

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

The previous lesson reviewed the text from 2:6 through the opening words of 2:10. Four results were seen.

First, wisdom is affirmed, fenced off from this age and its rulers, and assigned to God and. It is spoken in a mystery, and that phrase describes the manner of the speaking rather than the character of the content.

Second, the rulers of verse 8 are men, and their ignorance is culpable rather than excusing. The Scriptures were read in their hearing every Sabbath and they did not know what they heard.

Third, verse 9 is a synopsis rather than a direct quotation. Eye, ear, and heart name every human route to knowing: perception by sight, perception by hearing, and conception by the reasoning mind. Every route is declared closed to the true wisdom of God.

Fourth, verse 9 has no main verb. Its conclusion arrives in verse 10. What man cannot come to on his own is revealed through the Spirit.

The wisdom was predestined to our glory in verse 7, the rulers crucified the Lord of glory in verse 8, and what God prepared in verse 9 is that same glory. Verse 12 adds a fourth term to the series.

This lesson treats verses 10, 11, and 12, and closes with one observation drawn from verse 13.

EXPOSITION

Verse 10a: “To Us God Revealed Them Through the Spirit”

A Question of Text

The verse opens with a connective on which the manuscripts divide. Some read γάρ gar, “for,” and some read δέ de, “but” or “now.” The difference is one syllable on the page and a real difference in the reading, because the one grounds verse 9 and the other stands against it.

The textual evidence points to γάρ gar and renders it “For to us God revealed them.”

The result is that none of the rulers knew. No eye, ear, or heart reached it. To us God unveiled it. The flow of the paragraph is that eye, ear, and heart never reached these things because the route to the wisdom of God was never perception at all.

The Emphatic “To Us”

The first word of the clause in the Greek order is ἡμῖν hēmin, “to us.” A dative pronoun placed ahead of both verb and subject is emphatic by position, and the emphasis answers verse 8 directly. None of the rulers of this age has understood; to us God revealed.

Since verse 6 the subject has been a speaking “we”: “we speak wisdom among those who are mature” (2:6), “we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery” (2:7), and again in verse 13, “which things we

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also speak.” That “we” is the apostolic company through whom the revelation came. The pronoun in verse 10 belongs to the same company. The unveiling was given to the men commissioned to deliver it.

This is not a narrowing of God’s methods. It is a description of the route. The revelation was given to the apostles and prophets, and it reaches every believer through the word they spoke and wrote. The Corinthians knew the mystery because Paul had preached it among them (2:1-2).

*The career of Apollos confirms the distinction from the other side. Apollos was “mighty in the Scriptures” and “had been instructed in the way of the Lord,” and Priscilla and Aquila “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:24-26). He is presented as a man taught and then teaching, never as a source of new revelation, and this letter places him in exactly that role: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (3:6). A teacher delivers what was revealed. He does not add to it.

The Character of the Revealing

The verb is ἀποκαλύπτω apokaluptō, to uncover, to take the covering off, to unveil. It is the verb behind the noun for revelation, and its picture is the removal of something that concealed. What is unveiled was there before the unveiling. The verb does not describe the creation of new truth; it describes the lifting of a cover from truth that stood underneath.

The tense is aorist, and the aorist presents the action as a completed whole rather than as an ongoing supply. God unveiled. The verb is not “God unveils,” as though the act were repeating itself in each reader, and it is not “God is unveiling,” as though the process were still running. A completed act stands behind the text of Scripture.

Three verbs now stand in a row, each with God as subject, each in the aorist, and each with the wisdom of God, the plan of God, as the object. God predestined it (2:7). God prepared it (2:9). God revealed it (2:10). Human knowing enters the chain at no point as a cause. It enters only at the end, as a result.

The revelatory act described here is finished. Scripture is the deposit of what was unveiled, and it is sufficient for what God intends His people to know: for life, for godliness, and for the shape of things to come. “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3). The faith was “once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). What remains for the believer is not the reception of fresh revelation but the understanding of revelation already given.

Through the Spirit

The agent of the unveiling is God, and the means is the Spirit. The preposition is intermediate agency: God revealed, and He did it through the Spirit. The Spirit is the one by whom the unveiling was accomplished, which is why verse 10 moves immediately to what qualifies Him for the work.

One clarification protects the verse from a common misuse. The clause says that the Spirit was the means by which revelation was given to the apostolic company. It does not say that the Spirit supplies each reader with a private understanding that bypasses study, teaching, or the text itself. If the indwelling Spirit operated as an automatic interpretive faculty, teachers would be unnecessary (Ephesians 4:11-14), and this letter would not need to rebuke the Corinthians for failing to reason from what they already possessed. The Spirit's work in revelation is one thing. The Spirit's ordinary work in the believer, sealing, indwelling, serving as pledge, and interceding, is another. This verse is about the first.

Verse 10b: "For the Spirit Searches All Things, Even the Depths of God"

The second half of verse 10 grounds the first. The Spirit is the means of the unveiling because of what the Spirit has access to.

The Spirit Searches

The verb is ἐραυνάω eraunaō, to search, to examine thoroughly, to penetrate. It is used in John 5:39 of searching the Scriptures and in 1 Peter 1:11 of the prophets inquiring into the time the Spirit was indicating.

Romans 8:27 – God is described as "He who searches the hearts," using this same verb of the same activity. The searching of hearts by God is not an investigation undertaken to acquire information God lacks. It is exhaustive penetration, the complete fathoming of what is there. The word denotes thoroughness of knowledge, not the process of inquiry.

Likewise, the Spirit does not examine God in order to learn God. The Spirit penetrates all things, and the fathoming is complete.

Even the Depths

The conjunction before "the depths" is ascensive: all things, even the depths of God. The depths are not a second category standing alongside "all things." They are named as the outer limit of "all things," the furthest point. Nothing of God lies beyond the Spirit's reach. The clause moves from the general to the extreme case.

The Depths: A Word Study

The noun is βάθος bathos. Its range in Scripture is narrow and consistent, and tracing it settles the question the phrase raises.

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The Literal Sense

The base meaning is spatial distance below a surface. In Matthew 13:5 the seed falls where there is no depth of soil. In Luke 5:4 the instruction is to put out into the deep water. In Romans 8:39 neither height nor depth is able to separate from the love of God, where the pair names the full vertical dimension of the created order.

The Figurative Extension

From spatial distance the word extends to extremity and to what lies beyond reach. In 2 Corinthians 8:2, the Macedonians gave out of what the Greek calls their depth of poverty, poverty extending far down. In Ephesians 3:18 the breadth and length and height and depth belong to the love of Christ, and the passage immediately calls that love surpassing knowledge while praying that the saints would know it. That paradox is the same as in this text: beyond human reach, and nevertheless to be known, because it has been made known.

Romans 11:33

Romans 11:33 is a parallel passage because the vocabulary is exact.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Romans 11:33)

Two things to note. The noun is the same, and it is joined there to the wisdom and knowledge of God, which is the subject matter of this whole section of 1 Corinthians. More striking, the word rendered “unsearchable” is ἀνεξεραύνητος anexeraunētos, which is the verb of 1 Corinthians 2:10 with the negating prefix attached. What Romans 11:33 declares unsearchable to man, 1 Corinthians 2:10 says the Spirit searches. They state the same fact from the two sides, and the vocabulary makes the pairing explicit.