

1 Corinthians 2:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Analysis

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 rhetorically: *tis egnō noun kyriou* (τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, "who has known the mind of the Lord"). Expected answer: no one. The question emphasizes divine incomprehensibility and human incapacity to advise God—highlighting the absurdity of critiquing divine wisdom. *Hos symbibasei auton* (ὅς συμβιβάσει αὐτὸν, "who will instruct Him") reinforces the point: God needs no counsel (Romans 11:34).

The stunning contrast: **But we have the mind of Christ** (hēmeis de noun Christou echomen, ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν). *Nous* (νοῦς) means understanding, perspective, thought-pattern. Through Spirit-indwelling, believers share Christ's mindset (Philippians 2:5)—not omniscience but alignment with His values, priorities, and truth-perception. This climaxes chapter 2: what was impossible for natural humanity (knowing God's mind) becomes reality for Spirit-regenerated believers. The "mind of Christ" is accessed through Scripture (Spirit-inspired revelation) and ongoing sanctification (Spirit-transformation).

Historical Context

Jewish interpretation of Isaiah 40:13 emphasized God's transcendent wisdom, contrasting Creator with creature. Paul radicalizes the text: through union with Christ by Spirit, believers actually participate in divine perspective. This builds on earlier contrast—natural vs. spiritual person. The "mind of Christ" isn't mystical

intuition but Scripture-saturated thinking formed by apostolic teaching. Later patristic writers would connect this to theosis (participation in divine nature), but Paul's focus is epistemological: Christians can discern God's revealed will because they possess Christ's interpretive framework through the Spirit.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does having "the mind of Christ" practically mean for your daily decision-making and worldview formation?
2. How do you cultivate Christ's mindset through Scripture rather than assuming every thought you have reflects His perspective?
3. How should this promise of sharing Christ's mind shape your confidence when biblical truth conflicts with cultural consensus?

Interlinear Text

τίς	γὰρ	ἔγνω	νοῦν	κυρίου	ὅς	συμβιβάσει	αὐτόν
who	For	hath known	the mind	of the Lord	that	he may instruct	him
G5101	G1063	G1097	G3563	G2962	G3739	G4822	G846

ἡμεῖς	δὲ	νοῦν	Χριστοῦ	ἔχομεν
we	But	the mind	of Christ	have
G2249	G1161	G3563	G5547	G2192

Additional Cross-References

Romans 11:34 (References Lord): For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

John 15:15 (References Lord): Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Job 15:8 (Parallel theme): Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

Jeremiah 23:18 (References Lord): For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?

Job 40:2 (Parallel theme): Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Job 22:2 (Parallel theme): Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?