

# 1 Corinthians 1:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

## Analysis

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**For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent** (gegrapta gar, Apolō tēn sophian tōn sophōn kai tēn synesin tōn synetōn athetēsō, γέγραπται γάρ, Ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω)—Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14 (LXX) to show that God's subversion of human wisdom is not a New Testament novelty but an Old Testament pattern. The verbs apolλymi (ἀπόλλυμι, "destroy") and atheteō (ἀθετέω, "set aside, nullify, reject") are strong: God does not merely supplement or correct human wisdom—He obliterates it, renders it useless, exposes it as bankrupt.

Isaiah's context was Judah's reliance on political alliances and human strategies rather than trust in YHWH. God promised to act so unexpectedly that the wise would be confounded. Paul applies this to the cross: God's wisdom (salvation through a crucified Messiah) so thoroughly contradicts human wisdom that it exposes philosophy and eloquence as futile for knowing God.

## Historical Context

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Isaiah prophesied during a time when Judah's leaders trusted in Egyptian military alliances and diplomatic cunning rather than God. God responded by promising deliverance so surprising that human wisdom would be shown bankrupt. Paul sees the cross as the ultimate fulfillment: God saves through what humans consider weakness and folly, utterly bypassing and humiliating all worldly wisdom.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does the cross expose the bankruptcy of human wisdom, philosophy, and self-reliant intellect?
2. In what areas of life do we trust our own understanding rather than God's revealed wisdom in the gospel?
3. What does it mean practically that God "destroys the wisdom of the wise"—does this make intellectual pursuits worthless?

## Interlinear Text

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γέγραπται	γάρ	Ἄπολῶ	τὴν	σοφίαν	τῶν	σοφῶν	καὶ
it is written	For	I will destroy	G3588	the wisdom	G3588	of the wise	and
G1125	G1063	G622		G4678		G4680	G2532

τὴν	σύνεσιν	τῶν	συνετῶν	ἀθετήσω
G3588	the understanding	G3588	of the prudent	will bring to nothing
	G4907		G4908	G114

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 29:14** (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

**Jeremiah 8:9** (Parallel theme): The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?

**1 Corinthians 3:19** (Parallel theme): For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

**Isaiah 19:11** (Parallel theme): Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

**Isaiah 19:3** (Parallel theme): And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

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