

God's Wisdom In A Mystery

"We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown; yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought, but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the world unto you glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:6-8).

How astonishing and remarkable are the apostle's words when he wrote that the rulers of the world, and their wisdom, were coming to nought! Several weeks of crises in the stock market and in our government finally brought forth a "bailout" of 750 billion dollars for our financial institutions. But, as the crisis continued, our Secretary of Treasury revealed, by hind sight, that the "bailout" was addressing the "wrong problem"! All the accumulated wisdom of financiers; statesmen and politicians appears to have miscued! When we consider the "*wisdom of men*" in so many other areas: the origin of our world, life on other planets, the existence of an Eternal Being, cracks in their "so called" wisdom can surely be discerned. Where are the wise, the mighty? Their "excuses" for their error -- according to our Secretary of Treasury -- was that other facts had come to light! Indeed!

The eternal truth preached by the inspired apostles in the first century is unchanging, unalterable. The truth of the soul-damning consequences of sin; the soul-saving sacrifice of God's Son; the documentation of His resurrection, has not, will not change. It will not change because, unlike the wisdom of man, the apostles had all the facts at hand. No evidence was to later be uncovered that would alter the message they proclaimed.

The apostles spoke God's wisdom in a mystery. This word "*mystery*" appears frequently in Paul's letters and almost consistently it refers to something which was once concealed but had now been revealed. From the Roman letter comes these words, "*the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifest ...*" (Rom. 16:25f). "*When ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed ...*" (Eph. 3:4f).

This "*mystery*" in which God's wisdom is spoken, was something which was hidden, concealed, in God's mind to whom none had access save God's Spirit. It was not something which He simply knew, it was something He foreordained! There is a tremendous difference between God knowing something and God "*foreordaining*" a matter. Peter spoke on Pentecost of the

truth that Jesus was "*delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*" (Acts 2:23). This passage declared God knew the world would reject His Son. Isaiah had so declared when he wrote, "*He was despised and rejected of men.*" The Acts passage also declared that that rejection was ordained of God; ordained from the foundation of the world! Jesus knew he would die. "*The son of man goeth, even as it is written of him*" (Mt. 26:24). He also knew that that death was His mission to redeem fallen man. He said, "*The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto and to give his life a ransom for many*" (Mt. 20:28). The raising of the nation of Israel, the law Moses received and gave to the nation, the priestly order, the sacrifices, and the temple: none of these things were intended to be permanent. They were temporary, and known by God to be such. "*The law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster*" (Gal. 3:24f).

The world revises its predictions and forecasts often. Hidden facts surface; forcing such revision. But the gospel of Christ will never change because it is the revelation of God's eternal wisdom which He purposed from the world's foundation for the eternal benefit of man, His creation!

Jim McDonald