

1 Corinthians 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Analysis

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Christian wisdom is *sophia theou en mystēriō* (σοφία θεοῦ ἐν μυστηρίῳ, "wisdom of God in mystery")—not secretive, but previously concealed and now revealed. The term *mystērion* (μυστήριον) in Paul always means divine secrets disclosed through apostolic proclamation (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-6; Colossians 1:26-27), not esoteric knowledge for initiates.

Hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world (*apokekrymmenēn*, *hēn proōrisen ho theos pro tōn aiōnōn, ἀποκεκρυμμένην, ἦν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων*) reveals predestinarian election: redemption through Christ's cross was planned in eternity past, not an emergency response to human sin. The phrase *eis doxan hēmōn* (εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν, "unto our glory") indicates that God's eternal purpose includes believers' glorification—conformity to Christ's image (Romans 8:29-30). This "glory" inverts worldly glory: we are glorified through identification with the crucified Christ.

Historical Context

Mystery religions in Corinth (Eleusinian, Dionysian, Isis cults) promised secret wisdom to paying initiates through ritual experiences. Paul uses *mystērion* vocabulary but subverts it: Christian "mystery" is publicly proclaimed gospel, not privileged gnosis. Jewish apocalyptic literature (Daniel, 1 Enoch) also spoke of

divine mysteries revealed to seers. Paul democratizes mystery—all believers receive full revelation through apostolic teaching, not just special visionaries. The pre-temporal ordination of redemption echoes Jewish Wisdom literature (Proverbs 8:22-31).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's eternal planning of your salvation through Christ deepen your assurance and gratitude?
2. What prevents Christians from treating church membership like mystery cult initiation—exclusive knowledge for insiders?
3. How should the promise of future glorification shape your response to present suffering or shame for Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν σοφίαν θεὸς ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν
But we speak the wisdom God in a mystery G3588
G235 G2980 G4678 G2316 G1722 G3466

ἀποκεκρυμμένην ἥν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν
even the hidden wisdom which ordained G3588 God before G3588
G613 G3739 G4309 G2316 G4253

αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν.
the world unto glory our G2257
G165 G1519 G1391

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 1:3 (Glory): According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Psalms 78:2 (Parallel theme): I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Matthew 11:25 (Parallel theme): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Matthew 13:35 (Parallel theme): That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

1 Peter 5:10 (Glory): 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, establish, strengthen, settle you.

Ephesians 1:4 (Parallel theme): According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Revelation 13:8 (Parallel theme): And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

1 Peter 1:11 (Glory): Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

2 Timothy 1:9 (Parallel theme): Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

1 Peter 5:1 (Glory): The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

