



1 Corinthians

Messy
church

1 Corinthians 1:18-24 (ESV)

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”*

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.



18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Folly:

The english word MORON is derived from this word.

Perishing:

Does not mean physical annihilation, but permanent loss of fellowship with God, for which we were created.

Being saved:

1. Past decision (Acts 15:11; Rom. 8:24; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5)
2. Lifelong process (1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15)
3. Past event (Eph. 2:5,8; John 3:3)
4. Future consummation (Rom 5:9,10; 10:9; 13:11; 1 Cor 3:15; Phil 1:28; 1 Thess 5:8-9; Heb 1:14; 9:28)

Power of God:

The Gospel produces faith, repentance, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. These are not traits of the human will.

1 Cor. 1:24; Rom. 1:16



**19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”**

Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14

God’s wisdom is beyond our understanding. God’s foolishness is higher than man’s wisdom.

**20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe?
Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish
the wisdom of the world?**

Wise, scribes, debaters / philosophers: Makes reference to rationalists. Nobody can understand God’s ways and wisdom without a revelation from Him.

Wisdom of this world: This refers to the knowledge and presupposition of this “world”. World refers to those who live without faith and fear of God.



21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

The Corinthians come from an intellectual tradition. They are proud of their intellectual inheritance. They wanted to turn christianity into greek philosophy.

1 Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, "He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness."

1 Corinthians 2:4 And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit.

Save: In the OT the word SAVE was used for physical deliverance from enemies. In the NT it is used for spiritual forgiveness, regeneration and acceptance by God.

22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

People do not come to Christ by our logical arguments or seeing the supernatural. It is the revelation of Jesus through the Holy spirit

1. Jews rejected the Messiah because He was crucified. God cannot become sin and die.
2. Greeks rejected Him because He was resurrected: They believed God was unknowable.



23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

Crucifixion is not the supernatural revelation Jews expected. They take offence in this, a stumbling block.

Crucifixion is not a logical way for the “wise of the world” to save people from an eternity without God. It is a “MORON” idea for the world.

Crucifixion is not supernatural nor smart according to the world.

Jesus crucified sealed our salvation. He was the fulfilment of Gen. 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; and Zech. 12:10. A suffering Messiah was a theological shock to Jews!

24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Called: The opening of 1 Corinthians emphasises God's call (i.e., election) and God's grace as the only grounds for the Corinthian church's salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2,9,26,27; Eph. 1-2). We learn from John 6:44,65 that no one comes to the Father unless the Spirit draws him/her. The question is, "does God call some or all (cf. John 3:16; 4:42; 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14)? God's call does not eliminate or minimise the need for human response, both initially and continually (i.e., John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13).

Both Jews and Greeks: God created all of man and wants to unite all ethnicities in the Gospel.

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God: Jesus is the revelation of God's wisdom and power. If you want to know God, do not seek any other power than Jesus nor any other philosophy.

