

1 Corinthians 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

Analysis

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.

Paul paradoxically affirms Christian wisdom after denouncing worldly wisdom. He speaks *sophia* (σοφία, "wisdom") to the *teleioi* (τέλειοι, "mature/perfect")—not esoteric knowledge for spiritual elites, but gospel truth for those regenerated by the Spirit (v. 14-15). This isn't *sophia tou aiōnos toutou* (σοφία τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, "wisdom of this age") which is temporal and passing.

The **princes of this world** (*archontes tou aiōnos toutou*, ἄρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) likely refers to both human rulers (Pilate, Herod, Jewish leaders) and spiritual powers (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15). The phrase *katargoumenōn* (καταργουμένων, "coming to nought/being rendered powerless") indicates ongoing process—these powers are already being nullified through Christ's victory, though not yet fully abolished. Their wisdom proved bankrupt when they crucified the Lord of glory (v. 8).

Historical Context

First-century Judaism and Greek philosophy both claimed "wisdom" traditions. Rabbinic schools debated Torah interpretation; Greek philosophical schools (Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics) competed for adherents. Paul positions Christian wisdom as categorically different—revealed by God, not discovered by human

reason. The "rulers of this age" includes both Roman authority (represented by Pilate) and Jewish leadership (represented by the Sanhedrin) who collaborated in Christ's crucifixion, inadvertently fulfilling God's redemptive plan.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What worldly wisdom systems (political ideologies, psychological theories, philosophical movements) do Christians sometimes confuse with biblical wisdom?
2. How does the "coming to nought" of worldly powers provide hope when facing opposition to gospel truth?
3. What distinguishes mature Christian wisdom from immature understanding—and how do you grow from one to the other?

Interlinear Text

σοφίαν	δὲ	λαλοῦμεν	ἐν	τοῖς	τελείοις
the wisdom	Howbeit	we speak	among	G3588	them that are perfect
G4678	G1161	G2980	G1722		G5046

σοφίαν	δὲ	οὐ	τοῦ	αἰῶνος	τούτου	οὐδὲ	τῶν
the wisdom	Howbeit	not	G3588	world	of this	nor	G3588
G4678	G1161	G3756		G165	G5127	G3761	

ἀρχόντων	τοῦ	αἰῶνος	τούτου	τῶν	καταργουμένων·
of the princes	G3588	world	of this	G3588	that come to nought
G758		G165	G5127		G2673

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 5:14 (Parallel theme): But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

James 3:15 (Parallel theme): This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (Parallel theme): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

1 Corinthians 1:28 (Parallel theme): And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

Ephesians 2:2 (Parallel theme): Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

1 Corinthians 2:8 (Parallel theme): Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Matthew 5:48 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

1 Peter 5:10 (Parallel theme): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.