believing FOOLISH THINGS: <> that a “FLYING SAUCER” is coming to take us BACK to our home on PLANET X. (A small cult, 10 or 15 years ago . . . <> OR HOW about the e-mails from the Nigerian prince, or the widow of the Nigerian national treasurer, who is trying to transfer \$20 million dollars out of Nigeria, and if you will WIRE \$500 directly from YOUR BANK ACCOUNT, he or she will cut you into \$500 thousand dollars !!! THAT’S A GOOD DEAL, RIGHT ? ! ? (OF COURSE — it is some SCAM ARTIST trying to get YOUR bank account number to drain every penny you have !!!)

— SKEPTICISM is GOOD when it keeps you from falling for FOOLISH IDEAS, or SCAM ARTISTS !!!

— BUT SKEPTICISM can be MIS—USED to make EXCUSES : for deciding NOT to believe in ANYTHING !!

— When I was in college, About a year after I dedicated my life to Christ, I went through a period of trying to PROVE that CHRISTIANITY was right !!! I did not want to “HOOK MY LIFE” onto something fake !! After months of studying HISTORY and LOGIC and PHILOSOPHY, I finally decided that the APOSTLE PAUL had the RIGHT IDEA — our faith in God should not be based on some persuasive argument, but on the POWER of God, demonstrated at the CROSS and EMPTY TOMB of JESUS CHRIST. I realized that there is PLENTY of EVIDENCE that Jesus was who He said he was, and LIVED and DIED as the FOUR GOSPELS said, and ROSE FROM THE DEAD, just as the Bible teaches. Not TOTALLY OVERWHELMING PROOF, but there is AT LEAST as much proof of the RESURRECTION of JESUS as there is proof that JULIUS CAESAR had ever lived !! (Which has never been doubted !)

— BUT — we need to DECIDE to BELIEVE in GOD, and His Son, Jesus Christ !! We need to SOONER or LATER “GET OFF the FENCE” and DECIDE: ARE WE GOING to TRUST GOD, or NOT??? Are we going to believe in JESUS, or NOT??? Are we going to: “FISH— or CUT BAIT and GO HOME?”

— SKEPTICISM can become an excuse for UN—BELIEF !! It can be easier for some people to argue that “You can never know for sure, so why bother to believe in Jesus??” — I hope that no one here today will fall into that trap.

2. Dealing with OTHER PEOPLE’S Skepticism: What about when you talk to other people, neighbors, friends, maybe relatives, who are pretty SKEPTICAL and non—committal about God and Jesus?? — REMEMBER what PAUL wrote, what we read a minute ago, in verses 13 and

14? NON—CHRISTIANS and NON—BELIEVERS cannot understand some of the truths of God, because God's Spirit must give people the SPIRITUAL EYES of FAITH.

— You can explain the simple, HISTORICAL facts of Jesus' existence, of His teaching and His death and resurrection, to a skeptical person you know.

— MOST IMPORTANTLY, you can PRAY for that person !! PRAY that God's Spirit will OPEN their EYES to the TRUTH of Jesus and the TRUTH of God's Word.

CONCLUSION — THE TRUTH IS — NO HUMAN is SMARTER than God!!