

1 Cor 1:22-24 **CHRIST the WISDOM of GOD**

PRELIMS. The Greeks **loved** wisdom. They loved **talking** about it! They prided themselves as being people of wisdom. Paul had something to say to them – about Jesus Christ!

The CONTEXT

Paul is here writing to Cors about the **wisdom** and the **power** of God. He is **comparing** God's **wisdom** with man's wisdom!

*“Where is the one who is **wise**? Where is the scribe? (Scholar) Where is the **debater** of this age?(skilful in argument) Has not God made **foolish** the **wisdom** of the **world**?”*[20]! He says God can make a fool of us to show His greatness! **APP** Think of the millions of pounds spent on Y2K! Remember? Year 2,000! Many countries wasted millions and millions on **something that never happened!** The wisdom of men all **prophesied** about the impending threat to the world! **National electricity grids** could be shut down, **banking** systems would collapse.

A ‘Sunday Times’ article said ‘This is not a prediction it is a **certainty**’. The **US Federal Reserve Board** said it set aside \$50billion of currency reserves to help the **emergency** services. **Nuclear missiles** could be accidentally **launched!** Airlines **cancelled** flights running at midnight on 31 Dec 99! In UK **the Dome** alone cost £1.2bn! The wise men believed something was going to happen – but it didn't – and millions of clever people believed these ‘wise men’! (Its good to hear a bit humility just now re the financial crisis – un-chartered waters)

Then just a few months after that, the **reverse** happened – our wise men assured us of our security and safety! The very symbols which represented man's belief in humanity, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre - and the **unexpected happened** – which **did change** the world dramatically – which became to be known as **9/11!** ‘Daily Mail’ = ‘History will never be the same again’. ‘The Times’ = ‘The day that changed the

world'. Yes, man's wisdom and God's wisdom – what we expected, never happened – what we did not expect, happened! God was revealing to us Himself and saying 'Look, I'm in **control** of everything down here on earth – not you! And all this has a very **personal application**. Story: Stewardess on flight, given a tract, her 6th recently! 'What does God want me to do?' 'Give Him your life' then explained gospel. Next day she was on the 1st plane to crash into Twin Towers! There is such a thing as wisdom and folly! Eg its folly to **ignore reality**! We **are** going to die! What does that **mean**?

ALL OF US ARE SEARCHING for SOMETHING!

No matter what culture we are from, mankind throughout the world, is searching for something (often he does not know), but it is for **truth, reality and God**. The Jews, for example, want to see miracles before they will believe! "*For Jews demand signs*"[22] or some empirical evidence! At least that's what they **said**. But they **refused** to believe signs when Jesus **did** miracles! Believing is actually an act of the **will** "*if there be first a willing mind*"[2Cor8:12]! *And "*the Greeks seek wisdom*"[22] They wanted to know the opinions of the intellectuals, scholars, philosophers before they would believe!

And despite **all** the world's wisdom, (and it **has** a lot of wisdom) it has **never found** God. My friends, the Truth is that it is **God that finds us!** "*I have been found by those who did not seek Me; I have shown Myself to those who did not ask for Me*"[Rom 10:20]! God comes 'crashing' into our lives to **catch** our **attention!** He did to Paul! He did to that stewardess on 9/11 **APP** Can you say 'God **found** me?'

God finds us **as** He **reaches out to us** in the gospel message? That is what Paul is saying in [Rom 10:20] God is going to reveal Himself to other nations. He **contrasts** this with His attitude to Israel. To Israel, He has this to say "*All day long I have held out My hand* (in love and affection and invitation) to

a disobedient and contrary people”[Rom 10:21] God **invited** Israel for years and years and was refused so He now turns to the Gentiles and now invites **all** nations to come and taste the Lord’s kindness. Now that **the** offering of offerings, was offered and accepted by God, Christ is **held out** to the world!

PAUL PREACHED CHRIST

Why did Paul preach X? Because He is **wisdom personified**! Paul **did** preach wisdom – the wisdom of God! Look “*Christ Jesus whom God made our wisdom...righteousness...sanctification and redemption*”[30]! Sol said look: “*Get wisdom, get insight...and whatever you get, get insight*”[Pro 4:5-7].

Note, Paul preached **Christ!** “*we preach Christ crucified*”[23a] You can preach **about** Christ and **not** preach Christ **crucified!** We can preach all the ‘**incidentals**’, the non-fundamentals about the Xn faith, and ‘**forget**’ about the main big issue of “*Christ crucified*”! The **Cross!** All denominations have their particular ‘**identity**’ mark, their **distinctive** – that is why they are **separate** from others! They **believe in**, and **love** the **distinctive more** than the **essence** of Xnity –Christ Himself!

Paul here hints at the problems of divisions! **Not even** the **sacraments**, like **baptism**, ought to have a large place in the running of a Church! He speaks about the divisions that have been created by different views on baptism, so that he says “*Is Christ divided?..I am thankful that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius...For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel*”[14,15,17].

Christ **crucified** – Paul was concerned that they would fall into the big mistake of **forgetting** the **fundamental purpose** of the Church – the **gospel, Christ crucified**! Too often Churches want to **focus** on their **distinctive mark** rather than the **kernel** of the gospel, Christ **crucified!** We’re Baptist, we’re Presbyterian, we’re Pentecostal’ we’re Charismatic, we’re

Methodist! **Why** was Paul ‘successful’, **why** was Paul’s ministry **long-lasting**? Because he focused on **Christ crucified!** Paul was **afraid** to make an issue of baptism (as the Cors were doing), “...**lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power**”[17] and you will be ‘taken up’ with the ‘trimmings’!

Now our text says that Christ can be a stumbling block and foolishness to people [23]. Do you know **why** the gospel of Christ was a “**stumbling block**” to Jews? Because it was **too inclusive!** It included people **they** did not want – **Gentiles!** Because there was an **invitation** to **Gentiles** to become the people of God! This new gospel was **too open** for the Jews. Friends, there are **no class distinctions** with God. **All** are **sinners** before Him. Jews and Gentiles are all **equally guilty!**

Do you know **why** the gospel was “**foolishness**” to the **Greeks**? Because they ‘looked down’ on the **uneducated**. Jesus had ‘**no formal education**’, He never wrote a book, never travelled more than a radius of 50 miles! Greeks wanted **answers to all the questions** they asked! If they lived today they would ask ‘**Where was God on Sept 11?**’ **Ans:** Exactly the same place as He was when He permitted Jewish fanatics to **kill the innocent Son of God Jesus Christ** – ie, in **complete control** of everything in the world.

We all have an **appointment** with God. We all have a meeting in the **Court of Heaven** with the **Judge** of all the earth! Right? But here is the **best news** in the world – here is a piece of **advice** – you can **settle out of Court!**

Transactions have already been **completed** – **and passed** by the Court of Heaven and the Judge - which means you can be exonerated! There is no need to die forever. The **condition** is: **commit** your **life** to Christ, who made the transaction on your behalf! Your future life, not just a moment’s turning to Him, but a lifelong turning to God through Christ! Are you going to settle ‘out of Court’?