

NOTES ON LESSONTHREE MAIN POINTS IN OUR LESSON

1. The utter uselessness and emptiness of worldly wisdom to effect man's salvation. 1:19,20
2. God's provision for a helpless world. 1:21-30
3. What Christ means to the world. 1:31

TWO CLASSES OF HEARERS THEN AND NOW

1. One group destined to perish regarded the gospel as "foolishness."
 1. The Athenians called Paul a "babbling" or "seed picker."
 2. Because of their pseudo-intellectualism (wisdom after the fashion of the world) they mocked the messenger of God. Acts 17:18, 32
2. The second group was made up of those who considered the cross as "the Power of God."
 1. This group made up of those who were being saved. In Acts 2:47 we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

THREE NATURAL DIVISIONS OF THE LESSON. They are:

1. The Hearers. (There are three groups of hearers)
 1. The Jewish hearers require a sign. 1:22
 1. Luke 11:16; "And others tempting him sought of a sign from heaven."
 2. After the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the very next day, some of them asked: John 6:30, "What sign sheweth thou then, that we may see, and believe thee?"
 1. Every stroke of power it seems, must be surpassed by a following one yet more marvelous and more powerful.
 3. The signs they had:
 1. Jesus confined his signs to no one district, to no one section of the Jewish race above another.
 2. Everywhere before all the people Jesus did wonders and signs that surpassed anything of the kind that had ever occurred in history. But these were not signs to them.
 2. The Greek hearers. "The Greeks seek after wisdom." 1:22
 1. The Greeks asked for no sign. They cared nothing for the supernatural, the Greek of that day had ceased to believe in the supernatural. He believed only in nature.
 1. The gospel has come in conflict with that wisdom and philosophy of the Greeks. The gospel has challenged the philosophy of the Greeks. Paul told them:
 1. To this point your wisdom has failed.
 2. The wisdom of that day, as it will in any day when becomes the rule of man's life, had become a sort of an amusement in an arena for mere disputants.
 3. There was no real satisfaction for man's mind or heart in it.
 4. Gospel preaching, not the wisdom of this world, is that which brings God near to men.
 3. The "them which are called" hearers.
 1. The preaching of the gospel, the preaching of Christ crucified, brought home to these hearers the knowledge of God, the love of God. It gave them three things:
 1. Salvation; 2. Satisfaction; 3. Eternal life.
 4. The hearers compared. They all heard the same thing. The attitude must have made the difference:
 1. To the Jews: What they heard was "A stumbling block."
 2. To the Greeks: What they heard was "foolishness."
 3. To the "them that are called": What they heard was "Christ the power of God, of God."

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2. THE MESSAGE. What all three groups heard:1. They heard preaching.

1. Not foolish preaching but clear, easy to understand preaching.
2. They did not have to guess about what Paul was talking about.

2. They heard Christ preached.

1. Preaching Christ drew a contrast between: Man's need and helplessness and God's love and pity for man
2. Paul did not preach about Christ: He preached Christ!
3. There is a difference in preaching Christ and preaching about Christ. Example:
 1. There are few today who have not heard about Christ.
 2. There are multitudes who have never heard Christ.

3. The heard Christ crucified preached. Paul did not:

1. Preach Christ the Conquerer, or even Christ the Philosopher. This might have won both the Jews and the Greeks.
2. Paul did:
 1. Christ the Crucified.
 2. Christ the Humble.
 3. Christ the example for all men to follow.
 4. He preached Christ the resurrection and the Life, Christ the King of Glory.

3. THE RECEPTION OF THE MESSAGE1. The Jews

1. To the Jews death on the cross was a stumbling block. They could not weigh the evidences and claims of Christianity.
2. They could not think of the promised Christ dying on the cross.
3. The Jews worshipped success and Christ's death on the cross to them was a failure.

2. The Greeks

1. The Greeks worshipped what they called "wisdom." There are two kinds of wisdom:
 1. Theoretical wisdom:
 1. Such wisdom seems to give an account and explanation of all things as they are.
 2. Theoretical wisdom tries to give an account of the state of the world, of the puzzles and trials of human life.
 2. Practical wisdom:

Practical wisdom teaches men how to live as to make the best of life, to avoid the most evil, and to attain the most good.
2. The Greeks felt that the doctrine of the Cross failed to commend itself to wisdom.

3. Them which are called

1. They received the message as "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." V. 24
2. Christ the power of God:
 1. Christ crucified is the power of God in self-service.
 2. There is no power in all the world so great as that power that conquers evil by enduring evil.
 3. Christ crucified takes the rage of its enemy and lets him break it across the enduring meekness of its violated love.
 4. Christ crucified is the power of God for the salvation of men.

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