But We Have the Mind of Christ

The Wisdom of God in a Mystery — A Verse-by-Verse Study of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

A verse-by-verse study of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 — the hidden wisdom, the princes of this age, the natural man, and the mind of Christ — with the weight of every argument stated.

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Author: John Lobota

Research Assistant: Claude Cowork

papertiq@bellsouth.net

Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Why this passage, how its arguments are weighted, what is actually in dispute, and the opposing case stated at full strength.

Chapter 1 — The Ground Paul Has Already Cleared 9

1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5: the two wisdoms, the cross as foolishness, and why Paul refused eloquence at Corinth.

Chapter 2 — "Them That Are Perfect" 13

Verse 6a. What teleios means in Paul's own vocabulary, and why 1 Corinthians 3:1 settles it.

Chapter 3 — "The Wisdom of This World, Nor of the Princes of This World" 19

Verse 6b. Two different Greek words behind one English word, and a participle that says the whole order is passing.

Chapter 4 — "We Speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery" 24

Verse 7a. What a biblical mystery is, and what it is not.

Chapter 5 — "Which God Ordained Before the World Unto Our Glory" 28

Verse 7b. Foreordained before the ages — and the Pauline phrase the King James renders "the eternal purpose."

Chapter 6 — "Which None of the Princes of This World Knew" 31

Verse 8. Who crucified the Lord of glory in ignorance, and whether unseen powers are in view.

Chapter 7 — "Eye Hath Not Seen, Nor Ear Heard" 35

Verse 9. The hardest citation in the passage: where Paul got it, and what he is using it to say.

Chapter 8 — "But God Hath Revealed Them Unto Us by His Spirit" 39

Verse 10. The hinge of the passage, and the verb Paul elsewhere says man cannot perform.

Chapter 9 — "Save the Spirit of Man Which Is in Him" 42

Verse 11. The analogy Paul builds his whole case on, and what it does and does not prove.

Chapter 10 — "Not the Spirit of the World, But the Spirit Which Is of God" 45

Verse 12. The Giver, the gift, and the purpose clause that names what the gift is for.

Chapter 11 — "Comparing Spiritual Things With Spiritual" 48

Verse 13. A rare verb, an ambiguous dative, and a real fork in the road.

Chapter 12 — "The Natural Man Receiveth Not" 51

Verse 14. Psuchikos, the one-verse definition Jude supplies, and what "cannot" does and does not mean.

Chapter 13 — "He That Is Spiritual Judgeth All Things" 56

Verse 15. The most abused verse in the passage, and the control Paul himself supplies two chapters later.

Chapter 14 — "But We Have the Mind of Christ" 60

Verse 16. One Old Testament verse quoted twice by Paul, split two different ways, to two opposite conclusions.

Chapter 15 — Where the Passage Sits in the Administrations 65

How 2:6-16 reads against the framework of the seven administrations, and what it does not establish.

Chapter 16 — What Would Change My Mind 68

Three findings that would overturn this study's position, and whether any of them exists.

Appendix A — The Weight of Every Argument in This Study 71

Every argument tabulated with its rating and what the opposing reading fairly answers.

Appendix B — "World" in 1 Corinthians 77

Aion and kosmos side by side, with every occurrence in the letter.

Appendix C — The Greek Words of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 78

Word, Strong's number, every New Testament occurrence, and what the count shows.

Appendix D — Textual Variants in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 80

Where the King James text and the modern critical text differ, and whether anything turns on it.

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Sources Consulted 82

Texts, lexicons, and secondary works used, with what each was used for.

Scripture Index..... 83

Every verse quoted in this study, in canonical order.

Introduction

A. The passage, and why it is worth a whole study

Eleven verses. A single unbroken argument, from a man who had just told the same church that he came to them **"in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3)**, and who now turns and says that he and his fellow workers possess a wisdom that the rulers of the world never had and could not have gotten.

> **1 Corinthians 2:6** *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:*
>
> **2:7** *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*
>
> **2:8** *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*
>
> **2:9** *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*
>
> **2:10** *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*
>
> **2:11** *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*
>
> **2:12** *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*
>
> **2:13** *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
>
> **2:14** *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
>
> **2:15** *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*
>
> **2:16** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

Almost every sentence in that block has been made to carry weight it may or may not be able to bear. Verse 6 has been read as evidence of a two-tier Christianity with an inner circle. Verse 9 is read at funerals as a description of heaven, though Paul's very next word is "But God hath revealed them unto us" — he cites it to say the opposite of "we cannot know." Verse 14 has been used both to prove that an unbeliever is incapable of any right thought whatever, and to prove that believers need not answer to

anyone's reasoning. Verse 15 has been quoted by men who wished not to be corrected. Verse 16 has been quoted by men who wished to be thought infallible.

So the passage needs to be walked slowly, word by word, in the order Paul wrote it, with each claim rated for how much weight it will actually hold. That is what this study does.

Weighing it. Method, not argument. Nothing above is a claim about the text.

In short. Eleven verses, one argument, and a long history of being quoted out of its own shape. The remedy is to take it a verse at a time.

B. How arguments are weighted in this study

Every argument in this study carries a stated weight, using five terms. They are used with exactly these meanings throughout, and Appendix A tabulates every one of them in one place.

- **Direct statement** — Scripture says it in so many words. The only question is what the words mean.
- **Strong inference** — It follows closely from what Scripture says. The alternative has to strain against the text.
- **Reasonable inference** — It is the more natural reading, but an honest and careful reader can take it otherwise.
- **Corroboration only** — Consistent with this position, but roughly as consistent with the opposite one. It may be stated; it may not be leaned on.
- **Neutral** — Commonly cited by one side or the other, and it genuinely settles nothing.

Every section ends with a short "Weighing it" note giving that section's rating and naming **what the opposing reading can fairly answer**. A section with no such note would be a section whose weight was never examined.

Two further disciplines are held throughout, because both have been broken before in work of this kind:

Verify, do not recall. Every King James quotation in this study was checked against the text rather than quoted from memory. Every Greek form was checked word by word against a parsed Greek New Testament, and every claim about how often a word occurs was produced by counting, not by estimating. Where the Hebrew or the Greek Old Testament is cited, it was likewise looked up.

Name the nearest counter-instance before someone else does. Where an argument in this study rests on a pattern of usage, the closest case that does not fit the pattern is stated in the same section as the argument, not hidden or omitted. There are several. They are marked.

Weighing it. Method, not argument.

In short. Nothing in this study is asserted at a strength the text does not supply, and every rating is tabulated in one place at the end.

C. The crux — the question everything else is downstream of

A verse-by-verse exchange over this passage almost always stalls, because the participants are really disagreeing about something that was never put on the table. It is this:

Is the knowledge Paul is describing a capacity God gives to every believer as such, or an attainment reached by some believers and not others?

Grant the first, and most of what follows settles itself: "them that are perfect" describes the mature rather than an initiated class, "he that is spiritual" describes a condition shared by all who have received the gift, and the "we" of verse 16 is the church rather than the apostolate. Grant the second, and every one of those readings inverts, and the passage becomes a description of a graded Christianity with Paul near the top of it.

Both readings can be argued from this passage alone. Neither is obviously absurd. This study takes the first, and Chapter 2 gives the reason: Paul himself, twelve verses later, calls the very men he is writing to "babes in Christ," and does it with the words that are the exact opposites of the words he used in 2:6 and 2:15. That is a control internal to the argument, not a preference imported into it.

But it is only right to say plainly at the start that the whole study leans on it, so a reader who rejects that control knows exactly where the disagreement begins.

Weighing it. Method, not argument — but a method that names its own load-bearing wall. The opposing reading fairly answers that naming a crux does not settle it, and that 1 Corinthians 3:1 can be read as Paul saying the Corinthians had failed to reach a level others had reached, which is the graded reading rather than an answer to it. Chapter 2 addresses that directly.

In short. The argument is not really about eleven verses. It is about whether spiritual understanding is a gift held by every believer or a grade attained by some. State that first and much of the rest follows.

D. The opposing case, stated at its actual strongest

Before any of this is answered, here is the case for reading the passage the other way, made as its own best advocates make it, with its own emphases and its own best verses. It is not a straw man and it is not weak.

One. Verse 6 draws a line inside the church, not around it. Paul does not say "we speak wisdom to you." He says **"we speak wisdom among them that are perfect" (1 Corinthians 2:6)** — a prepositional phrase marking out a group. And the very next chapter shows there were Corinthians who did not belong to that group. If every believer had the wisdom, the phrase would do no work at all.

Two. Paul's vocabulary in this passage is the vocabulary of the mystery religions that surrounded Corinth. "Perfect," "mystery," "hidden," "the deep things," "spiritual" and "natural" as a pair of classes — this is the language of initiation, and Paul's first readers lived in a city full of it. It is at least possible

that Paul is deliberately using that vocabulary because he means something structurally like it: a genuine inner content, disclosed to those ready for it, withheld from those who are not.

Three. Verse 13's dative is very probably masculine. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" can as easily be rendered "explaining spiritual things **to spiritual men**." Bishop Pearce rendered it that way; E. W. Bullinger states flatly that the form there "is the Dative plural masculine, and means to spiritual persons." If that is right, then verse 13 is explicitly about a class of persons who receive this teaching and, by implication, a class who do not.

Four. Verse 15's "he himself is judged of no man" is a very strong claim. Whatever it means, it distinguishes the spiritual man sharply from everyone else, in a way that sits awkwardly with the idea that it simply describes every believer.

Five. Verse 8's "princes" are more naturally the unseen powers than Caiaphas and Pilate. Paul elsewhere says that the mystery was hidden in God so that **"now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10)** — the unseen powers are precisely the ones Paul says did not know it until the church revealed it. He calls Satan **"the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4)** using the same phrase "of this age" that stands in 2:6 and 2:8. And "that come to nought" fits a doomed spiritual order better than it fits a set of first-century officials who were going to die of old age anyway.

Six. Verse 9 is about the future. "The things which God hath prepared for them that love him" reads most naturally as what is laid up rather than what is already disclosed, and the Old Testament passage behind it is about what God will do, not what He has revealed.

Seven. Paul's "we" through the whole passage is an apostolic "we." "We speak," "we have received," "which things also we speak" — the same "we" as **"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1)**. If Paul means the apostolic company throughout, then "we have the mind of Christ" is a claim about apostolic authority, not about every Christian's mind.

Every one of those seven is answered somewhere in this study. Three of them are answered only partly, and the study says so where that happens. Point six is conceded in part. Point three is left genuinely open, because the Greek does not decide it.

Weighing it. Method, not argument. This section is a statement of the case against.

In short. The other reading is not silly. It has seven real arguments, at least one of which this study cannot fully close.

E. Text, translation, and method

The King James Version is the base text throughout, as in the rest of this library. Where the King James supplies a word that is not in the Greek, the study says so — the King James prints such words in italics,

and there are five of them inside these eleven verses — *even* and *wisdom* in verse 7, *it* in verse 8, *them* in verse 10, and *them* in verse 14 — at least one of which changes how the passage is usually read.

The Greek behind the King James is the Received Text, and where the modern critical text differs, Appendix D lists every difference inside the passage and says whether anything turns on it. The short answer, given in advance so that no reader is kept waiting for it: nothing in this study's argument depends on a disputed reading. The one variant with real theological interest is at verse 13, and the study makes its case without leaning on it.

Chapter and verse divisions are later editorial additions, not part of the inspired text. That matters more than usual here, because the single most decisive control on the whole passage sits on the other side of a chapter break — 1 Corinthians 3:1 is the next sentence Paul wrote after 2:16, and it was never meant to be read as the start of a new subject.

Original-language work follows this library's standard practice: a word is studied by collecting every occurrence and letting the composite govern, with the writer's own usage weighted above bare lexical matching. That distinction does real work in this study. Twice, an argument that looks strong on a word match turns out to be weak; twice, an argument that looks like a word match turns out to be a genuine authorial idiom. Both kinds are flagged where they occur.

Weighing it. Method, not argument.

In short. King James base text, Received Text behind it, every variant listed, every Greek claim counted rather than recalled, and no argument resting on a disputed reading.

Chapter 1 — The Ground Paul Has Already Cleared

Verse 6 opens with "Howbeit" — in the Greek, a plain *de*, "but" or "now." It is a turn in an argument already running. Read on its own, verse 6 sounds like the beginning of something. Read where Paul put it, it is a concession in the middle of a demolition. So the first task is to see what has already been pulled down.

A. The occasion: a church splitting over its favourite teachers

Paul is writing to a congregation that had fractured into parties named after preachers.

> **1 Corinthians 1:11** *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*
>
> **1:12** *Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*

That is the presenting problem of the whole first four chapters, and it is not incidental to our passage. A church that ranks its teachers is a church that has begun to treat the gospel as a body of impressive material and its preachers as rival experts in it. Paul's response is not to referee between the parties. It is to attack the standard by which they are ranking anyone.

Weighing it. Direct statement — Paul names the problem himself in 1:11-12 and returns to it in 3:4 and 4:6. The opposing reading has nothing to answer here; the occasion is not in dispute.

In short. The letter's first crisis is a congregation grading its preachers, and Paul answers by attacking the grading system rather than the grades.

B. The cross as the standard that ruins all the others

> **1 Corinthians 1:17** *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*
>
> **1:18** *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

Two things in verse 17 will matter later. First, the phrase **"lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Corinthians 1:17)** uses the verb *kenoo*, to empty out — Paul's worry is not that clever preaching is in poor taste but that it would drain the cross of its content. Second, and more useful for our purposes, verse 18 already sets up the two-class division that verse 14 of chapter 2 will state as a principle: the same message is **"foolishness"** to one group and **"the power of God"** to another. The Greek word rendered "foolishness" there is *moria*, and it is the same word Paul will use at 2:14 — **"for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Corinthians 2:14)**.

That word is worth a moment on its own. *Moria*, Strong's G3472, occurs in five verses in the whole New Testament, and all five are in these three chapters: 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1:21, 1:23, 2:14 and 3:19.

Nowhere else in Scripture does the noun appear. It is the vocabulary of this argument and of nothing else, which makes the identity between 1:18 and 2:14 rather more than a coincidence of a common word.

So the natural-man problem of 2:14 is not introduced in chapter 2. It is stated in 1:18 and then explained in 2:14. That is worth holding onto, because it means 2:14 is the conclusion of a thought Paul began sixteen verses earlier, not a fresh doctrine dropped in at the end of a passage about apostolic authority.

Weighing it. Strong inference. The word identity between 1:18 and 2:14 is a fact, and the two verses do describe the same phenomenon from two sides — 1:18 gives the symptom, 2:14 gives the cause. What the opposing reading can fairly answer: word identity alone does not prove that Paul intended a deliberate cross-reference, and 1:18's "them that perish" is a wider category than 2:14's *psuchikos* man, so the two verses are not simply interchangeable.

In short. "Foolishness" is the same word in 1:18 and 2:14. The problem of the natural man is raised at the start of the argument and diagnosed at the end of it.

C. Where is the wise? — the verse that separates two words the King James joins

> **1 Corinthians 1:19** *For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*
>
> **1:20** *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

Verse 20 contains, in a single sentence, the distinction this study will lean on in Chapter 3. In the Greek, "the disputer of this world" is *suzetetes tou aionos toutou* — the disputer of this **age**. "The wisdom of this world" in the same breath is *ten sophian tou kosmou toutou* — the wisdom of this **world-system**. Two different nouns, five words apart, both rendered "world" by the King James.

Paul does exactly the same thing again in the same letter:

> **1 Corinthians 3:18** *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*
>
> **3:19** *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

"Wise in this world" at 3:18 is *en to aioni touto*, in this **age**. "The wisdom of this world" at 3:19 is *tou kosmou toutou*, of this **world-system**. Same pairing, same order, ten verses further on.

This matters in both directions, and honesty requires saying both. It establishes that Paul had the two words available and did not use them interchangeably by accident — he pairs them deliberately and repeatedly, which is a genuine authorial pattern rather than a bare word match. But it also shows that in Paul's hands the two words *overlap heavily in reference*. The disputer of this age and the wisdom of this world-system are not two unrelated things. They are one situation described under two aspects: the age is the stretch of time under a governing order, the world is the ordered human arrangement inside it.

Anyone who argues, from this pairing, that *aion* in 2:6 must mean an administration and cannot mean anything like "world" is over-reading it.

Weighing it. Strong inference that Paul distinguishes the two words deliberately — the pairing occurs twice in the same letter, in the same order, which is not accident. Reasonable inference at most that the distinction carries doctrinal weight in 2:6-8. What the opposing reading fairly answers: near-synonyms are paired in rhetoric precisely because they are near-synonyms, and the very tightness of the pairing at 1:20 can be read as evidence that Paul meant one thing twice for emphasis, not two things once each.

In short. Paul uses "age" and "world" side by side, twice in this letter, deliberately and not interchangeably — but they describe one situation from two angles, and neither word can be pressed far from the other.

D. The Jew, the Greek, and what God chose instead

> **1 Corinthians 1:22** *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:*
>
> **1:23** *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*
>
> **1:24** *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*
>
> **1:25** *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

Verse 24 is the first appearance in the letter of the idea that the wisdom of God is a person and an event rather than a body of information — **"Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24)**. Keep that in view through chapter 2. When Paul says at 2:7 that "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery," he has already told us at 1:24 what that wisdom is. And when he ends at 2:16 with "we have the mind of Christ," the circle closes: the wisdom is Christ, and having the wisdom means having His mind.

> **1 Corinthians 1:26** *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*
>
> **1:27** *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;*
>
> **1:28** *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:*
>
> **1:29** *That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

Verse 28's **"to bring to nought things that are" (1 Corinthians 1:28)** is the verb *katargeo*, and it is the same verb that stands in 2:6 as "that come to nought." Again Paul plants a word in chapter 1 and harvests it in chapter 2. In 1:28 God is the one doing the bringing-to-nought; in 2:6 the princes are the ones being brought to nought. It is one action seen from the two ends.

And verse 29 states the purpose of the entire arrangement: **"That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29)**. This is the sentence that makes an elitist reading of 2:6-16 very difficult to sustain.

Paul's whole point in choosing this vocabulary is that nobody gets to boast. A passage designed to abolish boasting is an odd place to build a tier system.

Weighing it. Strong inference. The *katargeo* link between 1:28 and 2:6 is a verified fact of the text, and 1:29 is a direct statement of purpose governing the surrounding argument. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 1:29 forbids *fleshly* boasting — boasting in birth, status, and natural ability — and a two-tier reading of 2:6 need not involve any of those. A believer who has grown into maturity by the Spirit is not boasting in flesh. That is a fair answer and it does blunt the point, though it does not remove it: 3:21's **"therefore let no man glory in men" (1 Corinthians 3:21)** is aimed at exactly the kind of ranking that a tier system produces.

In short. Two of chapter 2's key words are planted in chapter 1, and chapter 1 states the purpose of the whole argument: that no flesh should boast.

E. Paul's own practice at Corinth

> **1 Corinthians 2:1** *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.*
>
> **2:2** *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*
>
> **2:3** *And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*
>
> **2:4** *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*
>
> **2:5** *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

Three points here bear directly on what follows.

First, **"the testimony of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1)** is *to marturion tou theou* in the Received Text. A significant body of manuscripts reads *to musterion* — "the mystery of God." It makes a difference to how verse 7 lands, and Appendix D treats it. The study's argument does not depend on either reading.

Second, verse 4's **"demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4)** is, in Bullinger's reading, the figure Hendiadys — two nouns joined by "and" where one idea is meant and the second noun functions as a superlative adjective. On that reading Paul is saying "a powerful demonstration of the Spirit," not "two things, a demonstration of the Spirit plus a demonstration of power." *Hendiadys* is the figure of speech in which two words joined by "and" express one idea, the second word describing the first. This is a naming of a figure, which is corroboration-grade: it is a reasonable identification, not something the text states.

Third, and most usefully, verse 4 contains the phrase *anthropines sophias*, "man's wisdom." That exact phrase occurs again at 2:13 — **"not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth" (1 Corinthians 2:13)** — and nowhere else in Scripture. The adjective *anthropinos* occurs seven times in the New Testament; four of them are in 1 Corinthians; and its two appearances joined to "wisdom" are at 2:4 and 2:13, the two ends of the same argument. That is a framing repetition — an inclusio, which Bullinger catalogues as *Sumplexis*, a figure in which the same words open and close a unit and thereby mark its boundaries.

If that framing is real, it tells us where Paul thought this section began and ended: it opens at 2:4 with "not with enticing words of man's wisdom" and closes at 2:13 with "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," and the material inside is a single unit on where his words came from instead.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference on the inclusio. The two phrases are identical and unique in Scripture, which is a real fact; but 2:13 is not the end of the passage — verses 14 to 16 follow — so the frame, if it is one, closes a sub-unit rather than the whole. The opposing reading fairly answers that Paul repeats himself for emphasis throughout this letter without marking structure by it, and that an inclusio identified after the fact is easy to find and hard to falsify. Held as a reading, not leaned on.

In short. Paul's own practice at Corinth — plain speech, one subject, and power rather than polish — is the demonstration of everything chapter 2 will then argue, and the phrase "man's wisdom" frames the argument at both ends.

F. So what is verse 6 conceding?

Now the "Howbeit" makes sense. Paul has spent twenty-three verses saying that he refused wisdom, avoided wisdom, would not use wisdom, and that God has made wisdom foolish. A reader could reasonably conclude that Christianity has no content worth thinking about. Verse 6 heads that off: there *is* a wisdom here, and it is spoken, and it is deeper than anything the age has — it simply is not the kind of wisdom anyone was grading the preachers by.

The concession is therefore not "there is an inner circle." It is "do not mistake my refusal of your standards for an absence of substance." That is what the sentence is doing in the argument. Whether it also marks out a class within the church is the question of the next chapter.

Weighing it. Strong inference on the function of the "Howbeit" — a concessive particle after twenty-three verses of denial has an obvious job, and this is it. What the opposing reading fairly answers: a sentence can do two things at once, and conceding that there is real wisdom is perfectly compatible with also saying who gets it.

In short. Verse 6 is Paul stopping a misunderstanding: refusing the world's wisdom is not the same as having nothing to say.

Chapter 2 — "Them That Are Perfect"

> **1 Corinthians 2:6** *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect …*

One word carries this chapter: *teleios*, Strong's G5046, here in the dative plural, *tois teleiois*. It is the single most consequential word in the passage, because whichever way it is read, the rest tends to follow.

A. What the word itself means

Teleios is built on *telos*, "end" or "completion." It describes something that has arrived at the end proper to it — finished, whole, complete, having reached its intended term. It is not primarily a moral word and not at all a word about flawlessness in the modern sense. A full-grown animal is *teleios* over against a young one; a completed work is *teleios* over against a half-done one.

The King James renders it "perfect" in most places, which was a better fit in 1611 than now: "perfect" then still carried its Latin sense of *perfectus*, made-through, completed. Modern English has narrowed it to "flawless," which is exactly what the Greek does not mean, and much of the trouble with this verse comes from that narrowing.

Weighing it. Direct statement, at the lexical level — the word's derivation and range are not in dispute among any party. What the opposing reading fairly answers: nothing here, because no serious reading of 2:6 claims *teleios* means morally flawless. The dispute is over *what* completion is in view.

In short. *Teleios* means finished or full-grown, not flawless. That is agreed on all sides.

B. Every occurrence, and what Paul does with it

The word occurs in seventeen verses of the New Testament — nineteen occurrences, since Matthew 5:48 and James 1:4 each have two. Set out plainly:

Where	Form	What is called *teleios*
Matthew 5:48	*teleioi*, *teleios*	Believers, and the Father
Matthew 19:21	*teleios*	The rich young ruler, if he sold all
Romans 12:2	*teleion*	The will of God
1 Corinthians 2:6	*teleiois*	Those among whom Paul speaks wisdom
1 Corinthians 13:10	*teleion*	"That which is perfect," over against "in part"
1 Corinthians 14:20	*teleioi*	Believers, over against "children"
Ephesians 4:13	*teleion*	"A perfect man," over against "children" in 4:14
Philippians 3:15	*teleioi*	"As many as be perfect"
Colossians 1:28	*teleion*	Every man, presented perfect in Christ
Colossians 4:12	*teleioi*	The Colossians, standing perfect and complete
Hebrews 5:14	*teleion*	"Them that are of full age," over against babes
Hebrews 9:11	*teleioteras*	A greater and more perfect tabernacle
James 1:4	*teleion*, *teleioi*	Patience's work, and believers
James 1:17	*teleion*	Every perfect gift
James 1:25	*teleion*	The perfect law of liberty
James 3:2	*teleios*	A man who offends not in word
1 John 4:18	*teleia*	Perfect love

Paul uses the word eight times. Six of those eight describe persons: 1 Corinthians 2:6, 1 Corinthians 14:20, Ephesians 4:13, Philippians 3:15, Colossians 1:28, and Colossians 4:12. The other two describe the will of God (Romans 12:2) and "that which is perfect" over against "that which is in part" (1 Corinthians 13:10). And in the two places where Paul supplies an explicit contrast, the contrast is age, not rank:

> **1 Corinthians 14:20** *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*

The King James margin on that last word reads: "Gr. perfect, or, of a ripe age." The Greek is *teleioi* — the same word, the same form, in the same letter, set directly against *paidia*, "little children." Paul is not saying "be initiates"; he is saying "grow up."

> **Ephesians 4:13** *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*
>
> **4:14** *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

Again *teleios*, again set against *nepioi*, "infants," in the very next verse, and again framed as growth: "the measure of the stature." The King James margin at 4:13 even offers "age" for "stature."

Hebrews, from a different writer, uses the word the same way and makes the metaphor explicit:

> **Hebrews 5:13** *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*
>
> **5:14** *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.*

"Them that are of full age" is *teleion*. The King James margin reads "or, perfect." Milk and strong meat, babes and the full-grown.

Weighing it. Strong inference. This is a same-author usage pattern, not a bare word match: in every case where Paul supplies a contrast term for *teleios* applied to persons, the contrast is infancy. That is the kind of evidence that survives the standard objection to word studies, because it rests on what Paul sets the word *against*, not merely on the word. What the opposing reading fairly answers: a maturity word can still be used to mark a class, and an initiation system is perfectly capable of describing its own initiates as "the grown-up ones" and outsiders as "children" — that is in fact how such systems usually talk. Maturity language does not by itself rule out a tier.

In short. Wherever Paul applies *teleios* to people and gives us the opposite term, the opposite term is "children." The word is about growth.

C. The control Paul supplies himself, twelve verses later

That last objection is fair, and it is the reason this chapter does not rest on the word study. It rests on what Paul does next.

> **1 Corinthians 3:1** *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*
>
> **3:2** *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*
>
> **3:3** *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*
>
> **3:4** *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

Look at what Paul has done. In 2:6 he says he speaks wisdom among the *teleioi*. In 2:15 he speaks of *ho pneumatikos*, "he that is spiritual." Then, with no break of subject — the chapter division is a thirteenth-century convenience, not Paul's — he says: I could not speak to you as unto *pneumatikois*, but as unto *sarkikois*, as unto *nepiois* in Christ.

Three words, in order:

- *teleiois* (2:6) — the full-grown
- *pneumatikois* (3:1) — the spiritual, the identical form of the word from 2:15
- *nepiois* (3:1) — infants, the standard opposite of *teleios*

Paul has taken the two terms of 2:6-16 and applied one of them to the Corinthians in the negative, with the age-opposite attached. And he has given the reason in the same breath: not that they lacked an initiation, but that they were quarrelling over preachers. **"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal" (1 Corinthians 3:3)**. The disqualifier is not an unattained grade. It is behaviour.

And he says, in the same sentence, that the barrier is a feeding problem: **"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 3:2)** — the identical milk-and-meat figure Hebrews attaches to *teleios* at 5:13-14. It is a growth barrier, and growth barriers are by definition temporary and removable.

Weighing it. Strong inference, close to direct statement. Paul uses the same word-form (*pneumatikois*) ten verses apart, once of a group he speaks wisdom among and once of a group the Corinthians were not; he supplies the opposite term himself; and he names the cause as their conduct rather than their standing. What the opposing reading fairly answers — and this is the strongest answer available to it — is that a temporary, behaviour-caused division is still a division, and that 3:1-3 therefore *confirms* rather than refutes the claim that 2:6 marks out a group inside the church. That answer is correct as far as it goes. The difference between the two readings is not whether Paul distinguishes groups — he plainly does — but whether the distinction is one of **attainment within a shared possession** or one of **possession itself**. 3:1-3 settles that: the Corinthians already had the Spirit (Paul tells them so at 3:16 and 6:19), and what they lacked was growth into what they already had.

In short. Paul's next sentence after "we have the mind of Christ" is "I could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto babes." He named the group in 2:6, told the Corinthians they were not yet it, and gave the reason: they were quarrelling. That is a growth problem, not a grade.

D. Does "among" mark a boundary?

The preposition is *en tois teleiois* — "among the full-grown." It is fair to notice that Paul did not simply write "we speak wisdom to you." The phrase does mark out a group.

But mark what kind of statement it is. Paul is not saying there is wisdom he withholds from other believers out of policy. He is saying there is wisdom that only lands among the grown. That is a statement about reception, not about permission. A teacher who says "I teach calculus to students who know algebra" is not running a secret society; he is describing what can be got across.

And Paul says as much directly: **"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Corinthians 3:2)**. The limiting factor is stated as *ability to bear*, not as clearance to receive.

This is worth saying plainly because the two are constantly confused. A body of teaching that only the mature can take in is an ordinary feature of any real subject. A body of teaching deliberately kept from the less advanced as a matter of rank is something else entirely, and it is what the mystery cults of Corinth actually did. Paul's language is close enough to theirs to invite the confusion; his stated reason is not theirs.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. "Among" does mark a group, and the reception-versus-permission distinction is drawn from 3:2 rather than from verse 6 itself, so it is an argument from context rather than from the preposition. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 3:2 concerns what Paul *did* at Corinth, which is evidence of his practice but not necessarily a definition of the *teleioi*, and one could still hold that maturity functions as a threshold of access even if the threshold is passable.

In short. "Among the perfect" describes where this wisdom lands, not whom Paul is permitted to tell. The stated barrier is capacity, and capacity can grow.

E. The mystery-religion parallel, taken seriously

The single strongest point in the opposing case is the vocabulary. *Teleios*, *musterion*, *apokekrummenos*, *ta bathe*, *pneumatikos* against *psuchikos* — a Corinthian reading that list would have heard the technical language of the initiatory cults, in which *teleios* could indeed denote one who had gone through the *teletai*, the rites. Corinth had such cults. Paul knew it.

Three things should be said about this, in order of increasing weight.

First, a word's use in one system does not import that system's meaning into another writer. *Musterion* is used in the Greek Old Testament of Daniel for the king's dream, with no cultic overtone at all, and the Gospels use it of the parables — **"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matthew 13:11)**. Paul had a perfectly good biblical stock of this vocabulary without borrowing from Eleusis.

Second, if Paul were adopting the cults' framework he chose a strange way to do it, since he had just spent a chapter saying that God's method is to pick **"things which are despised" (1 Corinthians 1:28)** precisely **"that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29)**. An initiation system is a machine for producing exactly the glorying he has just abolished.

Third, and decisively for this study, is what he does with the vocabulary. Whatever the words meant on the street, Paul defines his own usage three chapters later when he tells the whole church, without qualification:

> **1 Corinthians 3:16** *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

and again:

> **1 Corinthians 6:19** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

He says that to the same carnal, quarrelling, immature Corinthians. Whatever the *teleioi* have that the Corinthians did not yet have, it is not the indwelling Spirit — they had that already, and Paul rebukes them on the ground that they had it.

Weighing it. Strong inference against the initiation reading, but the point should be stated carefully. The lexical parallel with the mystery cults is real and cannot be waved away, and it remains possible that Paul is deliberately using the vocabulary polemically — taking the cults' words and filling them with the opposite content. This study reads it that way. What the opposing reading fairly answers: taking a word polemically is itself an interpretive claim, and the simpler explanation of a man using initiation vocabulary is that he means something like initiation. The answer to that is 3:16 and 6:19, which is why those verses rather than the word study carry the weight here.

In short. Paul's vocabulary overlaps the mystery cults'. His content does not: he tells the very people he calls babes that the Spirit of God already dwells in them.

F. What the *teleioi* therefore are

Putting it together: the *teleioi* are believers who have grown up. They are not a caste, not an order, not a class with an entrance rite, and not the apostles alone — Paul addresses the Philippians as **"as many as be perfect" (Philippians 3:15)**, an entire congregation, and prays for the Colossians that they may **"stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12)**, which would be an odd prayer if the state were a matter of appointment rather than growth.

And one more point, which is easy to miss and which decides the tone of the whole passage. Paul places himself outside the finished article in the very context where he uses the word of others:

> **Philippians 3:12** *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

> **3:15** *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

Three verses apart, Paul says he is not yet *teteleiomai* — brought to completion — and then addresses his readers as *teleioi*. The word is elastic in his hands, relative to the stage in view, and he is not standing at the top of a ladder looking down. Note also what he says the remedy is for those who are "otherwise minded": not further instruction from Paul, but **"God shall reveal even this unto you" (Philippians 3:15)**. The correction comes from the same source the wisdom does.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. Philippians 3:12 uses a related verb rather than the adjective, and a writer is entitled to use a word of his readers in a sense he declines for himself; so this is a supporting observation about Paul's tone, not a proof. Corroboration-grade on its own. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 3:12 and 3:15 may simply use the word in two different senses — absolute completion at the resurrection in verse 12, present maturity in verse 15 — in which case the passage shows nothing about tone at all. That is a fair reading and probably the right one; the point is retained only as the mildest of the three.

In short. The *teleioi* are grown believers, congregations at a time, and Paul does not exempt himself from still growing.

Chapter 3 — "The Wisdom of This World, Nor of the Princes of This World"

> **1 Corinthians 2:6** *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:*

Three items in the second half of this verse need separate handling: the word behind "world," the word behind "princes," and the participle behind "that come to nought."

A. "World" here is not the word for world

In the King James, verse 6 says "world" twice, verse 7 says "before the world," verse 8 says "world," and verse 12 says "world." An English reader has every reason to assume one Greek word stands behind all five. It does not.

Verse	King James	Greek	Literally
2:6	the wisdom of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
2:6	the princes of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
2:7	ordained before the world	*pro ton aionon*	before the ages
2:8	the princes of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
2:12	the spirit of the world	*tou kosmou*	of the world

Four of the five are *aion*, Strong's G165 — a stretch of time, an age, a period with a character of its own. The fifth, at verse 12, is *kosmos*, G2889 — the ordered system, the arrangement of things, the world as a going concern.

This is not a peculiarity of the King James translators' carelessness. *Aion* genuinely does shade into "world" in ordinary Greek of the period, in the same way English can say "in the modern world" and mean "in our time." The King James rendering is defensible. But it flattens something, and the flattening matters here, because the argument Paul is making in verses 6 to 8 depends on the idea of **a period with a term to it**, and the word "world" does not convey that at all.

Two supports for saying that Paul means the time-word rather than the system-word with real intent, and one honest concession.

The first support is that Paul had both words and used them side by side, twice in this letter, as Chapter 1 §C set out: **"where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Corinthians 1:20)** has *aion* in the first clause and *kosmos* in the second, and 3:18-19 does the same thing again. A writer who holds two words apart inside one sentence, twice, is not using them at random.

The second support is the participle that closes verse 6 and the phrase that opens verse 7, both of which are time-words. Verse 6 ends with a present passive participle meaning "being brought to nothing," and verse 7 says the wisdom was foreordained *pro ton aionon*, "before the ages." Paul's sentence is framed at both ends by the passage of time: a wisdom from before the ages, spoken now, over against an order that is presently being wound up. "World" cannot carry that; "age" carries it exactly.

The concession is the one already made in Chapter 1. Because Paul pairs the two words so tightly, and because they overlap heavily in reference, nothing doctrinal should be built on the bare fact that *aion* stands here. A reader who translates verse 6 as "the wisdom of this world-order" has not misrepresented Paul. The point is not that *aion* means something *kosmos* cannot; it is that *aion* foregrounds the temporary and bounded character of the thing, and Paul's argument in these three verses is about exactly that.

Weighing it. Direct statement that the Greek words differ — that is simply what the text says, and it is verifiable in any parsed Greek text. Reasonable inference that the difference is significant for Paul's argument here. What the opposing reading fairly answers: near-synonyms overlap, Paul uses them interchangeably enough that 1:20 could be pure variation for rhetorical effect, and the argument of verses 6-8 works perfectly well on either rendering. Nothing in this study depends on the distinction being pressed further than "the time-word foregrounds the time."

In short. The King James says "world" five times in seven verses, and four of them are the Greek word for an age. Paul's argument here is about an order with an end date.

B. "Princes" — who are they?

Archon, Strong's G758, occurs in thirty-six verses of the New Testament — thirty-seven occurrences, Acts 7:35 having two. Here it stands in the genitive plural, *ton archonton tou aionos toutou* — "the rulers of this age."

The word itself means a ruler, a magistrate, one in first place. Of those thirty-six verses, the overwhelming majority are plainly human officials: synagogue rulers (Luke 8:41), the rulers of the Jews (John 3:1, 7:26, 7:48, 12:42), the rulers who condemned Jesus (Luke 23:13, 23:35, 24:20), civil magistrates (Luke 12:58; Acts 16:19), and Paul's own citation of the law at his trial (Acts 23:5). Paul's one other use of the word is **"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil" (Romans 13:3)** — human government.

The word is also used of spirit beings, in two clusters. The Pharisees' charge that Jesus cast out devils by **"the prince of the devils" (Matthew 12:24)**, with parallels at Matthew 9:34, Mark 3:22 and Luke 11:15. And John's three uses of **"the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)**. Paul uses it of a spirit being once, and once only: **"the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2)**.

So the word can go either way, and the question has to be decided by more than the word.

Here is the observation that this study thinks carries the most weight, and it must be stated with its own limits attached. John's phrase and Paul's phrase are not the same phrase:

	Greek	Number	Second noun
John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11	*ho archon tou kosmou toutou*	singular	*kosmos*, world
1 Corinthians 2:6, 8	*ton archonton tou aionos toutou*	plural	*aion*, age
Ephesians 2:2	*ton archonta tes exousias tou aeros*	singular	"the power of the air"

John always writes the singular with *kosmos*. Paul in 1 Corinthians 2 writes the plural with *aion*. Ephesians 2:2, Paul's one certain use of *archon* for a spirit being, is singular and has neither of John's nouns. So the common move — "prince of this world" in John means Satan, therefore "princes of this world" in Paul means Satan's hierarchy — is a word match across two different phrases in two different writers, and the case for it is weaker than it looks.

Now the honest counter-instances, and there are three.

The first. Paul does attach "this age" to a spirit being, once: **"the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Corinthians 4:4)**. That is *ho theos tou aionos toutou* — the identical two-word tail that stands in 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 2:8. So the argument "Paul uses *aion* of the human order and *kosmos* of the satanic one" is simply not true as a rule, and should not be stated as one.

The second. Paul plainly does teach that unseen powers were ignorant of the mystery:

> **Ephesians 3:9** *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*
>
> **3:10** *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*

That is as close to a direct statement of the opposing reading's substance as anyone could want. The unseen powers did not know the hidden thing; they are learning it now, through the church. If a reader takes 1 Corinthians 2:8 the same way, he is not importing a foreign idea into Paul — he is reading Paul by Paul. The only qualification worth making is lexical: Ephesians 3:10 says *archais kai exousiais*, "principalities and powers," using *arche* (G746), a different word from *archon* (G758). It is a real difference, but it is a thin reed to hang much on.

The third. Paul's other passage about the powers uses "this age" of them too: **"against the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12)** is *tous kosmokratoras tou skotous tou aionos toutou* — world-rulers of the darkness of this age. Once again the tail *tou aionos toutou* is attached to spirit beings.

So where does that leave verse 6? It leaves the word undecided and the decision to be made at verse 8, where Paul gives the one piece of information that can settle it: what these rulers did. That is Chapter 6.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference that the plural and the choice of *archon* point toward human rulers, and no stronger, because 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Ephesians 6:12 both attach Paul's exact "of this age" phrase to spirit beings. The opposing reading fairly answers with Ephesians 3:10, which states its central claim outright in Paul's own words, and which this study does not dispute as a Pauline doctrine — only as the referent of *these* particular words in *this* particular verse.

In short. "Princes" is a word for rulers that Paul uses of men nearly always and of a spirit being once. His phrase here is not John's phrase. But he does elsewhere attach "this age" to spirit powers, and he does say elsewhere that the unseen powers did not know the mystery — so the word alone decides nothing, and verse 8 has to do the work.

C. "That come to nought" — a participle with a doctrine in it

The last three words of verse 6 are *ton katargoumenon*: the genitive plural of the present passive participle of *katargeo*, Strong's G2673.

Katargeo is built from *a-* (not) and *ergon* (work): to make inoperative, to put out of commission, to render idle. It is not primarily a destruction word. A law that is superseded is *katargeo*-ed; so is a debt discharged, or a machine switched off.

It occurs in twenty-six verses of the New Testament, and twenty-four of those are Paul's — the only exceptions are Luke 13:7 (the fig tree that "cumbereth the ground") and Hebrews 2:14. That is an unusually concentrated Pauline word, which makes his own usage an unusually good guide.

What does Paul put out of commission with it?

Reference	What is rendered inoperative
Romans 3:3	The unbelief of some, against the faith of God
Romans 3:31	The law — "do we then make void the law through faith?"
Romans 4:14	The promise, if heirs were by law
Romans 6:6	"That the body of sin might be destroyed"
Romans 7:2	The wife's legal bond, when the husband dies
Romans 7:6	"But now we are delivered from the law"
1 Corinthians 1:28	"To bring to nought things that are"
1 Corinthians 2:6	The princes of this age
1 Corinthians 6:13	The belly and meats
1 Corinthians 13:8	Prophecies and knowledge
1 Corinthians 13:10	"That which is in part," when the perfect comes
1 Corinthians 13:11	"I put away childish things"
1 Corinthians 15:24	"All rule and all authority and power"
1 Corinthians 15:26	"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"
2 Corinthians 3:7, 11, 13, 14	The ministration of death, and the glory that was to be done away
Galatians 3:17	The covenant, which the law cannot disannul
Galatians 5:4	"Christ is become of no effect unto you"
Galatians 5:11	"Then is the offence of the cross ceased"
Ephesians 2:15	"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity"
2 Thessalonians 2:8	"That Wicked," at the Lord's coming
2 Timothy 1:10	Death, abolished by Christ's appearing

Look at the shape of that list. The dominant Pauline use of *katargeo* is **the passing of one governing arrangement when another supersedes it** — the law in Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 3, the Mosaic ministration and its fading glory, childhood when a man grows up, the partial gifts when the complete comes, and at last death itself and all rule and authority. Four of the occurrences (2 Corinthians 3:7, 11, 13, 14) are specifically about the administration of the law being superseded, and three of them are the same present passive participle as here.

That is the single most instructive comparison available for 2:6. *Katargoumenon* at 2:6 is exactly the form *katargoumenen*, *katargoumenon*, and *katargoumenou* take at 2 Corinthians 3:7, 3:11 and 3:13, where the thing being wound up is the Mosaic administration. Paul is not saying the princes will one day be destroyed. He is saying they are, right now, in the process of being rendered inoperative — because the arrangement they belong to is being superseded.

And that is why the verse's "age" language matters after all. The rulers are *of this age*, and the age is on its way out. Their wisdom expires with their administration.

Weighing it. Strong inference. This is a same-author pattern with an exact formal match: identical verb, identical tense, voice, mood and participial form, used by the same writer of a superseded administration four times in one chapter of another letter. That is not a bare word match. What the opposing reading fairly answers: *katargeo* is a broad word in Paul's hands and does sometimes mean plain destruction (2 Thessalonians 2:8 of the Wicked one, 1 Corinthians 15:26 of death), so the "superseded arrangement" sense is a dominant use, not an exclusive one; and a doomed satanic hierarchy is quite naturally described as being brought to nothing, as 1 Corinthians 15:24 in fact describes it.

In short. "That come to nought" is a present passive participle: not "who will be destroyed" but "who are being put out of commission," in the form and sense Paul uses elsewhere of an administration being superseded. Their wisdom has a term on it.

D. What verse 6 as a whole is claiming

Pulling the three strands together, verse 6 says this: there is a wisdom, it is spoken openly among grown believers, and it is not of the same order as either the reasoning or the rulers of the present age — an age and a set of rulers who are, as Paul writes, already being wound up.

That is a claim about two competing frames of reference, not about two tiers of Christian. The contrast in the verse is not between the perfect and other believers. It is between this wisdom and the age's wisdom. The *teleioi* are mentioned as the place where it lands, and then dropped; Paul does not return to them. The rest of verses 6 to 16 is about the wisdom, its source, and who can take it in.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. That Paul does not return to the *teleioi* is an argument from what he does not say, which is weak on its own; it becomes worth something only alongside 3:1. What the opposing reading fairly answers: the *teleioi* are picked up again at 2:15 under the other name, "he that is spiritual," so Paul does not in fact drop the theme — he renames it.

In short. Verse 6 sets one wisdom against another wisdom, and mentions the mature only as the place where the first one lands.

Chapter 4 — "We Speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery"

> **1 Corinthians 2:7** *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*

Two clauses, treated in this chapter and the next. First, what a mystery is.

A. The King James italics, and what the sentence actually says

The King James prints *even* and *wisdom* in italics at verse 7. Both are supplied; neither stands in the Greek. What Paul wrote is:

alla laloumen theou sophian en musterio, ten apokekrummenen

— "but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden one." The feminine article and participle agree with *sophian*, so the King James supply of "wisdom" is correct and helpful; it makes explicit what the Greek carries in the grammar. But it is worth seeing the bare shape, because in Greek the emphasis falls on the participle: **the hidden one**. That is the thing being asserted. A wisdom characterised by having been hidden.

Apokekrummenen is a perfect passive participle of *apokrupto*, Strong's G613 — a perfect tense, which in Greek describes a completed action with a standing result. Hidden, and therefore in a state of hiddenness. The passive says somebody did the hiding; verse 7's next clause says who.

Weighing it. Direct statement of the Greek text and of what the King James supplies. The opposing reading has nothing to dispute: both readings agree on the grammar here.

In short. "Even the hidden wisdom" is Paul saying, with the emphasis on the participle, "the wisdom that had been hidden and stayed hidden."

B. *Apokrupto* — six occurrences, and the pattern in them

The verb occurs six times. Set out in full, because the pattern is unusually clean:

> **Matthew 11:25** *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.*
>
> **Luke 10:21** *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*
>
> **Matthew 25:18** *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 2:7** *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*
>
> **Ephesians 3:9** *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*
>
> **Colossians 1:26** *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

Three of the six are Paul's, and all three are the same perfect passive participle, and all three are about the mystery: *apokekrummenen* (1 Corinthians 2:7), *apokekrummenou* (Ephesians 3:9), *apokekrummenon* (Colossians 1:26). The three differ only in the case and gender required by what they modify. Paul never uses this verb for anything else.

That is a same-author idiom in the strict sense, and it is the strongest single piece of lexical evidence in this study. It is not "the same word occurs elsewhere"; it is "the same writer uses this word in the same

tense, voice and mood, in all three of his uses of it, of one and the same subject." When Paul writes *apokekrummenen*, he is talking about the mystery. Every time.

And the other two occurrences, Matthew 11:25 and its parallel at Luke 10:21, are not an exception but a confirmation: the Lord thanks the Father for having hidden *these things* from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Hidden from the clever, disclosed to the simple, by the Father's own good pleasure. That is the structure of 1 Corinthians 2:6-10 in one sentence, and it belongs to the Lord's own teaching before Paul ever used it.

Weighing it. Strong inference, and the cleanest in the study. Three of three Pauline uses, identical form, identical subject. What the opposing reading fairly answers: three occurrences is a small sample, and Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:26 are close in date and subject matter, so the "pattern" may be one habit exercised three times rather than a settled idiom. That is fair, and it is why the conclusion drawn is only that 2:7 belongs with Ephesians 3 and Colossians 1 — not that the verb by itself proves anything about the content.

In short. All three of Paul's uses of "hidden" are the same form and all three are about the mystery. 1 Corinthians 2:7 is the same subject as Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:26.

C. What "mystery" means in Scripture, and what it does not

Musterion, Strong's G3466, occurs twenty-seven times. The English word "mystery" now means a puzzle, something inherently obscure, a whodunnit. The biblical word means almost the reverse: a thing that could not have been worked out, which is now told.

The Gospels supply the definition with unusual clarity:

> **Matthew 13:11** *He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*
>
> **Mark 4:11** *And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:*

Notice that in both, the mystery is something *given to be known*. It is not a permanently sealed thing; it is a disclosed thing, and the disclosure is the point.

Paul's usage says the same, and says it repeatedly with the word "now":

> **Romans 16:25** *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*
>
> **16:26** *But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:*
>
> **Ephesians 3:3** *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*
>
> **3:4** *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

> **3:5** *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*
>
> **Colossians 1:26** *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*
>
> **1:27** *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Every one of those passages has the same two-beat rhythm: hidden **then**, disclosed **now**. Romans 16:25-26 — "kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest." Ephesians 3:5 — "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed." Colossians 1:26 — "hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

And note who receives it in each case. Romans 16:26: "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Colossians 1:26: "made manifest to **his saints**." Not to an order, not to a grade — to the saints, and through them to all nations.

There is one more feature worth naming, because it is the strongest single argument against the elitist reading of 1 Corinthians 2. In Ephesians, having described the mystery in the highest possible terms, Paul says what he wants done with it:

> **Ephesians 6:19** *And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,*

He asks the church to pray that he may open his mouth **boldly**. A mystery religion's secret is guarded. Paul's request about his mystery is that he be enabled to say it out loud.

Weighing it. Strong inference, verging on direct statement. The "hidden then, revealed now" structure is explicit in the words of Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:5 and Colossians 1:26, and the recipients are named. What the opposing reading fairly answers: the mystery being now revealed to the saints in general does not settle how deeply any given saint takes it in, which is precisely what 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 3:1-2 address. Disclosure and comprehension are different things, and the opposing reading is about comprehension.

In short. A biblical mystery is not a riddle kept. It is a secret told — hidden in God through the ages, disclosed now to His saints, and to be spoken boldly.

D. "In a mystery" — how the phrase works in the sentence

En musterio is adverbial: Paul speaks God's wisdom *in the manner of*, or *in the character of*, a mystery. He is not saying "we speak about a mystery" as if the mystery were the topic. He is saying that the wisdom he speaks has this character — it is of the sort that could not have been reasoned out, and has been told.

That reading is what makes verse 8 intelligible. The rulers did not fail to know it through inattention or stupidity. They could not have known it, because it had not been told; and the moment it was told, in the event of the cross, it was too late for them to act on it.

It is also what makes verses 9 and 10 intelligible, and Chapter 7 will show that verse 9 has been almost universally read against the grain of this. Paul quotes "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard" not to say that the things are unknowable but to say that they were unreachable *by those routes* — and then immediately says God has taken a different route.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference on the adverbial force. Grammatically *en musterio* could be construed more loosely, and some readers take it as "we speak, in a mystery, God's wisdom" with "in a mystery" qualifying the speaking rather than the wisdom. The difference is slight and nothing in this study turns on it. What the opposing reading fairly answers: if "in a mystery" qualifies the speaking, it could describe a guarded or veiled manner of speech — which would support the initiation reading — and that construal cannot be ruled out on grammar alone. It is ruled out, if at all, by Ephesians 6:19's "boldly."

In short. "In a mystery" describes the kind of wisdom it is: not reasoned out, but told.

Chapter 5 — "Which God Ordained Before the World Unto Our Glory"

> **1 Corinthians 2:7** *… which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*

Three words to take in order: *ordained*, *before the world*, and *unto our glory*.

A. "Ordained" — *proorizo*, and its six occurrences

The Greek is *proorisen*, aorist active indicative of *proorizo*, Strong's G4309: *pro*, before, plus *horizo*, to mark out a boundary or set a limit. To determine beforehand, to mark out in advance. The English "horizon" comes from the same root — the line that marks the edge.

It occurs six times in the New Testament, and all six are worth seeing together, because this is a small enough set to take in at a glance:

> **Acts 4:28** *For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*
>
> **Romans 8:29** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*
>
> **8:30** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 2:7** *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*
>
> **Ephesians 1:5** *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*
>
> **Ephesians 1:11** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

Four of the six are Paul's, and every one of them is about God's settled prior purpose reaching its term in the glory of His people. Romans 8:30 runs the chain out to its end: predestinated, called, justified, **glorified**. And 1 Corinthians 2:7 ends the same way: "unto our glory."

It is worth noticing what is and is not predestinated in 2:7. The object of the verb is the feminine relative *hen*, which reaches back to *sophian*: it is the **wisdom** that was foreordained, not persons. Whatever a reader concludes elsewhere about the predestination of individuals, this verse is not evidence for it. Paul is saying that the plan itself was settled in advance.

That is a real limit on what the verse will carry, and it is worth stating because the verse is sometimes pressed into service in arguments it has no part in.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the grammar — the relative pronoun is feminine singular and agrees with *sophian*, which is not a matter of interpretation. Strong inference on the pattern in the six occurrences. What the opposing reading fairly answers: Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:5 do have persons as the object, so a reader who holds that Paul teaches the predestination of persons is not contradicted by 2:7 — only unsupported by it. That is the correct and limited claim.

In short. What God "ordained before the world" in this verse is the wisdom, not the people. The verb is Paul's word for a settled prior purpose that ends in the glory of His own.

B. "Before the world" — *pro ton aionon*, and what it is not

The Greek is *pro ton aionon*: "before the ages." The phrase in exactly this form occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

Its near relatives, however, are a cluster, and they repay looking at together, because the King James renders them by four different English phrases and an English reader has no way of seeing that they belong to one another:

Reference	King James	Greek	Literally
1 Corinthians 2:7	ordained before the world	*pro ton aionon*	before the ages
Romans 16:25	kept secret since the world began	*chronois aioniois sesigemenou*	kept silent in age-long times
Ephesians 3:9	from the beginning of the world hath been hid	*apo ton aionon*	hidden from the ages
Colossians 1:26	hid from ages and from generations	*apo ton aionon kai apo ton geneon*	from the ages and from the generations
Ephesians 3:11	according to the eternal purpose	*kata prothesin ton aionon*	according to the purpose of the ages
2 Timothy 1:9	before the world began	*pro chronon aionion*	before age-long times
Titus 1:2	promised before the world began	*pro chronon aionion*	before age-long times

Every one of those is an *aion* phrase. Every one of them belongs to the same doctrine — a purpose settled before the ages ran, kept silent through them, disclosed now. And Ephesians 3:11 is the key that opens the whole set: what the King James calls **"the eternal purpose" (Ephesians 3:11)** is in Greek *prothesin ton aionon*, **the purpose of the ages**.

That single phrase is worth more to this study than any amount of argument about *aion* in 2:6. Paul has a name for God's plan, and the name is built on the word for ages. The plan is not merely a purpose that happens to be everlasting; it is a purpose that unfolds *through* the succession of ages, one arrangement after another, and the mystery is the part of it that was held back until this one.

This is exactly the territory the Seven Administrations study covers, and Chapter 15 takes it up properly. Here it is enough to say that 1 Corinthians 2:7's "before the ages" is not a vague gesture at eternity past. It is Paul's ordinary way of dating the plan relative to the periods through which the plan runs.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the Greek phrases, every one of which was checked word by word. Strong inference that the seven passages belong to a single doctrine — they share vocabulary, subject and the hidden-then-disclosed structure, and four of them use the same verb or noun as 2:7. What the opposing reading fairly answers: *aion* in the plural with *pro* is a normal Greek way of saying "from eternity," and translating it "before the ages" rather than "before the world began" changes the flavour more than the sense. That is true, and no argument in this study rests on the flavour alone. The load is carried by Ephesians 3:11, where the ages are not a time-marker but the plan's own structure.

In short. "Before the world" is "before the ages." Paul's own name for God's plan, at Ephesians 3:11, is "the purpose of the ages" — a plan that runs through periods, with a part of it held back until now.

C. "Unto our glory" — the purpose clause, and who "our" is

Eis doxan hemon: unto, or with a view to, our glory. *Doxa* is the ordinary word for glory, honour, weight of reputation; it is also the word behind "the Lord of glory" in the next verse, and Paul is setting up that echo deliberately. The wisdom was foreordained unto **our** glory, and the rulers crucified **the Lord of glory**. One word, two ends of the sentence.

The pronoun matters. If the "we" of this passage is the apostles alone, "our glory" is apostolic glory, which sits very oddly beside **"that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29)**. If the "we" is the church, "our glory" is the end of the chain Romans 8:30 runs out: **"and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans 8:30)**.

Two observations bear on this, and they point the same way.

The first is that the immediately preceding "we" in this letter is explicitly inclusive. Two verses earlier Paul wrote **"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:5)** — the second person. And at 1:18, the sentence that sets up the whole argument, he wrote **"but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18)**, where "us which are saved" is plainly every believer. Paul's "we" in this letter moves between the apostolic company and the

whole church, and the reader has to take each case on its own; but the "us" of 1:18, which governs the argument that 2:6 resumes, is the whole church.

The second is that the destination Paul names — glory — is nowhere in Scripture an apostolic privilege. It is the common inheritance: **"which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)**, said to the Colossians; **"whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans 8:30)**, said of all who are called.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. The pronoun genuinely is ambiguous in this passage, and Paul does use an apostolic "we" elsewhere in this very letter — **"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1)** is unmistakably apostolic. So the case here is contextual rather than grammatical. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 4:1 is close at hand and is about exactly this subject — the stewardship of mysteries — and an advocate of the apostolic reading can point to it as the natural sense of "we speak" throughout 2:6-13. This study answers that the *content* of "our glory" is the common Christian hope rather than a ministerial one, which makes the inclusive reading more natural at this particular phrase even if "we speak" is narrower.

In short. "Unto our glory" names the destination of the plan. Glory is nowhere an apostolic perquisite in Scripture; it is what the whole church is being brought to.

Chapter 6 — "Which None of the Princes of This World Knew"

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

This is the verse that decides Chapter 3's open question, and it is also the verse most often read past. The King James supplies *it* in italics — "had they known it." The Greek has no object: *ei gar egnosan, ouk an ton kurion tes doxes estaurosan* — "for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

A. Two verbs for knowing, in one sentence

The verse uses *ginosko* (G1097) twice, in two different tenses, and the difference is worth seeing.

- "knew" — *egnoken*, perfect active indicative. A completed knowing with a standing result: none of them has come to know it, and so none of them stands in a state of knowing it.
- "had they known" — *egnosan*, aorist active indicative, inside a contrary-to-fact condition. A plain past: if they had come to know.

The construction of the second half is the standard Greek unreal condition in past time: *ei* with the aorist indicative in the protasis, *an* with the aorist indicative in the apodosis. That construction asserts, as part of its grammar, that the condition did **not** hold. Paul is not speculating. He is stating that they did not know, and drawing out what would have followed if they had.

Weighing it. Direct statement. The contrary-to-fact construction is not a matter of interpretation; it is what the grammar means.

In short. The grammar of the second clause asserts that they did not know. Paul is not raising a possibility; he is stating a fact and drawing the consequence.

B. The strongest argument in the passage for the human reading

Here is the argument, and it is worth setting out step by step, because it is the one place in this study where a reading is held at close to direct-statement strength.

First. The action Paul attributes to the princes is the crucifixion. *Estaurosan* — they crucified. Whoever these princes are, they are the ones who did it.

Second. Scripture names who did it, repeatedly and specifically, and the names are human:

> **Acts 4:26** *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*
>
> **4:27** *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,*

"The rulers" in Acts 4:26 is *hoi archontes* — the same word as 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 2:8, in the plural, quoting Psalm 2:2. And Acts 4:27 identifies them by name: Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, the people of Israel. That is the apostolic church's own inspired identification of the plural *archontes* who stood against the Lord's Christ, and it is a list of men.

Third. Scripture attributes their act specifically to ignorance, using the same verb, more than once:

> **Acts 3:17** *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.*
>
> **Acts 13:27** *For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

Acts 13:27 is Paul's own sermon. "Their rulers" is *hoi archontes auton* — the identical noun, in the plural, that stands in 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 2:8. "Because they knew him not" is *touton agnoesantes*, from *agnoeo*, to be ignorant of; Peter at Acts 3:17 uses the matching noun, *kata agnoian*, "through ignorance." These are not the same verb as 1 Corinthians 2:8's *ginosko*, and the argument does not claim they are. What the argument claims is narrower and firmer: Paul, in his own preaching, says that the *archontes* of Jerusalem condemned Christ **because they did not know** — which is the substance of 1 Corinthians 2:8, made about the same people, under the same noun, by the same man.

Fourth. The Lord said the same from the cross: **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34)**.

Fifth. Paul applies the same diagnosis to himself: **"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Timothy 1:13)**.

Put those together and the case is this: Paul, elsewhere in his own preaching, uses the same word for the same people and gives the same reason for the same act. That is not a word match across two writers. It is the same man saying the same thing twice.

Weighing it. Strong inference, close to direct statement. The chain runs: the princes crucified Him (1 Corinthians 2:8, stated); the crucifiers were Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, and are called *archontes* (Acts 4:26-27, stated); Paul himself says those *archontes* acted in ignorance (Acts 13:27, stated). Each link is a direct statement; the inference is only that the same writer means the same thing by the same phrase about the same event.

What the opposing reading fairly answers, and it has two real answers. **One:** the two claims are not exclusive. If the unseen powers moved the human rulers — and Scripture does speak that way, **"then entered Satan into Judas" (Luke 22:3)** — then the ignorance of the men and the ignorance of the powers behind them are one story, and Paul could mean the whole of it. **Two:** Ephesians 3:10 states that the principalities and powers did not know the mystery, so a reader who finds them here is reading Paul by Paul. This study's answer to both is that verse 8 specifies a deed and a set of actors that Scripture elsewhere names, and specificity should govern; but the point is not that the powers were knowing bystanders, and nothing in this study denies Ephesians 3:10.

In short. The princes of verse 8 are the men who crucified Christ — a group Acts names, calls *archontes*, and twice says acted in ignorance, once in a sermon of Paul's own. The unseen powers are a real Pauline subject, but they are Ephesians 3:10's subject, not this verse's.

C. "For had they known it, they would not have crucified" — what this does and does not prove

The conditional has been used to prove more than it says. Two limits.

It does not say the crucifixion was accidental or avoidable. Acts 4:28 finishes the sentence Acts 4:26-27 began: **"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28)**. The rulers acted in ignorance, and in doing so did exactly what God's counsel had determined. Both are asserted, three verses apart, by the same speakers. Ignorance of the plan and fulfilment of the plan are not alternatives here.

It does not make ignorance an excuse. Acts 3:17 says "through ignorance ye did it," and Acts 3:19 immediately says **"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)**. Ignorance explains; it does not acquit. Paul's own case is the same: he obtained mercy *because* he acted ignorantly in unbelief, which presupposes there was something to obtain mercy for.

What the conditional does prove is the thing Paul is using it for: that the wisdom he is speaking was genuinely hidden. The proof is empirical and it is brutal. If the wisdom of God had been available to the wisdom of the age, the age's own best-placed men, with every advantage of learning and position, would have seen it. They had the Scriptures read every sabbath day (Acts 13:27) and they did not see it. That is the argument.

Weighing it. Strong inference on the function of the conditional in Paul's argument; direct statement on the two limits, both of which rest on explicit verses (Acts 4:28; Acts 3:19). What the opposing reading fairly answers: nothing substantial — the limits are conceded by every side.

In short. The conditional proves the wisdom was hidden, not that the crucifixion was a mistake God had to work around. Ignorance explains the act and does not excuse it.

D. "The Lord of glory"

Ton kurion tes doxes. The phrase occurs once more in the New Testament, at **"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (James 2:1)**, where the King James supplies "the Lord" in italics.

Its background is the Old Testament's glory-titles:

> **Psalms 24:8** *Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.*
>
> **24:10** *Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*
>
> **Acts 7:2** *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,*

The rhetorical force of the phrase in 2:8 is the point. Paul has just said that the wisdom was ordained *eis doxan hemon*, unto **our glory**. Then he says what the rulers did to *ton kurion tes doxes*, the Lord of **glory**. The word is the pivot of the sentence: the glory that is coming to us was purchased in the murder of the One whose glory it is. The figure at work is a deliberate repetition of a root word in two different constructions — Bullinger catalogues this as *Polyptoton*, the repetition of the same word in different inflections — and it is doing rhetorical work, not decorative work.

One further note, and it should be handled carefully. The phrase does not by itself settle any question about the relation of the Lord Jesus Christ to God; it is a title of majesty, and this study makes no argument from it in either direction. What it does establish is the enormity Paul is describing: the best-informed men of the age, holding the oracles of God and reading them weekly, executed the One in whom the whole hidden purpose was lodged, and did not know what they were doing.

Weighing it. Direct statement that the phrase occurs and that *doxa* links verse 7 to verse 8. Reasonable inference on the deliberateness of the repetition — a writer can repeat a word without designing anything by it, though the placement here at the two ends of a single sentence is suggestive. Neutral on anything Christological; the phrase is not evidence either way and is not used as such here.

In short. The glory ordained for us and the Lord of glory they crucified are the same word, at the two ends of one sentence. That is the shape of the argument, and it is also its cost.

Chapter 7 — "Eye Hath Not Seen, Nor Ear Heard"

> **1 Corinthians 2:9** *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

This is the most quoted verse in the passage and the most consistently misused. It is also the one place where the study has to say plainly that a familiar answer does not survive examination.

A. What the verse is doing in the argument

Start with the connective, because everything depends on it. Verse 9 begins *alla kathos gegraptai* — "but as it is written" — and verse 10 begins *hemin de ho theos apekalupsen*: "**but** to us God revealed." The two verses are a matched pair, and Paul's point lands in the second half of the pair, not the first.

The shape is: *this is what was beyond reach* — **but God has revealed it to us**.

That is the reverse of how the verse is normally used. It is read at funerals and in sermons as a statement that the glories to come are past all imagining, and the sentence is stopped at the end of verse 9. Paul does not stop there. He wrote the sentence in order to turn it. His subject in verses 6 to 16 is a wisdom **now spoken**, and verse 9 supplies the contrast that makes the speaking remarkable.

Weighing it. Strong inference. The *de* opening verse 10 is adversative, the two verses are grammatically joined, and the whole surrounding argument is about present disclosure — so reading verse 9 as a standalone statement about the unknowable inverts its function. What the opposing reading fairly answers: the *content* of the quotation is genuinely about what God has prepared, and things prepared can be both revealed in principle and unexperienced in fact. A reader who applies verse 9 to the yet-unseen future is not misreading the words; he is only detaching them from what Paul does with them in the next breath. That is a fair distinction, and this study concedes it — the verse is about things prepared, and much of what is prepared has not yet arrived.

In short. Verse 9 exists to be answered by verse 10. Paul quotes what was out of reach in order to say that God has now put it within reach.

B. Where the quotation comes from — and the honest answer

Paul says "as it is written." The passage he is nearest to is Isaiah 64:4. Set the two side by side, in the King James:

> **Isaiah 64:4** *For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 2:9** *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

The similarities are obvious. So are the differences, and they are not small:

	Isaiah 64:4	1 Corinthians 2:9
Order	heard, perceived by ear, eye seen	eye seen, ear heard
Third clause	none	"neither have entered into the heart of man"
Verb of preparing	Hebrew *ya'aseh*, "who acts/works"; Greek *poieseis*, "thou wilt do"	*hetoimasen*, "hath prepared"
For whom	"him that waiteth for him" (*limchakkeh*)	"them that love him" (*tois agaposin auton*)

And here is the Greek Old Testament of Isaiah 64:4 as it actually reads: *apo tou aionos ouk ekousamen oude hoi ophthalmoi hemon eidon theon plen sou, kai ta erga sou ha poieseis tois hupomenousin eleon* — "from of old we have not heard, neither have our eyes seen a God beside thee, and thy works which thou wilt do for them that wait for mercy."

Paul is not quoting that. He is not quoting the Hebrew of it either. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, a standard reference two centuries old, says so plainly at this verse: "This passage is not taken from the LXX, nor is an exact translation of the Hebrew; but it gives the general sense."

So three questions arise, and they should be taken separately.

Where does the eye-and-ear pair come from? Isaiah 64:4, almost certainly. The Hebrew there has the ear and the eye, and the opening *ûme'olam* — "and from of old," "from the age" — which is the same time-word family Paul has been using since verse 6. The reversal of order and the compression are the ordinary freedoms of a writer citing from memory and for effect.

Where does "neither have entered into the heart of man" come from? Not from Isaiah 64:4, which has no such clause. It comes from a standing Hebrew idiom, and the King James translators noticed it themselves. Look at their own marginal notes:

> **Isaiah 65:17** *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*
>
> **Jeremiah 3:16** *And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.*

At Isaiah 65:17 the King James margin reads: "come...: Heb. come upon the heart." At Jeremiah 3:16 it reads: "come to mind: Heb. come upon the heart." The Hebrew idiom is *'alah 'al leb*, to come up upon the heart, and it means to enter someone's thoughts.

The Greek Old Testament renders Jeremiah 3:16 with exactly the construction Paul uses: *ouk anabesetai epi kardian* — "it shall not come up upon the heart." Paul's clause is *ouk epi kardian anthropou anebe* — the same verb *anabaino*, the same preposition *epi*, the same noun *kardia*. Isaiah 65:17's Greek uses a different verb (*eperchomai*) for the same idiom.

So the third clause is not an invention and not an error. It is the standard scriptural way of saying "nobody thought of it," and Paul is writing in it. That it appears in Isaiah 65:17, two chapters past Isaiah 64:4 and in the same great passage about the new creation, is very likely why it came to Paul's hand along with the eye-and-ear.

And "them that love him" for "him that waiteth for him"? That is a standing scriptural designation for the people of God, and Paul uses it. The exact Greek phrase *tois agaposin auton* — the dative plural participle with the pronoun — occurs three times in the New Testament: here, at **"the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12)**, and at **"heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him" (James 2:5)**. Paul's own nearest form is the same participle with the noun instead of the pronoun: **"all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28)**, *tois agaposin ton theon*. So Paul has replaced Isaiah's "him that waiteth for him" with the settled designation he and James both use for God's own. That is a real substitution, and it should be named as one rather than smoothed over.

Weighing it. Direct statement that Paul's wording matches neither the Hebrew nor the Greek of Isaiah 64:4 — this is verifiable and was verified, and the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge says the same. Strong inference that the third clause is the Hebrew "come upon the heart" idiom: the King James margin identifies the idiom at two places, and the Greek of Jeremiah 3:16 matches Paul's verb and preposition exactly. Reasonable inference that Isaiah 64:4 plus the idiom is the whole explanation. What the opposing reading fairly answers: a free citation combining two passages is a reasonable reconstruction, but it is a reconstruction, and Paul's "as it is written" would more naturally introduce a text than a composite. That is the force of the next section.

In short. The eye and ear are Isaiah 64:4. "Entered into the heart" is a Hebrew idiom the King James translators flag in their own margin at Isaiah 65:17 and Jeremiah 3:16. "Them that love him" is Paul's own regular phrase, substituted for Isaiah's "him that waiteth for him."

C. The old objection: did Paul quote an apocryphal book?

This has been asked since the third century, and it deserves a straight answer rather than a dismissal.

Origen, commenting on Matthew at 27:9, wrote that the words of 1 Corinthians 2:9 are found in no canonical book but in an apocryphon of Elijah. Jerome answered him — in his letter to Pammachius on translation, and again in his Commentary on Isaiah, book 17 — arguing that Paul is rendering Isaiah 64:4 from the Hebrew, and that the presence of the words in works like the Ascension of Isaiah and an Apocalypse of Elijah reflects those works borrowing a circulating form of the Isaiah material rather than Paul borrowing from them.

Three things should be said.

One: the datum is real. There genuinely are non-canonical works containing a form of these words, and Origen genuinely did say what he said. Pretending otherwise is not an option for an honest study.

Two: the direction of borrowing is the whole question, and it is not settled by the fact of parallel. A saying that appears in Paul and in a later apocryphal work is at least as likely to have travelled from Paul as to it, and the surviving Apocalypse of Elijah is a Coptic work generally dated well after Paul.

Three: the internal evidence favours Jerome. Paul's third clause is demonstrably the standard Hebrew idiom of the prophets, not an exotic import; his fourth clause is his own habitual phrase; and his first two clauses are Isaiah's ear and eye. Every element of the verse is accounted for from within Scripture. A theory that requires an outside source has to explain why none of the material needs one.

This study therefore holds Jerome's answer, and holds it at **corroboration-only** weight, because the evidence is patristic and reconstructive rather than scriptural. Nothing in the study's argument depends on it. If a reader concludes that Paul cited a non-canonical saying, the function of verse 9 in Paul's argument — the thing that actually matters — is entirely unchanged: it is the foil for verse 10 either way.

Weighing it. Corroboration only, deliberately. This is extra-biblical tradition weighed against extra-biblical tradition, with an internal-evidence argument on top. It is stated because a reader will meet the objection, not because the study needs it. What the opposing reading fairly answers: Origen was closer to the sources than we are, "as it is written" is Paul's normal formula for citing Scripture and not for allusion, and the composite theory is an inference rather than a demonstration.

In short. Origen thought Paul quoted an apocryphon of Elijah; Jerome answered that Paul was rendering Isaiah. The internal evidence accounts for every clause of verse 9 from within Scripture, which favours Jerome — but nothing here rests on it either way.

D. The one point where this study concedes ground

The opposing case, in Introduction §D point six, argued that verse 9 is about the future: "the things which God hath prepared" reads most naturally as what is laid up rather than what is already disclosed.

That is partly right, and it should be conceded rather than argued away.

Hetoimasen is an aorist: God **prepared** them. What was prepared is not thereby experienced. Paul says at verse 7 that the wisdom was ordained *eis doxan hemon*, unto our glory, and the glory is not yet. So the things prepared do have a future dimension, and a reading of verse 9 that refers it purely to present knowledge is flattening it.

What cannot be conceded is the removal of verse 10. Whatever else "the things which God hath prepared" includes, Paul's very next word is that God has revealed **them** — the pronoun is supplied by the King James, but the Greek verb's object is plainly the *ha hetoimasen*, the things prepared, of verse 9. The things prepared are the things revealed. There is no room in the grammar for verse 9's "things" to be one set and verse 10's revelation to be about another.

So the settled reading is this: God has prepared things for those who love Him which no human faculty could have reached; He has now disclosed them by His Spirit; and their full enjoyment is still to come. All

three are true at once, and the passage is damaged by dropping any of them. What the funeral reading drops is the middle one, which is the one Paul wrote the sentence for.

Weighing it. This section is a concession. The future reference of "prepared" is granted as a reasonable inference from the aorist and from the unfulfilled glory of verse 7. The refusal to detach verse 10 is a strong inference from the grammar — verse 10's verb has no other available object.

In short. Yes, the things prepared are partly still to come. No, that does not let verse 9 stand alone. Prepared, revealed, and not yet enjoyed are all three true, and the middle one is what Paul is arguing.

Chapter 8 — "But God Hath Revealed Them Unto Us by His Spirit"

> **1 Corinthians 2:10** *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

This is the hinge of the passage. Everything before it says the wisdom was out of reach; everything after it explains the mechanism by which it is now reached.

A. The word order, and where the weight falls

The Greek begins *hemin de ho theos apekalupsen* — "**to us** and God revealed." The dative pronoun stands first, before the conjunction and before the subject. Greek puts emphasis at the front of a clause, and Paul has put "to us" there.

That is the point of the sentence and it is where the contrast with verse 8 bites. *None* of the rulers of the age knew it. **To us** God revealed it. The two groups are set against each other by position in the sentence, and the difference between them is not intelligence or standing but the fact that God did something.

The verb *apekalupsen* is *apokalupto*, to uncover, to take the cover off — the verb behind the noun "apocalypse." It is the exact answer to verse 7's *apokekrummenen*, hidden: *apo-krupto* covered it, *apo-kalupto* uncovered it. Paul is playing one word against its opposite across three verses, and the pair is deliberate.

Weighing it. Strong inference on the emphasis — fronted datives in Greek are emphatic as a rule, and this one stands in explicit contrast to "none of the princes." Direct statement on the hidden/revealed word pair, which is simply what the two verbs mean. What the opposing reading fairly answers: the emphatic "to us" is precisely what an apostolic reading wants, since it marks off the recipients; the fronting establishes a contrast but does not say how wide the "us" is.

In short. "To us" stands first in the sentence, against "none of the princes." What was covered over in verse 7 is uncovered in verse 10, by the matching verb.

B. "By his Spirit" — the means, and a textual note

Dia tou pneumatos autou: through His Spirit. The Received Text has the pronoun *autou*, "his"; a number of early manuscripts omit it, giving simply "through the Spirit." Nothing turns on it, and Appendix D records it.

What does matter is the preposition. *Dia* with the genitive marks the means or agent through which something is done. The revelation is God's act, and the Spirit is how He does it. That is the ordinary Pauline construction and it matches Ephesians 3:5, where the mystery **"is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5)** — *en pneumati* there, but the same relation.

Weighing it. Direct statement. The preposition means what it means, and the variant is recorded rather than used.

In short. God is the revealer; the Spirit is the means.

C. "The Spirit searcheth all things" — and the word Paul elsewhere says man cannot do

Ereuna is the present active indicative of *ereunao*, Strong's G2045: to search, to search out, to investigate. It occurs six times:

> **John 5:39** *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*
>
> **John 7:52** *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*
>
> **Romans 8:27** *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 2:10** *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*
>
> **1 Peter 1:11** *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.*
>
> **Revelation 2:23** *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

Two of the six are the searching of hearts by God (Romans 8:27; Revelation 2:23), one is the Spirit's searching of God's own depths (here), and one is the prophets' searching into what the Spirit in them signified (1 Peter 1:11). It is a word for real investigation, not passive awareness.

Now the observation that makes this verse remarkable, and it can be verified in a minute by anyone with a concordance. Paul's only other use of *ereunao* is Romans 8:27. But Paul uses the *negative* of the same root once, and it is in a passage that is otherwise the twin of this one:

> **Romans 11:33** *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

> **11:34** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?*

"How unsearchable" is *anexereuneta* — the alpha-privative compound of *ereunao*: not-out-searchable. And "the depth" is *bathos*, the singular of the very noun Paul uses at 1 Corinthians 2:10 for "the deep things," *ta bathe*.

So the two passages sit in exact opposition:

	Romans 11:33-34	**1 Corinthians 2:10, 16**
The depth	*bathos* of God's riches, wisdom, knowledge	*ta bathe* of God
Searching	*anexereuneta* — unsearchable	*ereuna* — the Spirit searches
The mind of the Lord	"who hath known the mind of the Lord?" — no answer given	"who hath known the mind of the Lord? … But we have the mind of Christ"

The same writer, the same two nouns, the same Old Testament quotation, and two opposite conclusions — because in Romans 11 he is speaking of what man can do and in 1 Corinthians 2 he is speaking of what the Spirit does. God's depths are unsearchable to man and searched by God's own Spirit. That is precisely the argument verse 11 is about to make with the analogy of the human spirit.

Weighing it. Strong inference, and one of the firmest arguments in the study. This is not a word match; it is the same author using a root and its own alpha-privative, together with a shared noun and a shared Old Testament citation, in two passages on the same subject. What the opposing reading fairly answers: Romans 11:33 and 1 Corinthians 2:10 were written to different churches for different purposes, and a writer is not obliged to be constructing a cross-reference when he reuses his own vocabulary; the parallel may be the natural result of one man thinking about one subject twice. That is fair — but the conclusion drawn here does not require deliberate design, only that Paul held both things and saw no conflict between them.

In short. Paul says God's depths are unsearchable by man and searched by God's Spirit, using the same root both times. The difference is not the depths. It is who is doing the searching.

D. "Yea, the deep things of God"

Kai ta bathe tou theou. The *kai* here is ascensive — "and indeed," "yes, even" — which the King James renders "yea." *Bathos* means depth in the plain sense; the plural *ta bathe* means the deep parts, the things down in the depths.

The word occurs eight times. Three are physical depth (Matthew 13:5; Mark 4:5; Luke 5:4). Two are metaphorical extremity (Romans 8:39, "nor height, nor depth"; 2 Corinthians 8:2, "their deep poverty"). Two are the depth of God's own riches and wisdom (Romans 11:33; here). One is Ephesians 3:18, and it repays attention:

> **Ephesians 3:18** *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

That prayer is made **"with all saints" (Ephesians 3:18)**, and its object is the dimensions of what has just been described as the mystery. Paul prays that the whole body of believers may be able to take in the depth. He does not pray it for a class.

One caution belongs here, because this is the verse in the passage most easily bent. Paul says the **Spirit** searches the deep things of God. He does not say believers search them. What believers receive, verses 10 and 12 say, is the **revelation** of what the Spirit has searched. The distinction is worth keeping: the Spirit is the one who knows the depths; the believer is the one to whom the Spirit discloses what He knows. Any reading in which the believer himself has independent access to the divine depths has crossed a line the text does not cross — and it is exactly the line the Corinthian party spirit was pushing at.

Weighing it. Direct statement on who does the searching — it is the grammatical subject of the verb and there is no ambiguity. Reasonable inference that Ephesians 3:18's "with all saints" bears on the scope question here; it is a different letter and a prayer rather than a statement, so it supports rather than proves.

In short. The Spirit searches the depths; the believer receives what the Spirit discloses. Paul prays that "all saints" may take it in, and nowhere suggests the believer does his own searching of God.

Chapter 9 — "Save the Spirit of Man Which Is in Him"

> **1 Corinthians 2:11** *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

Verse 11 is an argument by analogy, and it is the load-bearing wall of the whole passage. If the analogy holds, verses 12 to 16 follow almost of themselves. So it deserves careful handling, including a plain statement of what an analogy can and cannot prove.

A. The shape of the argument

The verse is a pair of matched clauses built on a rhetorical question. Bullinger's catalogue names the figure *Erotesis*, the asking of a question not to gain information but to make an assertion more forcibly than a plain statement would.

The first clause: *tis gar oiden anthropon ta tou anthropou ei me to pneuma tou anthropou to en auto* — "for who among men knows the things of the man, except the spirit of the man that is in him?"

The second: *houtos kai ta tou theou oudeis oiden ei me to pneuma tou theou* — "so also the things of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

Houtos kai — "even so also" — is the hinge. The second clause is asserted **on the strength of** the first. Paul is reasoning from something his readers already grant to something he wants them to see.

Note the verb: *oiden*, the perfect of *eido*, used with present force — to know in the sense of holding knowledge, being in possession of the fact. Not *ginosko*, which tends toward coming-to-know by acquaintance or experience. Paul uses *oiden* twice here and *ginosko* at verse 8 of the rulers. It is a fine distinction and this study does not press it, but the choice is worth noticing: in verse 11 Paul is talking about who is in a position to hold this knowledge at all, not about who has come to learn it.

Weighing it. Direct statement of the structure — the *houtos kai* is explicit and the parallel is exact. What the opposing reading fairly answers: nothing here; the shape of the argument is agreed.

In short. Nobody knows a man's inner things but that man's own spirit. In the same way, nobody knows God's inner things but God's own Spirit. Paul argues the second from the first.

B. "The spirit of man which is in him"

Paul's premise is that a man has a spirit within him and that it is the seat of his self-knowledge. He states it as something too obvious to argue, and Scripture supports it throughout:

> **Genesis 2:7** *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*
>
> **Zechariah 12:1** *The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.*
>
> **Job 32:8** *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*
>
> **Proverbs 20:27** *The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*
>
> **Ecclesiastes 12:7** *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

Zechariah 12:1 is the closest verbal parallel — "the spirit of man within him" beside Paul's "the spirit of man which is in him." Proverbs 20:27 is the closest conceptual parallel, and it is striking: the spirit of man is the lamp by which the inward parts are **searched** — the same relation Paul states between the Spirit of God and the depths of God at verse 10.

E. W. Bullinger, in his classified list of the uses of *pneuma*, files this first occurrence in verse 11 under his heading "Psychological" — spirit as it belongs to man's own constitution — and the second occurrence in the verse under "the Holy Spirit." His comment is exact: "though we have the article in both sentences, *pneuma* is used, in the first, psychologically; and the article is used grammatically. Man's *pneuma* is contrasted with God's *pneuma*."

That distinction is worth holding, because Paul has five occurrences of *pneuma* in these eleven verses and they are not all doing the same work. Chapter 10 takes that up.

Weighing it. Direct statement that Scripture affirms a spirit in man — five verses say so in so many words, and Paul assumes it as common ground. Corroboration only on Bullinger's classification, which is

a careful scholar's judgment and not the text's own statement. What the opposing reading fairly answers: nothing on the premise itself, which no party disputes.

In short. A man's own spirit is what knows the man. Scripture says so plainly, and Proverbs 20:27 even uses the language of searching for it.

C. What the analogy proves, and what it does not

Here the study has to be careful, because an argument from analogy is the easiest kind to overrun.

What it proves. That knowledge of an inner life requires the inner life's own participation. Nobody gets at a man's thoughts from outside; they are reached only through that man's spirit. Paul asserts that the same is true of God — with the consequence that no amount of external investigation, however skilled, reaches God's thoughts. That conclusion is what verses 12 to 14 then build on, and it is stated plainly in the second half of verse 11: **"even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11)**.

What it does not prove. Three things.

One. It does not establish anything about the internal relations of God. The verse says the Spirit of God knows the things of God as a man's spirit knows the man's things. That is an analogy about **access to knowledge**, drawn from an everyday fact about persons. To press it into a statement about the constitution of the Godhead is to make the analogy do metaphysical work it was not framed for — and it is worth noticing that the analogy's own human term cuts the other way: a man and his spirit are not two persons. This study makes no argument from the verse in either direction on that question, and a reader who does is going beyond it.

Two. It does not prove that the believer knows what the Spirit knows. The verse says the Spirit knows. Verse 10 said the Spirit reveals. What reaches the believer is the revelation, not the searching. Paul keeps those separate and so should any reading of him.

Three. It does not prove that no unbeliever ever thinks a true thought about God. The scope is *ta tou theou* — "the things of God," in context the hidden wisdom foreordained before the ages. It is not "any fact whatever concerning God." Paul himself says in Romans that God's eternal power and Godhead are **"clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ... so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20)** — a real knowledge, available without the Spirit, and sufficient to leave men accountable. Any reading of 1 Corinthians 2:11 that contradicts Romans 1:20 has over-read it.

Weighing it. Strong inference on what the analogy proves — the *houtos kai* transfers the point explicitly. Direct statement on the three limits, each resting on either the verse's own wording or an explicit verse elsewhere (Romans 1:20). What the opposing reading fairly answers: on limit three, an advocate of a stronger reading will say that Romans 1:20's knowledge is precisely the knowledge that condemns rather than saves, and that 1 Corinthians 2 is about the saving kind — which is right, and is in fact the same distinction drawn from the other side.

In short. The analogy proves that God's thoughts are reached only through God's own Spirit. It does not tell us anything about the Godhead's internal life, it does not hand the believer the Spirit's own searching, and it does not say the unbeliever can know nothing whatever about God.

Chapter 10 — "Not the Spirit of the World, But the Spirit Which Is of God"

> **1 Corinthians 2:12** *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

A. Five occurrences of one word, doing four different jobs

Pneuma occurs five times in 2:10-14, and they are not interchangeable. Setting them out with Bullinger's own classification alongside is the clearest way to see it, and this study adopts his sorting because it is careful, it is argued from the text, and it matches what the passage does:

Verse	The phrase	What it denotes
2:10 (twice)	"by his Spirit" / "the Spirit searcheth"	The Holy Spirit — the Giver, at work
2:11 (first)	"the spirit of man which is in him"	Man's own spirit, psychologically
2:11 (second)	"the Spirit of God"	The Holy Spirit — the Giver
2:12 (first)	"the spirit of the world"	Not the Holy Spirit
2:12 (second)	"the spirit which is of God"	The gift — the new nature
2:13	"which the Holy Ghost teacheth"	The operation of the Holy Spirit
2:14	"the things of the Spirit of God"	The Holy Spirit — the Giver

The single most important line in that table is verse 12's second occurrence. Paul says **"we have received"** it — *elabomen*, aorist, a completed act. The Holy Spirit is not something believers "received" as a possession; He is God. What is received is what God gives. So the phrase **"the spirit which is of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12)** is the gift, and *to pneuma to ek tou theou* — "the spirit, the one out from God" — says so in its own construction: the preposition *ek* marks origin. It came out from God; it is His to give and ours to have received.

Bullinger files this one under his heading "The New Nature," and observes that the Authorized Version of 1611 and the Revised Version both used a small *s* for the first occurrence in the verse and a capital for the second, while "current editions of A.V. have *s* in both cases." The capitalisation is not part of the inspired text either way — Greek manuscripts had no such distinction — but the fact that careful translators have divided over it is a fair indication that the two are not obviously the same thing.

This is the Giver-and-gift distinction that runs through this library's work, and 1 Corinthians 2:12 is one of the clearest places in Scripture where both stand in a single sentence: the Giver is God, and what He gives is spirit out from Himself.

Weighing it. Strong inference. The verb *elabomen*, "we received," is the decisive datum: what is received is a gift, and the preposition *ek* names its source. Corroboration only on Bullinger's classification as such — it is a scholar's sorting, not the text's own label — though the sorting is argued from the text rather than imposed on it. What the opposing reading fairly answers: "received the Spirit" is ordinary New Testament language for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon a believer (Acts 8:15, 8:17, 19:2 all use *lambano* with *pneuma hagion*), so the verb alone does not force the gift reading; and a reader who takes all of 2:10-14's occurrences as the Holy Spirit Himself has not done violence to any of them.

In short. Five occurrences of "spirit" in five verses, and they are not all the same. What "we have received" in verse 12 is a gift out from God, not the Giver Himself.

B. "Not the spirit of the world"

Ou to pneuma tou kosmou. This is the one place in the passage where *kosmos* rather than *aion* stands — the world as an ordered system, not the age as a period. The choice fits: Paul is contrasting two dispositions, two sources of outlook, not two eras.

What is "the spirit of the world"? The text does not define it, and a study should not pretend otherwise. Three readings are available and the evidence does not clearly separate them:

One: the disposition of the world. The cast of mind that belongs to the world-system — its instincts, its valuations, its confidence in its own wisdom. This is how Bullinger takes it, filing it under his psychological heading. On this reading Paul is contrasting the outlook a man absorbs from the world with the new nature God gives.

Two: a personal spirit at work in the world. Paul does write of **"the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2)**, and of **"the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4)**. On this reading "the spirit of the world" is that same influence, and Paul is denying that believers took their outlook from it.

Three: the two together. The world's cast of mind, energised by the power behind the world-system. These are not really rivals; Ephesians 2:2-3 states both in one breath — the prince of the power of the air, **and** "the lusts of our flesh."

This study leaves it open, and marks it as a place where the text underdetermines the answer. What is certain is the function of the clause: it is a denial, set up to make the affirmation that follows sharper. Paul's interest is in where the believer's understanding came **from**, and his answer is: not from there.

Weighing it. The identification of "the spirit of the world" is **Neutral** — the phrase is used once, defined nowhere, and the three readings are all compatible with Paul's usage elsewhere. It is noted here

precisely so that it is not quietly resolved in passing. The **function** of the clause, as the negative half of a contrast, is a direct statement of the sentence's grammar.

In short. Paul denies that the believer's understanding came from the world. What exactly "the spirit of the world" is, he does not say, and this study does not decide.

C. The purpose clause — what the gift is for

Hina eidomen ta hupo tou theou charisthenta hemin — "that we might know the things freely given to us by God."

Three things in that clause.

"That we might know" — *hina* with the subjunctive, a purpose clause. The gift has a stated object. It was not given as an ornament or a credential; it was given so that something would be known. This is the single most practical sentence in the passage.

"Freely given" — *charisthenta*, aorist passive participle of *charizomai*, the verb formed on *charis*, grace. To give as a favour, to grant freely. The King James renders it well. What is known is a set of things **granted as a gift**, and the verb is passive: God did the granting.

"To us" — *hemin*, the same dative that was fronted at verse 10.

Put together, verse 12 says: we received the gift in order that we might know the gifts. And that is the answer to the whole tier question, so far as this study is concerned. The purpose of the thing every believer received is that the believer should know what God has given him. It is not an entrance qualification; it is an instrument of knowledge, aimed at what is already his.

Compare Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, which is the same idea at prayer-length:

> **Ephesians 1:17** *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*
>
> **1:18** *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

Same structure: a spirit of wisdom and revelation, given, **that ye may know** what is already yours. And it is prayed for a whole congregation.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the purpose clause — *hina* with the subjunctive is not ambiguous, and the object of knowing is named in the same breath. Strong inference that this bears against a tier reading: a capacity given to all so that all may know what all have been given is not a grading instrument. What the opposing reading fairly answers: purpose and outcome are different things, and the same gift may be given to all while being used by some and neglected by others — which is, in fact, exactly what 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 describes. That is a real answer, and it means verse 12 settles the question of *possession* rather than the question of *maturity*. This study accepts that limit: the tier that Paul denies is a tier of possession; the difference he affirms is a difference of growth.

In short. The gift was given for a purpose, and the purpose is that believers should know what God has freely given them. That settles who has it. It does not settle who has grown into it.

Chapter 11 — "Comparing Spiritual Things With Spiritual"

> **1 Corinthians 2:13** *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

This is the most technically difficult verse in the passage. It has two problems, and the second of them this study cannot close.

A. "Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth"

Ouk en didaktois anthropines sophias logois, all' en didaktois pneumatos hagiou — "not in words taught of man's wisdom, but in [words] taught of Holy Spirit."

The adjective *didaktos*, Strong's G1318, occurs in only two verses in the whole New Testament, and both are worth having in front of us:

> **John 6:45** *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 2:13** *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

In John 6:45 the phrase is *didaktoi theou*, "taught of God," and it is the Lord's citation of **"And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD" (Isaiah 54:13)**. The construction is the adjective with a genitive naming the teacher.

Paul's construction is the same: *didaktois pneumatos hagiou*, "taught of Holy Spirit," the genitive naming the teacher. Two occurrences in Scripture, both with a genitive of the teacher, both about God's own instruction of His people.

Now the honest qualification, because this study's own standard demands it. John and Paul are two writers, so this is not a same-author idiom; it is a construction shared across two writers, most likely because both stand on the same Old Testament promise. That is weaker than a demonstrated authorial pattern. But it is stronger than a bare word match, because it is the *construction* that matches, not merely the word, and there are only two instances to compare.

What the verse asserts is not that Paul spoke in some ecstatic or non-human language. The verb is *laloumen*, we speak, and he had just said at verse 4 that his speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. The claim is about the source of his wording, not its strangeness. And Paul makes the same claim in plain terms to the same church later: **"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let**

him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37).

There is also a textual note. The Received Text reads *pneumatos hagiou*, "Holy Spirit," and the King James renders "the Holy Ghost." The critical texts read simply *pneumatos*, "Spirit," omitting *hagiou*. Bullinger notes the omission in his own discussion of this verse. Nothing in the argument turns on it; Appendix D records it.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference on the *didaktos* parallel — the construction match is real and the sample is complete, but the two instances are by different writers, which is the limit this library's own standards require naming. Direct statement on what the clause asserts, which is stated in the words themselves. What the opposing reading fairly answers: two occurrences is a very small sample, and a shared construction may reflect a common idiom of the period rather than a deliberate echo of Isaiah 54:13.

In short. "Taught of the Holy Ghost" uses a word found in only one other verse, where it means "taught of God" and cites Isaiah's promise. Paul's claim is about the source of his wording, and he makes it plainly again at 14:37.

B. The fork: "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" — or "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men"?

Pneumatikois pneumatika sunkrinontes.

Two problems at once, and they compound each other.

Problem one: what does the verb mean? *Sunkrino*, Strong's G4793, from *sun*, together, and *krino*, to judge or separate. It occurs in only two verses in the New Testament:

> **1 Corinthians 2:13** *... comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 10:12** *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

In 2 Corinthians 10:12 it occurs twice and plainly means **compare**. That is Paul's only other use, and same-author usage is the standard this library weights above lexical matching. On that standard, "comparing" wins.

But the Greek Old Testament pushes the other way, and it pushes hard. There *sunkrino* is the standard word for **interpreting** a dream:

> **Genesis 40:8** *And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.*

In the Greek of Genesis 40:8 "interpreter" is *ho sunkrinon*; at Genesis 40:16 "he interpreted" is *sunekrinen*; at Genesis 40:22 "as Joseph had interpreted to them" is *katha sunekrinen autois Ioseph*. The

same usage runs through Genesis 41 and into Daniel. Bullinger cites this range and adds Numbers 15:34 and Leviticus 24:12, where the Greek renders the Hebrew *parash*, to declare or make distinct, and concludes that the word "means to communicate, declare, or make known."

So one body of evidence — Paul's own single parallel — says *compare*, and another — the Greek Old Testament Paul read and quoted constantly — says *interpret* or *declare*. Both are real. Neither is decisive.

Problem two: is the dative masculine or neuter? The dative plural of *pneumatikos* is identical in both genders: *pneumatikois*. There is no way to tell from the form. Context must decide, and context is divided:

- **For neuter** ("spiritual things with spiritual"): the immediately preceding word *pneumatika* is accusative plural **neuter** — "spiritual things." A writer who has just used the neuter is likely using the neuter again in the same breath. The parsed Byzantine text with Strong's numbers assigns the dative as neuter here. That assignment, however, is an editor's judgment, not a fact of the form.
- **For masculine** ("spiritual things to spiritual men"): ten verses later Paul uses the identical form for persons — **"I ... could not speak unto you as unto spiritual" (1 Corinthians 3:1)**, *hos pneumatikois*, unmistakably masculine from the context. And at 2:15, two verses on, *ho pneumatikos* is a person. Bullinger states flatly that in 2:13 it "is the Dative plural masculine, and means to spiritual persons." Bishop Pearce rendered it "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men," and the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge records that rendering at this verse.

This is the nearest counter-instance to this study's own reading and it is named here rather than buried: **Paul's next use of this exact form, ten verses later, is masculine and refers to people.** That is a genuine point for the other side and it cannot be talked away.

Where that leaves us. Four combinations are grammatically possible:

Reading	Rendering
compare + neuter	"comparing spiritual things with spiritual things" (King James)
compare + masculine	"comparing spiritual things for spiritual men"
interpret + neuter	"interpreting spiritual things by spiritual means"
interpret + masculine	"explaining spiritual things to spiritual men" (Pearce, Bullinger)

The first and the fourth are the live options. This study declines to decide between them, and says why: the same-author evidence favours "compare," the Old Testament evidence favours "interpret," and the gender is formally undeterminable with a strong contextual pointer in each direction. A study that claimed to settle this would be claiming more than the evidence supplies.

What can be said is that **nothing in the passage's argument changes either way.** On the King James reading, Paul says his method is to set spiritual things beside spiritual things — which is exactly the principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture that this library works by, and is a real and useful

statement of method. On the Pearce and Bullinger reading, Paul says his audience is those who have the Spirit — which is what verse 14 says in the next breath anyway. The verse points forward to verse 14 on either construction.

Weighing it. Neutral, deliberately and explicitly. This is a place where two honest readings stand and the text does not choose. It is included in Appendix A as a Neutral entry precisely so that no later version of this study quietly promotes one of them. What each reading fairly answers is set out above; neither has an answer that closes the other.

In short. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" or "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men" — the Greek permits both, the evidence is genuinely split, and this study does not decide. Nothing in the passage's argument depends on which is right.

C. A note on the figure

Whatever the construction, verse 13 ends with three words built on the same root in three different forms, and then verse 14 adds a fourth:

- *pneumatikois* — dative plural adjective
- *pneumatika* — accusative plural adjective
- (2:14) *pneumatikos* — the adverb, "spiritually"
- (2:15) *pneumatikos* — nominative singular adjective, "he that is spiritual"

Four inflections of one root in three verses. Bullinger's catalogue names this figure *Polyptoton*, "many inflections" — the repetition of the same word in different grammatical forms, used for emphasis. Nessle's work on repetition, also in this library, would call the clustering a concentration signal: where a term and its family pile up unusually densely, that density marks what the passage is fundamentally about.

Both observations point the same way, and it is worth saying: the subject of 2:13-15 is not two classes of people. It is the adverb — the *manner* in which these things are handled. Spiritual things, handled spiritually, by those who have the Spirit.

Weighing it. Corroboration only. Identifying a figure of speech is an interpretive act, and a cluster of cognates can be nothing more than a writer using the only available vocabulary for his subject — there is no other Greek word for "spiritual." The observation is offered as a reading, not as evidence.

In short. Four forms of one word in three verses. Whatever else the cluster does, it marks the subject: spiritual things, spiritually handled.

Chapter 12 — "The Natural Man Receiveth Not"

> **1 Corinthians 2:14** *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Four clauses, and each needs its own handling. The whole verse hangs on one adjective.

A. *Psuchikos* — "natural" — and its five occurrences

The Greek is *psuchikos de anthropos*, Strong's G5591. It is the adjective formed on *psuche*, soul — the word behind "psyche" and "psychology." A strictly literal rendering would be "the soulish man," or "the soul-man." The King James's "natural" is a fair attempt at an English word that does not exist.

It occurs in five verses in the New Testament, and the set is small enough to put in full:

> **1 Corinthians 2:14** *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 15:44** *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 15:46** *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.*
>
> **James 3:15** *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*
>
> **Jude 1:19** *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

The King James renders it "natural" three times and "sensual" twice, and marks the margin at James 3:15 with "sensual: or, natural."

Three of the five are Paul's, and in every one of Paul's the word is set directly against *pneumatikos*, spiritual. In 15:44 and 15:46 the pair describes two kinds of **body**: the body as it now is, animated by soul-life, and the body as it will be raised, animated by spirit. Paul then explains the pairing:

> **1 Corinthians 15:45** *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

There is the key. *Psuchikos* is the Adam word. It describes what man is as a **living soul** — Genesis 2:7's *nephesh chayyah* — considered without the further thing God gives. It is not a word of moral condemnation. It is a word of constitution: this is what a man is, on his own.

Weighing it. Strong inference. Paul explicitly grounds the *psuchikos/pneumatikos* pair in the Adam of Genesis 2:7 at 15:45, and uses the pair consistently in all three of his occurrences. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 15:44-46 is about bodies at the resurrection, which is a different subject from 2:14's man and his reception of truth, so the transfer from one to the other is an inference rather than a statement.

In short. *Psuchikos* is the soul-word. It describes man as a living soul — what Adam was made — considered apart from what God gives on top of that.

B. Jude supplies the definition in one clause

The most useful verse in Scripture for this word is not in Paul at all:

> **Jude 1:19** *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

Psuchikoi, pneuma me echontes — soulish, **not having spirit**. Jude puts the adjective and its definition side by side in four Greek words.

That is a one-verse lexicon entry, and it settles a question that has produced a great deal of heat. The *psuchikos* man is not defined by the depth of his depravity. He is defined by an absence: he has not the spirit. Whatever else is true of him, the reason he does not receive the things of the Spirit of God is that he lacks the faculty by which they are received.

Bullinger, in his classified list, files Jude 19's *pneuma* under the same heading as 1 Corinthians 2:12's second occurrence — "The New Nature." On that reading Jude 19 and 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 are describing the same thing from the two sides: verse 12's believers **received** the spirit which is of God; verse 14's man has **not** got it, and Jude says so in as many words.

James, from a third writer, uses the word of a kind of wisdom rather than a kind of man, and the parallel to 1 Corinthians 2 is striking:

> **James 3:15** *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*
>
> **3:17** *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

Two wisdoms, one from above and one *psuchike*. That is Paul's structure in 1 Corinthians 1-2, arrived at independently by another apostle. And James's context is the same as Paul's: he is writing about **"bitter envying and strife in your hearts" (James 3:14)**, which is precisely what Paul names as the Corinthians' carnality at **"envying, and strife, and divisions" (1 Corinthians 3:3)**.

Weighing it. Direct statement on Jude 19 — the definition is in the verse, not inferred from it. Strong inference that Jude's *psuchikos* and Paul's are the same category, since the word is rare, the definition fits Paul's usage exactly, and Paul's own contrast term is the thing Jude says is absent. Corroboration only on James 3:15-17, which is a different writer on a related subject and is offered as independent support rather than as proof of Paul's meaning. What the opposing reading fairly answers: Jude and Paul are different writers, and Jude's men are apostates rather than ordinary unbelievers, so the definition may be narrower than Paul's use.

In short. Jude defines the word in four Greek words: soulish men, not having spirit. The *psuchikos* man is described by what he lacks, not by how bad he is.

C. "Receiveth not" — and then "neither can he know"

Paul says two different things about this man, in two different verbs, and they are not the same claim.

"Receiveth not" — *ou dechetai*, present middle indicative of *dechomai*: to receive, to welcome, to take to oneself. This is a verb of willing reception, of welcoming a guest or accepting an offer. It is not a verb of physical capacity. The man does not welcome these things. And Paul gives the reason in the same

breath: *moria gar auto estin* — "for they are foolishness to him." It is not that he cannot hear them; it is that when he hears them they sound absurd.

That takes us straight back to **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:18)**, the same noun *moria*, sixteen verses earlier. The two verses close a circle: 1:18 reports the phenomenon, 2:14 gives the reason.

"Neither can he know them" — *kai ou dunatai gnonai*: and he is not able to come to know. Here is the capacity word, *dunamai*, and it is stronger than the first clause. Paul is not softening. He says it is beyond the man's power.

And then the reason: *hoti pneumatikos anakrinetai*, "because they are spiritually examined." The adverb *pneumatikos* occurs only twice in Scripture — here and at **"which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt" (Revelation 11:8)**, where it means "in a spiritual sense." Here it means "in the spiritual manner," or "by spiritual means." The things of the Spirit are appraised by a spiritual faculty, and the man who has not got that faculty cannot perform the appraisal, any more than a man without ears can assess a chord.

That is the force of the analogy in verse 11 arriving at its destination. Knowledge of a mind requires that mind's own participation. God's things are known by God's Spirit. A man without that Spirit is simply not equipped for this class of object.

Weighing it. Direct statement on both verbs and the stated reasons — Paul supplies the reason for each clause in the same sentence. What the opposing reading fairly answers: nothing on the exegesis; the disputes about this verse are about its scope, which is the next section.

In short. Two claims, not one. He does not welcome them, because they sound like nonsense to him. And he cannot know them, because knowing them takes an instrument he has not got.

D. What this verse does not say — three limits

This is the verse in the passage most often stretched, so the limits are worth stating carefully, each with the text that sets it.

One: it is not about intelligence. Paul has already said that the men with every intellectual advantage of the age missed it (2:8), and that God deliberately chose **"the foolish things of the world" (1 Corinthians 1:27)**. The incapacity is not mental. A brilliant man and a dull one are equally *psuchikos* until God gives.

Two: it is not a statement that the unbeliever can know nothing true about God at all. The object of "receiveth not" is *ta tou pneumatos tou theou*, "the things of the Spirit of God" — the same phrase as the "things of God" in verse 11, which in this context is the hidden wisdom of verse 7. Romans 1:20 stands: **"the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20)**. There is a knowledge available to all men and sufficient to leave them without excuse. 1 Corinthians 2:14 is not about that knowledge.

Three: it is not a permanent sentence. This is the most important limit and the most often forgotten. If it were permanent, no one could ever be saved, and Paul's own labour would be pointless — he would be preaching to men constitutionally unable to receive anything he said. Paul plainly did not think that. He says **"how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14)**, and he spent his life on the answer. The *psuchikos* condition is the condition of a man who has not received; it describes a present state, not a fixed destiny.

What removes it is not education and not effort. It is the gift of verse 12: "we have received." That is the doorway, and the door is the gospel plainly preached — which is exactly what Paul says he did at Corinth, in weakness and fear and trembling, determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Weighing it. Direct statement on limits one and two, each resting on explicit verses. Strong inference on limit three: it follows necessarily from the fact that believers were once *psuchikoi* and are not now, which verse 12's "we have received" implies, though Paul does not say it in those words in this passage. What the opposing reading fairly answers — and here the opposing reading is a doctrinal one rather than an exegetical one — is that the removal of the condition must itself be God's act rather than the man's decision, since a man who cannot know cannot choose to know. That is a real question and it is outside the scope of this study; 1 Corinthians 2:14 states the condition and does not describe the transition out of it.

In short. Not a statement about intelligence, not a denial of all knowledge of God, and not a life sentence. It describes the state of a man who has not received, and the whole point of the passage is that receiving is possible.

E. Why this verse is the hinge of the practical argument

Step back and see what Paul has done to the Corinthians with this verse.

They were ranking preachers by eloquence and wisdom — the very standards of "this age." Paul has now told them that the standards they are using belong to a category of man that cannot even perceive the subject matter. He has not called them *psuchikoi*; three verses later he calls them *sarkikoi*, carnal, which is a different and gentler word for believers behaving as though they were not. But he has shown them that their measuring stick was made in a workshop that cannot see the thing being measured.

That is the practical point, and it is why the passage is in this letter and not somewhere else. It is not a lecture on epistemology. It is the demolition of a congregation's grading system.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. Paul does not state this connection; it is drawn from the placement of 2:14 between the argument about wisdom and the rebuke of 3:1-4. What the opposing reading fairly answers: the verse reads perfectly well as a general doctrinal statement with no special reference to the Corinthian quarrel, and Paul may simply be completing his argument before turning to application at 3:1.

In short. Paul is telling a church that grades its teachers by worldly standards that those standards were built by people who cannot see the subject.

Chapter 13 — "He That Is Spiritual Judgeth All Things"

> **1 Corinthians 2:15** *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*

This verse has done more damage in the hands of confident men than any other in the passage. It has been used to place a teacher, a leader, or a movement beyond correction. What follows is what the words actually say, and the control Paul himself supplies two chapters later.

A. "Judgeth" — the word is not what English suggests

The verb is *anakrino*, Strong's G350, three times in two verses: *anakrinei* here, *anakrinetai* here and at the end of verse 14. The King James margin at verse 15 offers, for both occurrences, "or, discerneth" and "or, discerned" — the translators themselves flagged that "judge" was not quite it.

Anakrino is *ana* (up, through) plus *krino* (to judge, separate, decide). It means to examine, to sift, to investigate — in Greek usage very often the **preliminary** judicial examination that precedes a verdict, not the verdict itself. Luke uses it exactly that way throughout Acts:

> **Luke 23:14** *Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:*
>
> **Acts 4:9** *If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;*
>
> **Acts 12:19** *And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death …*
>
> **Acts 24:8** *Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.*
>
> **Acts 28:18** *Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.*

And once, memorably, of something that is not judicial at all:

> **Acts 17:11** *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

"Searched the scriptures daily" is *anakrinontes tas graphas* — the Bereans were doing *anakrino* to the Old Testament, and Luke commends them for it. That is the flavour of the word: careful, sifting examination to find out whether a thing is so.

Paul uses it ten times, and six of them are in 1 Corinthians outside our passage:

> **1 Corinthians 4:3** *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.*
>
> **4:4** *For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*
>
> **9:3** *Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,*
>
> **10:25** *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:*
>
> **10:27** *If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*
>
> **14:24** *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:*

At 10:25 and 10:27 the King James renders it "asking no question" — investigating, enquiring into. That is the word.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the word's range, which is established by ten Pauline occurrences across eight verses and six more in Luke and Acts, and confirmed by the King James translators' own margin. What the opposing reading fairly answers: examination and verdict shade into each other, and 4:4's "he that judgeth me is the Lord" does carry verdict-force, so the distinction should not be made absolute.

In short. *Anakrino* is sifting examination, not passing sentence. The Bereans did it to the Scriptures and Luke called them noble for it.

B. "All things" — and what the spiritual man is actually doing

Anakrinei men panta — "examines indeed all things." The Received Text has *men* ("indeed"), the critical text *ta panta*; nothing turns on it.

Read with the right sense of the verb, the claim is not that the spiritual man pronounces judgment on everything. It is that there is nothing in this whole field that is closed to his examination — because he has the instrument. Verse 14 said the *psuchikos* man **cannot** perform the appraisal. Verse 15 is the other side of that sentence: the man who has the Spirit **can**.

Paul expects this of ordinary believers and says so repeatedly, using related words:

> **1 Thessalonians 5:21** *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 14:29** *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 5:12** *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?*
>
> **Galatians 6:1** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

1 Thessalonians 5:21's "prove" is *dokimazete*, and 1 Corinthians 14:29's "judge" is *diakrinetosan* — different words from *anakrino*, and the study does not claim they are the same word. What it claims is the same expectation: the congregation is repeatedly told to weigh, test and sift, which is impossible if the faculty belongs to a few.

Galatians 6:1 is the most useful of the four, because it uses the same noun as 2:15 — *hoi pneumatikoi*, "ye which are spiritual" — and addresses it to a whole congregation, giving them a job that requires exactly this discernment, and warning them in the same breath to watch themselves. That is the tone of the New Testament's spiritual man: competent to examine, and required to be careful.

Weighing it. Strong inference. Galatians 6:1 uses the identical word of a whole congregation and assigns them the work, which is a same-author use of the key term against the elitist reading. What the opposing reading fairly answers: Galatians 6:1's "ye which are spiritual" may itself be marking out a subset within the Galatian churches — the phrase does not say "all of you" — which would make it evidence for the other side rather than against it. That is a fair reading of the Greek, and the verse is therefore not decisive on its own.

In short. The spiritual man can examine anything in this field, because he has the instrument the natural man lacks. Paul tells whole congregations to do exactly this.

C. "Yet he himself is judged of no man" — the clause that gets abused

Autos de hup' oudenos anakrinetai — "but he himself is examined by no one."

Taken bare, this sounds like a claim of immunity. It has been used that way. Three things prevent it.

First, the parallelism. The sentence is one thought in two halves, and the second half is governed by the first. The spiritual man examines all things *in this field* — the things of the Spirit of God. He is not examined *in this field* by the man who cannot see it. That is the contrast Paul has been drawing since verse 14, and reading the second half more widely than the first breaks the sentence.

Second, and decisively, Paul says the opposite about himself two chapters later, using the same verb.

> **1 Corinthians 4:3** *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.*
>
> **4:4** *For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*
>
> **4:5** *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

Paul, who is if anyone is *ho pneumatikos*, says plainly: **"he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:4)** — *ho de anakrinon me kurios estin*, the same verb. He is not exempt from examination; he is answerable to a higher examiner than the Corinthians. And he refuses to exempt even his own self-assessment: "I judge not mine own self… I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified." A clear conscience does not acquit him.

That is the control, and it is internal to the letter. Whatever 2:15 means, it cannot mean that a spiritual man is beyond examination, because Paul denies exactly that of himself in the same letter with the same word.

Third, Paul subjects his own teaching to a test. He tells the Thessalonians to prove all things, tells the Corinthians that the prophets' words are to be weighed by the others (14:29), and points the Corinthians back to a fixed standard: **"that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written" (1 Corinthians 4:6)**. "That which is written" is the measure, and it is public.

Weighing it. Strong inference, close to direct statement. The argument does not rest on reading 2:15 in a particular way; it rests on Paul saying, two chapters later, in the same letter, with the same verb, that he himself is examined by the Lord and that the Corinthians must not think of men above what is written. A reading of 2:15 that contradicts 4:3-6 is a reading that makes Paul contradict himself within two chapters. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 4:3 concerns Paul's ministry and stewardship specifically, and one could hold that 2:15 makes a narrower claim about spiritual **discernment** while 4:3 concerns **faithfulness in office** — two different objects of examination. That is a coherent distinction and it does blunt the argument, though it does not remove the plain force of "he that judgeth me is the Lord."

In short. Paul says in the same letter, with the same verb, that he himself is examined — by the Lord, not by the Corinthians. Verse 15 cannot mean what men have used it to mean, because chapter 4 forbids it.

D. One more control: the unbeliever examined, and by whom

There is a small and easily missed confirmation eleven chapters later:

> **1 Corinthians 14:24** *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:*

"He is judged of all" is *anakrinetai hupo panton* — the same verb, in the same passive form as 2:15, with the unbeliever as its object and **all** the prophesying believers as its agents. So the pattern Paul describes in 2:14-15 he expects to see happening in an actual meeting: the spiritual do the examining, the one who has not received is examined, and the examiners are "all," not a few.

Weighing it. Strong inference. Identical verb, identical passive form, same letter, and the agents are explicitly "all." What the opposing reading fairly answers: 14:24's "all" refers to all who prophesy, which is a defined group within the meeting rather than the whole congregation. That is correct as far as it goes, though 14:31's **"for ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Corinthians 14:31)** widens it again.

In short. Paul uses the same word and form eleven chapters later of an unbeliever walking into a meeting and being sifted by "all." The examining is congregational.

E. What the verse is for

Read in its place, 2:15 is not a charter. It is the positive half of a contrast whose negative half is 2:14, and its practical purpose in the letter is to tell a squabbling congregation that they have, every one of them,

the instrument they need — and by implication that their preference for Paul or Apollos or Cephas is not a use of it.

The sting is in what Paul says next. He has just described the spiritual man who sifts everything. Then: **"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1)**. He describes the capacity and then tells them they were not using it. That is the argument, and any reading of 2:15 that leaves a man feeling exempt has landed on the opposite side of Paul's point from where Paul put it.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference on the rhetorical purpose, which is drawn from the placement rather than stated by Paul. What the opposing reading fairly answers: the sequence 2:15 to 3:1 can as easily be read as Paul distinguishing himself and the *pneumatikoi* from the Corinthians, which is the graded reading.

In short. Paul describes the instrument, then tells them they were not using it. That is what verse 15 is doing in the letter.

Chapter 14 — "But We Have the Mind of Christ"

> **1 Corinthians 2:16** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

The passage ends where it has been heading since verse 6. Paul quotes an Old Testament question that expects the answer "nobody," and then answers it.

A. The quotation, and a detail worth the whole chapter

The verse quoted is Isaiah 40:13. Here it is in the King James, and here is the Greek Old Testament of it:

> **Isaiah 40:13** *Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?*

The Greek Old Testament reads: *tis egno noun Kuriou, kai tis autou sumboulos egeneto, hos sumbiba auton?* — "Who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has been his counsellor, who shall instruct him?"

Three clauses:

1. *tis egno noun Kuriou* — who has known the mind of the Lord
2. *kai tis autou sumboulos egeneto* — and who has been his counsellor
3. *hos sumbiba auton* — who shall instruct him

Now here is the detail. **Paul quotes this verse twice, and each time he takes a different pair of its clauses.**

> **Romans 11:34** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?*

> **1 Corinthians 2:16** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

Romans 11:34 in Greek is *tis gar egno noun kuriou? e tis sumboulos autou egeneto?* — clauses **one and two**.

1 Corinthians 2:16 is *tis gar egno noun kuriou, hos sumbibasei auton?* — clauses **one and three**.

Same opening, then a fork. In Romans he keeps the counsellor and drops the instructor; in 1 Corinthians he keeps the instructor and drops the counsellor. That is not sloppiness; it is a man handling a text he knows well, taking from it what each argument needs.

And there is more. In Romans, Paul asks the question and lets it stand unanswered — the whole passage is a doxology of God's unsearchableness:

> **Romans 11:33** *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*
>
> **11:34** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?*
>
> **11:35** *Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*
>
> **11:36** *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

Three unanswerable questions in a row, and then worship. In 1 Corinthians, Paul asks the same question and **answers it in the next clause**: "But we have the mind of Christ."

The same man, the same verse, the opposite conclusion. And the reason for the difference is the whole of 1 Corinthians 2:10-12. In Romans 11 Paul is speaking of what man can reach; in 1 Corinthians 2 he is speaking of what God has given.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the textual facts — the three clauses of Isaiah 40:13 in the Greek Old Testament, and Paul's two different selections from them, were verified word by word against the texts, and anyone may check them. Strong inference on what the difference means, since Paul supplies the reason himself in the surrounding verses of each passage. What the opposing reading fairly answers: a writer quoting from memory may simply recall different parts on different occasions without design, and the two contexts do differ enough that no deliberate contrast need be intended. That is possible; but the two passages share *bathos*, share the *ereunao* root, and share this quotation, which makes coincidence a strain.

In short. Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 twice. In Romans he takes the first two clauses and leaves the question hanging. Here he takes the first and third and answers it.

B. "Mind" in the Greek, "Spirit" in the Hebrew

There is a second detail in this verse and it is the most elegant thing in the passage.

The Hebrew of Isaiah 40:13 does not say "mind." It says *ruach YHWH* — **the Spirit of the LORD**. The King James renders the Hebrew faithfully: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD." The Greek Old Testament renders *ruach* by *nous*, mind, and it is that Greek form Paul quotes.

Now look at what Paul has just spent six verses saying. Verse 10: the **Spirit** searches the deep things of God. Verse 11: the things of God knows no man but the **Spirit** of God. Verse 12: we have received the **spirit** which is of God. Verse 13: the words which the Holy **Ghost** teacheth. Verse 14: the things of the **Spirit** of God.

Then verse 16 quotes a verse which in Hebrew asks "who has directed the **Spirit** of the LORD?" and in Greek asks "who has known the **mind** of the Lord?" — and Paul answers with "we have the **mind** of Christ."

The two halves of the passage are held together by the very verse Paul ends on. The Spirit of the Lord that no man directed is the mind of the Lord that no man knew; and the answer to both is that God has given His Spirit, and with it His mind.

This is not a claim that Paul chose the Greek version in order to make this point — there is no way to know that, and the Greek Old Testament was simply the text he and his readers used. It is a claim about what the finished sentence does, which can be seen by anyone who lays the Hebrew, the Greek and Paul's argument side by side.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the texts: the Hebrew has *ruach*, the Greek has *nous*, and Paul follows the Greek. Both were checked. Reasonable inference on the significance — the convergence is real and it is striking, but Paul does not comment on it, and a writer using the ordinary Greek Bible of his readers need not be exploiting a difference he may not have been thinking about. Offered as an observation about the shape of the finished argument, not as a claim about Paul's intention.

In short. Isaiah asks who directed the Spirit of the LORD; the Greek renders it the mind of the Lord; Paul, having spent six verses on the Spirit, answers with the mind. The passage's two words meet in the verse it closes with.

C. *Nous* — and what it is not

Nous, Strong's G3563, occurs twenty-two times, twenty-one of them in Paul and Revelation. It is the mind as the faculty of understanding and judgment — the perceiving, reasoning, deciding part.

The most useful comparison for our verse is this one:

> **Romans 12:2** *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Three of 1 Corinthians 2's key words are in that single verse. "This world" is *to aioni touto*, this **age** — the word of 2:6. "Mind" is *noos*, the word of 2:16. "Perfect" is *teleion*, the word of 2:6. And the purpose clause — "that ye may prove" — is *dokimazein*, the testing word, which is the practical equivalent of 2:15's examining.

Romans 12:2 is therefore the working instructions for 1 Corinthians 2:16. Having the mind of Christ is not a static possession to be announced; it is a mind under renewal, by which a believer tests and proves what God's will is. And Romans 12:2 is addressed to a whole church, in the imperative, as something they are to let happen to them.

Now two things *nous* is not, and both are worth saying because both are common.

It is not Philippians 2:5. The famous verse **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5)** does not contain *nous*. The Greek is *touto phroneistho en humin* — a verb, *phroneo*, to be minded, to have an attitude or disposition. Philippians 2:5 is about **attitude**, and its content is the humility of the following verses. 1 Corinthians 2:16 is about **understanding**. They are complementary and they are not the same verse, and a study that runs them together has lost a distinction Paul kept.

It is not Romans 8:5-7 either. Those verses use *phronema*, the noun from the same *phroneo* root: **"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6)**, where the King James margin reads "Gr. the minding of the flesh" and "Gr. the minding of the Spirit." Again disposition, not the faculty.

So 1 Corinthians 2:16's nearest Pauline relative, by word, is Romans 12:2's renewed *nous*. That is the comparison to work from.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the word counts and on the fact that Philippians 2:5 and Romans 8:6 use a different root — this is simply what the Greek texts read, and all three were checked. Strong inference that Romans 12:2 is the nearest parallel, since it shares three of the passage's key terms with 2:6-16. What the opposing reading fairly answers: *nous* and *phronema* overlap substantially in Paul's usage and the distinction should not be made absolute; Philippians 2:5 and 1 Corinthians 2:16 may well describe one reality under two aspects.

In short. "Mind" here is the understanding, not the attitude. Philippians 2:5 is a different word and a different point. The verse to read alongside 2:16 is Romans 12:2 — a mind under renewal, testing what God's will is.

D. "We have" — and what that claim amounts to

Hemeis de noun Christou echomen. We, on the other hand, have Christ's mind.

Three observations, in ascending order of importance.

One: the verb is present and plain. *Echomen*, we have. Not "we shall have," not "we are attaining." It is stated as a present possession.

Two: there is no article. The Greek is *noun Christou*, "mind of Christ," without the definite article. Greek often omits the article where the noun is qualified by a genitive, so this should not be over-pressed; but it does slightly favour the sense "we have Christ's mind" as a characterisation rather than "we possess the entirety of Christ's mind" as a quantity.

Three, and most importantly: the claim is not what it is usually taken for. To have the mind of Christ is not to be incapable of error. Paul, who wrote the sentence, corrected Peter to his face (Galatians 2:11), had a dispute so sharp with Barnabas that they parted (Acts 15:39), and told the Corinthians two chapters later that he did not even trust his own clear conscience to acquit him (1 Corinthians 4:4). The mind of Christ, in the hands of the man who claimed it, did not produce a man who thought himself beyond examination. It produced a man who submitted himself to the Lord's examination and pointed his readers to what is written.

What the claim amounts to is this: the believer has been given access to the thinking of God on the matter that counts. Not omniscience, not inerrancy, not exemption — access, by the Spirit, to the wisdom that the age's own rulers could not reach. And because the verse is the conclusion of the argument that began at verse 6, its "we" should be read by the argument it concludes: a wisdom spoken among the grown, revealed by the Spirit, received by those who received the gift, with the Corinthians told twelve verses later that they had the standing and had not yet grown into it.

Weighing it. Direct statement on the verb and the absence of the article. Strong inference that the claim excludes infallibility — Galatians 2:11, Acts 15:39 and 1 Corinthians 4:4 are explicit, and all three concern the man making the claim. What the opposing reading fairly answers: none of those three cases is about *doctrinal* error, and an advocate could hold that the mind of Christ guarantees right understanding while leaving room for failures of temper and judgment. That is a real distinction; the answer to it is that 1 Corinthians 4:4 is about Paul's own self-assessment in general, and that 4:6's appeal to "that which is written" sets a standard outside the claimant.

In short. "We have the mind of Christ" is a present possession and an access, not an immunity. The man who wrote it also wrote that the Lord examines him and that nobody should think of men above what is written.

E. The one sentence that follows

The last thing to say about verse 16 is what Paul said after it. There is no break in the Greek; the chapter division is a later convenience.

> **1 Corinthians 3:1** *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

"We have the mind of Christ. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual."

Whatever else that juxtaposition does, it forbids the triumphalist reading. Paul has just made the highest claim in the passage and immediately turns it into a rebuke — not "you do not have this" but "you were not able to bear it." The possession is theirs; the growth was not.

Weighing it. Strong inference. The absence of a break is a fact of the text; the reading of the juxtaposition is an inference, but a short one. What the opposing reading fairly answers: as noted at Chapter 2 §C, 3:1 can be read as Paul distinguishing himself and the spiritual from the Corinthians, which

would make the juxtaposition support the graded reading. This study's answer is 3:16 and 6:19: the Corinthians had the Spirit, and Paul rebukes them on that ground.

In short. The sentence immediately after "we have the mind of Christ" is "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual." The claim and the rebuke are one breath apart, and that is how Paul meant them to be read.

Chapter 15 — Where the Passage Sits in the Administrations

This chapter reads 2:6-16 against the framework of the seven administrations — the sevenfold division of biblical history worked out separately in this library, each administration opening with an audible declaration from God establishing new governing terms: Eden, Patriarchal, Mosaic Law, Christ, Grace, the Day of Wrath, and the Day of Judgment.

The chapter has two halves. The first sets out what the passage genuinely contributes to that framework. The second sets out, at equal length, what it does not — because the temptation with a passage this rich is to make it prove more of a system than it does.

A. "Before the ages" and "the purpose of the ages"

Chapter 5 established the textual facts. They are worth restating in one place because they are the substance of this chapter's positive claim.

Paul's word for God's plan is built on the word for ages. At **"according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11)** the Greek is *kata prothesin ton aionon* — the purpose of the ages. And the mystery is dated relative to those ages at every turn: foreordained *pro ton aionon*, before the ages (1 Corinthians 2:7); hidden *apo ton aionon*, from the ages (Ephesians 3:9); hidden from the ages and from the generations (Colossians 1:26); kept silent *chronois aioniois*, through age-long times (Romans 16:25); the grace given *pro chronon aionion*, before age-long times (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2).

That is a consistent vocabulary, and what it describes is a plan that unfolds through a succession of periods, with a portion held in reserve. Paul does not say "God had a plan and now He has revealed it." He says the plan ran through ages, was silent through them, and is spoken now.

The seven-administration framework is one attempt to identify those periods from Scripture's own markers. Whether that particular division is right is a separate question, worked out in its own study. What 1 Corinthians 2:7 contributes is the underlying principle the division depends on: that God's dealings are periodised, that the periods have boundaries, and that what is disclosed differs from one to another.

Weighing it. Strong inference. The vocabulary is verified and consistent across six passages, and Ephesians 3:11 names the plan by the ages. What the opposing reading fairly answers: *aion* language can be read as a Hebraic way of saying "for ever" and "from eternity," in which case the periodising is an artefact of translating literally, and Ephesians 3:11's "eternal purpose" is exactly how the King James took it. That is a real answer and it is why this is inference rather than statement.

In short. Paul's own name for God's plan is "the purpose of the ages," and he dates the mystery by the ages at every turn. The plan runs through periods.

B. The mystery is the content of Grace, not a period of its own

This is the point at which the passage speaks most directly into the framework, and it speaks by way of a negative.

1 Corinthians 2:7 says the wisdom was foreordained before the ages and is now spoken. Ephesians 3:5 says it **"in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed" (Ephesians 3:5)**. Colossians 1:26 says it was **"hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints" (Colossians 1:26)**.

A reader could take that "now" as marking a new administrative boundary — a fresh period beginning when the mystery was disclosed. The seven-administration study considered that question at length and settled it the other way, and the passage before us supports that settlement rather than undermining it.

The reason is this. On the framework's own test, an administration begins with an audible declaration from God establishing new governing terms. The disclosure of the mystery has no such declaration. Paul says he received it **"by revelation" (Ephesians 3:3)** — privately, to one man, without a public utterance of the kind that marks the other boundaries. And 1 Corinthians 2:7 does not present the mystery as a new arrangement at all. It presents it as **the content of a wisdom** — something spoken, understood, and believed, not a new set of terms on which God deals with men.

So the mystery is what the Grace administration contains, not a sub-administration inside it. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 is describing the depths of an arrangement already in force, not the inauguration of another one.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. The argument works by applying the framework's own criterion to this passage, and depends on that criterion being right — which is a matter for that study, not this one. What the opposing reading fairly answers: Ephesians 3:2 speaks of **"the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward" (Ephesians 3:2)** and Colossians 1:25 of **"the dispensation of God which is given to me for you" (Colossians 1:25)**, using *oikonomia*, the administration word, of Paul's own stewardship — which an advocate can read as marking a distinct arrangement committed to Paul. That is a serious argument and this study does not claim to have closed it.

In short. The mystery is the content of the Grace administration, not a period of its own. Nothing in 1 Corinthians 2 opens an administration; it describes the depths of one already running.

C. "The princes of this age... being brought to nought"

Chapter 3 established that *katargoumenon* is a present passive participle and that Paul's dominant use of *katargeo* is the winding-up of a superseded arrangement — four times in 2 Corinthians 3 of the Mosaic ministration, three of those in this very participial form.

That is the passage's second contribution to the framework, and it is a modest one. It says that the order to which the rulers of this age belong is, as Paul writes, already being put out of commission. It does not say when the winding-up completes; Paul says elsewhere that **"then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24)**, which is a future completion of the same process.

So the present participle at 2:6 and the future subjunctive at 15:24 describe one action at two stages. The rulers' order is being wound up now and will be put down then. Anyone working with administrations will recognise the shape: a superseded arrangement that has lost its authority before it has lost its existence, exactly as the law had at 2 Corinthians 3:11 — **"For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" (2 Corinthians 3:11)**.

Weighing it. Reasonable inference. The participle is a fact; the linking of 2:6 to 15:24 as two stages of one process is an inference, and 15:24 uses *arche* rather than *archon*, so the two verses are not speaking of precisely the same subjects. What the opposing reading fairly answers: 2:6's rulers and 15:24's "rule and authority and power" may be different things altogether, and the parallel may be no more than two uses of a common verb.

In short. The rulers' order is already being wound up and will be finally put down. That is the shape of every administrative boundary in Scripture.

D. What this passage does not establish

Four things, stated plainly, because a study that only harvests support from a passage is not reading it.

One: it does not name any administration. The word *oikonomia* does not occur in 1 Corinthians 2. The passage supplies the raw material of periodisation — ages, a plan across them, something held back — and no more. Anyone quoting 2:7 as though it identified a dispensation is quoting a verse that does not mention one.

Two: it does not date anything. "Before the ages" gives no date and no count. It does not say how many ages there are, when they begin, or where their boundaries fall. Every one of those questions has to be answered from elsewhere.

Three: it does not tell us which age is "this age." Verse 6 says the rulers of *this* age, and the natural reading is the age in which Paul wrote and in which his readers lived. But Paul wrote after Pentecost, so "this age" as he uses it here cannot be simply equated with any one administration without further argument — the rulers who crucified Christ belonged to the arrangement that preceded the one Paul was writing under. The phrase is elastic in Paul's hands: at **"who gave himself for our sins, that he might**

deliver us from this present evil world" (Galatians 1:4) the same word describes the present order that believers are delivered from, which is a moral characterisation more than a chronological one.

Four: nothing in the passage requires seven of anything. That number comes from a different study's reading of different texts. This passage is entirely compatible with it and supplies no independent support for it.

Weighing it. Direct statement on all four — each is a statement of what the passage does not contain, verifiable by reading it. This section is a limitation, not an argument.

In short. The passage gives the principle that God's plan runs through periods with different disclosures. It gives no names, no dates, no count, and no boundaries. Those come from elsewhere or not at all.

Chapter 16 — What Would Change My Mind

A study that cannot say what would falsify it is not making a claim; it is stating a preference. This chapter names the specific findings that would overturn this study's central position, says whether any of them exists, and then lists the points on which it has already conceded.

The central position, stated in one sentence so that there is something definite to falsify: **1 Corinthians 2:6-16 describes a wisdom hidden through the ages and now disclosed by God's Spirit to believers as such, received by every believer as a gift and taken in according to each believer's growth — not a body of teaching reserved to a class within the church.**

A. Three findings that would overturn it

One. A place where Paul withholds the mystery from believers as a matter of policy rather than of capacity.

If Paul anywhere says, or clearly implies, that there is a body of Christian teaching he keeps from some believers because they are not entitled to it — not because they cannot yet take it in — the case collapses. The distinction is between "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual" (capacity) and "I may not speak unto you" (entitlement).

Does it exist? No. The nearest candidate is 1 Corinthians 3:2, and it says the opposite: **"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 3:2)**. The stated reason is inability, and the same figure in Hebrews 5:12-14 is likewise about capacity, with the writer blaming his readers for not having grown — which would make no sense if the barrier were a rule. And Paul's stated wish about the mystery runs the other way: **"that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19)**.

Two. Evidence that the word "perfect" in Paul carries the sense of an initiated class rather than a grown believer.

If Paul uses *teleios* of persons anywhere in a way that requires an entrance rite, an appointment, or a rank — rather than growth — then Chapter 2 fails and the rest goes with it.

Does it exist? No. All six Pauline uses of *teleios* for persons were examined. In the two where Paul supplies the contrast term, the contrast is infancy (1 Corinthians 14:20; Ephesians 4:13-14). In two more he addresses whole congregations with it (Philippians 3:15; Colossians 4:12). In one he states it as the goal of his preaching to **every man** — **"warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)**, where "every man" occurs three times in one verse. A rank that Paul aims to confer on every man is not a rank.

Three. A place where Paul makes the spiritual man genuinely exempt from examination.

If 1 Corinthians 2:15's "judged of no man" is confirmed elsewhere as a claim of immunity rather than a statement about a field of competence, then the passage really does underwrite what has been done with it.

Does it exist? No, and the counter-evidence is in the same letter. **"He that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:4)** uses the same verb of Paul himself. **"That ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written" (1 Corinthians 4:6)** sets an external standard. **"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" (1 Corinthians 14:29)** puts the spoken word of the most gifted under congregational assessment. Three verses, one letter, one direction.

Weighing it. This section is a discipline, not an argument. Each "does it exist" answer rests on verses quoted in full, and a reader who thinks a candidate has been missed has a definite thing to produce.

In short. Three findings would sink this study: a withheld-by-policy teaching, an initiatory *teleios*, or a genuinely exempt spiritual man. None of the three is in the text, and each has counter-evidence in the same letter.

B. What this study has already conceded

Five things, gathered in one place so that no later version quietly takes them back.

One. Verse 9 has a future reference. "The things which God hath prepared" includes what is not yet enjoyed, and a reading of verse 9 as purely about present knowledge flattens it. Conceded at Chapter 7 §D. What is not conceded is detaching verse 9 from verse 10.

Two. Verse 13 is genuinely undecided. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" and "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men" are both live, the Greek does not choose, and Bullinger and Bishop Pearce both take the reading this study does not build on. Rated **Neutral** at Chapter 11 §B and recorded as Neutral in Appendix A.

Three. Paul's exact phrase "of this age" is attached to spirit beings elsewhere. "The god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and **"the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12)** both carry *tou aionos*

toutou. So no rule can be stated that *aion* marks the human order and *kosmos* the satanic one. Conceded at Chapter 3 §B.

Four. Paul does teach that unseen powers were ignorant of the mystery. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10) states it outright. This study reads 1 Corinthians 2:8 of the human rulers on the strength of Acts 4:26-27 and Acts 13:27, and does not deny the Ephesians doctrine. Conceded at Chapter 3 §B and Chapter 6 §B.

Five. "Spirit of the world" is not identified. Three readings are available and the text does not decide. Rated **Neutral** at Chapter 10 §B.

Weighing it. These are concessions, not arguments.

In short. Five points are conceded outright, two of them rated Neutral. They are listed here so that they cannot be lost.

C. One discipline applied in both directions

There is a failure mode worth naming explicitly, because it is easy to fall into when a passage divides people into two groups.

The rule is this: **if diminished understanding does not prove absence of the Spirit, then abundant understanding does not prove its presence.** The argument has to run the same way in both directions or it is not an argument at all.

This study has held to that, and the place where it bites is 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. The Corinthians were carnal, quarrelsome, and unable to take solid teaching. It would be very convenient to argue from that to their spiritual condition. Paul does not, and this study does not: he tells the same people that the Spirit of God dwells in them (3:16) and that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost (6:19). Poor understanding did not prove absence.

The same rule forbids the reverse. A believer's grasp of doctrine, however deep, is not evidence of anything about his standing; and a teacher's confidence in his own understanding is not evidence that his understanding is right — which is exactly why Paul would not let his own clear conscience acquit him at 4:4. Where 2:15 says the spiritual man examines all things, the examining is a capacity to be exercised under a standard, not a result to be claimed.

Weighing it. Method, applied. This is a statement of a rule the study has held itself to, and a reader may check whether it has.

In short. Weak understanding does not prove the Spirit absent; strong understanding does not prove Him present. The rule runs both ways or it runs neither.

D. Three questions left open on purpose

One. Is the dative plural at 2:13 masculine or neuter? Left open. The form does not decide, and the contextual pointers genuinely conflict. See Chapter 11 §B.

Two. What is "the spirit of the world" at 2:12? Left open. Three readings, no decider. See Chapter 10 §B.

Three. How wide is the "we" of verses 6 to 13? Partly open. This study argues that "our glory" at verse 7 and "we have received" at verse 12 are inclusive, and that "we have the mind of Christ" at verse 16 is inclusive because it concludes that argument. But **"we speak"** at verses 6, 7 and 13 may well be narrower — Paul and his fellow preachers — and 1 Corinthians 4:1's "stewards of the mysteries of God" is a real argument for that. It is quite possible that the "we" who *speak* is narrower than the "we" who *have received*, and that Paul moves between them without marking the change, as he does elsewhere in this letter. Nothing in the study's central position requires that question to be settled: a wisdom spoken by apostles and received by all believers is the same wisdom either way.

Weighing it. These are declared open questions, not claims.

In short. Two words and one pronoun are left unresolved, on purpose, and the study's position does not depend on any of them.

Appendix A — The Weight of Every Argument in This Study

Every argument made in the body of this study, with its rating and what the opposing reading can fairly answer. Ratings use the five-step scale defined in Introduction §B. Entries marked **Conceded** are points on which this study yields; entries marked **Neutral** are places where the text does not decide.

#	Argument	Where	Weight	What the other reading fairly answers
1	The letter's crisis is a congregation grading its teachers	Ch1 §A	Direct statement	Nothing; not in dispute
2	"Foolishness" at 1:18 and 2:14 is one word and one subject	Ch1 §B	Strong inference	Word identity is not proof of intended cross-reference; 1:18's "them that perish" is a wider group
3	Paul distinguishes *aion* from *kosmos* deliberately, twice in this letter	Ch1 §C, Ch3 §A	Strong inference	Near-synonyms are paired because they are near-synonyms; the tightness of 1:20 may show one idea stated twice
4	That distinction carries doctrinal weight at 2:6-8	Ch3 §A	Reasonable inference	The argument works equally on either rendering; nothing here is load-bearing
5	*Katargeo* at 1:28 and 2:6 is one verb linking the chapters	Ch1 §D	Strong inference	A common Pauline verb may recur without design
6	1:29's "no flesh should glory" governs the argument against a tier reading	Ch1 §D	Strong inference	It forbids *fleshly* boasting; Spirit-given maturity is not flesh
7	"Man's wisdom" at 2:4 and 2:13 frames a unit (inclusio)	Ch1 §E	Reasonable inference	The frame closes at 2:13, not 2:16; inclusios found after the fact are hard to falsify
8	Verse 6's "Howbeit" concedes that there is real content, not an inner circle	Ch1 §F	Strong inference	A sentence can concede content *and* mark its recipients
9	*Teleios* means grown, not flawless	Ch2 §A	Direct statement	Nothing; agreed on all sides
10	Paul's contrast term for *teleios* applied to persons is always infancy	Ch2 §B	Strong inference	Initiation systems also call their initiates grown and outsiders children
11	1 Corinthians 3:1's *pneumatikois/nepiois* is the control on 2:6 and 2:15	Ch2 §C	Strong inference, near direct	3:1-3 does distinguish groups; the question is whether the difference is possession or growth
12	"Among the perfect" describes reception, not permission	Ch2 §D	Reasonable inference	3:2 describes Paul's practice, not a definition of *teleioi*; maturity may still be a threshold
13	Paul's content contradicts the mystery-cult framework even where his vocabulary overlaps it	Ch2 §E	Strong inference	Reading a word polemically is itself an interpretive claim; the simpler reading of initiation vocabulary is initiation
14	Paul does not exempt himself from still growing (Philippians 3:12, 15)	Ch2 §F	Corroboration only	3:12 and 3:15 may use the word in two different senses; this is probably the right reading
15	Four of the five "world"s in 2:6-12 are *aion*	Ch3 §A	Direct statement	Nothing; verifiable fact

16	*Archon* in Paul is a human-ruler word with one spirit-being exception	Ch3 §B	Reasonable inference	Ephesians 2:2 is that exception, and it is Paul's
17	John's "prince of this world" is not Paul's phrase	Ch3 §B	Direct statement	The phrases differ; whether the referent differs is another question
18	Paul attaches "of this age" to spirit beings elsewhere	Ch3 §B, Ch16 §B	**Conceded**	2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12
19	Paul teaches that unseen powers were ignorant of the mystery	Ch3 §B, Ch6 §B, Ch16 §B	**Conceded**	Ephesians 3:10 states it outright
20	"That come to nought" is a present participle of an administration-superseding verb	Ch3 §C	Strong inference	*Katargeo* also means plain destruction (2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:26)
21	Verse 6 contrasts two wisdoms, not two tiers of Christian	Ch3 §D	Reasonable inference	The *teleioi* are picked up again at 2:15 as "he that is spiritual"
22	The King James supplies *even* and *wisdom* at 2:7	Ch4 §A	Direct statement	Nothing; the italics say so
23	All three Pauline uses of *apokrupto* are the same form and the same subject	Ch4 §B	Strong inference	Three is a small sample from letters close in date and subject
24	A biblical mystery is a secret told, not a riddle kept	Ch4 §C	Strong inference, near direct	Disclosure and comprehension are different; the opposing case is about comprehension
25	"In a mystery" describes the character of the wisdom	Ch4 §D	Reasonable inference	It may qualify the speaking, which would suit a veiled manner
26	What is foreordained at 2:7 is the wisdom, not persons	Ch5 §A	Direct statement	The verse does not contradict predestination of persons; it simply does not support it
27	Seven *aion*-phrases across Paul belong to one doctrine	Ch5 §B	Strong inference	Plural *aion* with *pro* is normal Greek for "from eternity"
28	Ephesians 3:11 names God's plan "the purpose of the ages"	Ch5 §B, Ch15 §A	Direct statement	The King James's "eternal purpose" is a defensible rendering of the same words
29	"Our glory" is the church's, not an apostolic perquisite	Ch5 §C	Reasonable inference	1 Corinthians 4:1's apostolic "us" is close at hand and on the same subject
30	Verse 8's conditional asserts, grammatically, that they did not know	Ch6 §A	Direct statement	Nothing; contrary-to-fact construction
31	The princes of 2:8 are the human rulers who crucified Christ	Ch6 §B	Strong inference, near direct	The two readings are not exclusive if unseen powers moved the men; Ephesians 3:10
32	Ignorance explains the crucifixion and does not excuse it, nor make it accidental	Ch6 §C	Direct statement	Nothing; Acts 3:19 and 4:28 are explicit
33	*Doxa* links "our glory" (2:7) and "the Lord of glory" (2:8)	Ch6 §D	Reasonable inference	A repeated word need not be designed

34	"The Lord of glory" settles nothing about Christ's relation to God	Ch6 §D	Neutral	Used by both sides; a title of majesty proves neither case
35	Verse 9 exists to be answered by verse 10	Ch7 §A	Strong inference	The content of the quotation genuinely concerns things prepared, some of them future
36	Verse 9 matches neither the Hebrew nor the Greek of Isaiah 64:4	Ch7 §B	Direct statement	Nothing; verifiable, and the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge says so
37	"Entered into the heart" is the Hebrew idiom flagged in the King James margin	Ch7 §B	Strong inference	The composite theory is a reconstruction; "as it is written" more naturally introduces a text
38	Paul substituted "them that love him" for Isaiah's "him that waiteth for him"	Ch7 §B	Direct statement	The substitution is a fact; its significance is a matter of judgment
39	Jerome's answer to Origen on the source of 2:9 is to be preferred	Ch7 §C	Corroboration only	Origen was nearer the sources; "as it is written" is Paul's citation formula
40	Verse 9's "things prepared" has a future reference	Ch7 §D	**Conceded**	Granted; the aorist and the unfulfilled glory of 2:7 require it
41	Verse 10's revelation cannot be detached from verse 9's things	Ch7 §D	Strong inference	Verse 10's verb has no other available object
42	The fronted "to us" at 2:10 is emphatic and contrasts with "none of the princes"	Ch8 §A	Strong inference	The emphasis marks the recipients, which is what the apostolic reading wants
43	Romans 11:33's *anexereuneta* is the alpha-privative of 2:10's *ereunao*	Ch8 §C	Strong inference	Two letters, two purposes; a writer may reuse vocabulary without cross-reference
44	The Spirit searches; the believer receives the revelation	Ch8 §D	Direct statement	Nothing; it is the grammatical subject of the verb
45	Verse 11 is an analogy about access to knowledge	Ch9 §A, §C	Strong inference	Agreed on all sides as to shape
46	Verse 11 establishes nothing about the internal relations of God	Ch9 §C	Neutral	Cited by several traditions; the human term of the analogy cuts against all of them
47	Verse 11 does not deny Romans 1:20's knowledge available to all	Ch9 §C	Direct statement	Romans 1:20's knowledge condemns rather than saves — the same distinction from the other side
48	*Pneuma* in 2:10-14 does four different jobs	Ch10 §A	Strong inference	"Received the Spirit" is ordinary language for the Holy Spirit coming on a believer (Acts 8:15; 19:2)
49	What "we have received" at 2:12 is the gift, not the Giver	Ch10 §A	Strong inference	As above; a reader taking all five as the Holy Spirit does no violence to any

50	The identity of "the spirit of the world"	Ch10 §B, Ch16 §B	**Neutral**	Three readings, no decider in the text
51	The gift's stated purpose is that believers should know what they have been given	Ch10 §C	Direct statement	Purpose is not outcome; 3:1-3 shows the same gift neglected
52	Verse 12 settles possession, not maturity	Ch10 §C	**Conceded** as a limit	Granted; the tier Paul denies is of possession, the difference he affirms is of growth
53	*Didaktos* occurs twice, both with a genitive of the teacher	Ch11 §A	Reasonable inference	Two instances by different writers; may be a common idiom
54	The rendering of 2:13	Ch11 §B, Ch16 §B	**Neutral**	Same-author usage favours "compare"; the Greek Old Testament favours "interpret"; the gender is formally undeterminable
55	Paul's next use of *pneumatikois* (3:1) is masculine and refers to people	Ch11 §B	Direct statement	Named here as the nearest counter-instance to this study's own reading
56	The fourfold *pneumatik-* cluster is *Polyptoton* marking the subject	Ch11 §C	Corroboration only	There is no other Greek word for "spiritual"; the cluster may be unavoidable
57	*Psuchikos* is the Adam-word, grounded in Genesis 2:7 by 1 Corinthians 15:45	Ch12 §A	Strong inference	15:44-46 is about resurrection bodies, a different subject
58	Jude 19 defines *psuchikos* as "not having spirit"	Ch12 §B	Direct statement	Jude's men are apostates; his sense may be narrower than Paul's
59	James 3:15-17's two wisdoms parallel Paul's	Ch12 §B	Corroboration only	A different writer on a related subject
60	"Receiveth not" and "cannot know" are two different claims	Ch12 §C	Direct statement	Nothing; Paul supplies the reason for each
61	2:14 is not about intelligence, not a denial of all knowledge of God, and not permanent	Ch12 §D	Direct statement / Strong inference	On permanence: how the condition is removed is a doctrinal question outside this passage
62	2:14's function is to dismantle the Corinthians' grading system	Ch12 §E	Reasonable inference	The verse reads well as a general statement with no special reference to the quarrel
63	*Anakrino* is sifting examination, not sentence	Ch13 §A	Direct statement	Examination and verdict shade into each other; 4:4 carries verdict-force
64	Paul expects congregations to weigh and test	Ch13 §B	Strong inference	Galatians 6:1's "ye which are spiritual" may itself mark a subset
65	2:15 cannot mean exemption, because 4:3-6 denies it of Paul	Ch13 §C	Strong inference, near direct	4:3 concerns stewardship; 2:15 may concern discernment — two different objects

66	14:24's identical passive of *anakrino* shows congregational examining	Ch13 §D	Strong inference	"All" there means all who prophesy — though 14:31 widens it again
67	2:15's purpose is to show the Corinthians an instrument they were not using	Ch13 §E	Reasonable inference	The sequence can as easily be read as Paul distinguishing himself from them
68	Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 twice, taking a different pair of clauses each time	Ch14 §A	Direct statement	Memory-quotation may vary without design
69	Romans 11:34 leaves the question open; 1 Corinthians 2:16 answers it	Ch14 §A	Strong inference	The contexts differ enough that no deliberate contrast need be intended
70	The Hebrew of Isaiah 40:13 reads "Spirit"; the Greek reads "mind"; Paul follows the Greek	Ch14 §B	Direct statement	Nothing; verifiable in both texts
71	That convergence holds the passage's two halves together	Ch14 §B	Reasonable inference	Paul used the ordinary Greek Bible of his readers and may not have been exploiting the difference
72	1 Corinthians 2:16's *nous* is not Philippians 2:5's *phroneo*	Ch14 §C	Direct statement	The two roots overlap substantially in Paul
73	Romans 12:2 is the nearest Pauline parallel to 2:16	Ch14 §C	Strong inference	Shares *aion*, *nous* and *teleios* with the passage
74	"We have the mind of Christ" excludes infallibility	Ch14 §D	Strong inference	Galatians 2:11 and Acts 15:39 are not doctrinal errors
75	The sentence after 2:16 is 3:1, and forbids a triumphalist reading	Ch14 §E	Strong inference	3:1 can be read as Paul distinguishing himself from the Corinthians
76	Paul's plan-vocabulary is built on the word for ages	Ch15 §A	Strong inference	*Aion* language may be Hebraic idiom for "for ever"
77	The mystery is the content of Grace, not an administration of its own	Ch15 §B	Reasonable inference	*Oikonomia* at Ephesians 3:2 and Colossians 1:25 is used of Paul's own stewardship
78	2:6's present participle and 15:24's future are two stages of one winding-up	Ch15 §C	Reasonable inference	15:24 uses *arche*, not *archon*; they may be different subjects
79	The passage names no administration, dates nothing, and requires no count	Ch15 §D	Direct statement	This is a limitation, not a claim
80	The outcomes rule binds both directions: weak understanding does not prove the Spirit absent, strong understanding does not prove Him present	Ch16 §C	Method, held	Applies to this study's own conclusions as much as to anyone's

Appendix B — "World" in 1 Corinthians

The King James uses the English word "world" for two different Greek words in this letter, and in one place for a third construction entirely. This appendix lists every occurrence of both words in 1 Corinthians so that a reader can check the claims of Chapter 1 §C and Chapter 3 §A directly.

Aion (G165) in 1 Corinthians — seven verses, eight occurrences

Verse	King James	Greek	Literally
1:20	the disputer of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
2:6	the wisdom of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
2:6	the princes of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
2:7	ordained before the world	*pro ton aionon*	before the ages
2:8	the princes of this world	*tou aionos toutou*	of this age
3:18	wise in this world	*en to aioni touto*	in this age
8:13	while the world standeth	*eis ton aiona*	unto the age (i.e. for ever)
10:11	the ends of the world	*ta tele ton aionon*	the ends of the ages

Two of those repay a second look.

8:13 shows the King James rendering the ordinary Greek idiom for "for ever" — *eis ton aiona*, literally "unto the age" — with the word "world." That is the same word as 2:6, and here it plainly means duration. It is a useful corrective against pressing *aion* too hard in either direction.

10:11 is the most interesting occurrence in the letter. **"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11)** is *ta tele ton aionon* — "the ends of the ages." Two observations. First, it is plural: **ages**, with ends. Second, the noun *telos* is the root of *teleios*, the word of 2:6. Paul is writing to people upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived, and he calls the grown among them the *teleioi*.

That is not offered as an argument; it is offered as an observation, and it is rated **corroboration only** because a shared root is not a shared meaning and Paul makes nothing of the connection himself.

Kosmos (G2889) in 1 Corinthians — seventeen verses, twenty-one occurrences

1:20 (the wisdom of this world); 1:21 (the world by wisdom knew not God); 1:27 (twice — the foolish things of the world, the weak things of the world); 1:28 (base things of the world); 2:12 (the spirit of the world); 3:19 (the wisdom of this world); 3:22 (or the world, or life, or death); 4:9 (a spectacle unto the world); 4:13 (the filth of the world); 5:10 (twice — the fornicators of this world; ye must needs go out of the world); 6:2 (twice — the saints shall judge the world; if the world shall be judged by you); 7:31 (twice

— they that use this world; the fashion of this world passeth away); 7:33 (the things that are of the world); 7:34 (the things of the world); 8:4 (an idol is nothing in the world); 11:32 (condemned with the world); 14:10 (so many kinds of voices in the world).

The pattern is plain: *kosmos* in this letter is the world as a system of people, values and arrangements — something one is in, is a spectacle to, is judged with, and whose fashion passes away. *Aion* is the world as a period with a term.

And 7:31 puts the two ideas together without using *aion* at all: **"for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31)**. The *kosmos* has a *schema* that is passing. That is the same thought as 2:6's *katargoumenon*, reached with the other noun — which is another reason not to over-press the distinction between the two words.

Appendix C — The Greek Words of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Every significant word in the passage, with its Strong's number, its New Testament occurrence count, and a one-line note. Counts were produced by searching a parsed Greek New Testament, not estimated. "Verses" counts verses containing the word; "occ." counts individual occurrences, which is higher where a word appears twice in one verse.

Word	Strong's	Verses	Occ.	Of which Paul	Note
sophia, wisdom	G4678	49	51	28 occ.	Seventeen occurrences are in 1 Corinthians, sixteen of them in chapters 1-3
teleios, perfect	G5046	17	19	8 occ.	Six of Paul's describe persons; the contrast is always infancy
aion, age	G165	101	126	38 occ.	Eight in 1 Corinthians; see Appendix B
archon, prince, ruler	G758	36	37	4 occ.	Paul's four: Romans 13:3; 1 Corinthians 2:6, 2:8; Ephesians 2:2
katargeo, bring to nought	G2673	26	27	25 occ.	A Pauline word: only Luke 13:7 and Hebrews 2:14 are not his
musterion, mystery	G3466	27	27	20 occ.	The hidden-then-told structure; never a riddle kept
apokrupto, hide	G613	6	6	3 occ.	All three Pauline uses are the same form, all of the mystery
proorizo, ordain beforehand	G4309	6	6	5 occ.	Acts 4:28; Romans 8:29-30; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:5, 1:11
doxa, glory	G1391	151	168	77 occ.	Links 2:7's "our glory" to 2:8's "Lord of glory"
kosmos, world	G2889	152	187	47 occ.	In this passage only at 2:12
apokalupto, reveal	G601	26	26	13 occ.	The exact opposite of *apokrupto*; 2:10 answers 2:7
ereunao, search	G2045	6	6	2 occ.	Paul's other is Romans 8:27; the negative *anexereunetos* is Romans 11:33
anexereunetos, unsearchable	G419	1	1	1 occ.	Romans 11:33 only — the alpha-privative of *ereunao*
bathos, depth	G899	8	8	5 occ.	Romans 11:33 and 1 Corinthians 2:10 of God's depth; Ephesians 3:18 prayed "with all saints"
pneuma, spirit	G4151	350	385	149 occ.	Five occurrences in 2:10-14 doing four different jobs; see Chapter 10 §A
charizomai, freely give	G5483	19	23	16 occ.	Formed on *charis*, grace; 2:12's "freely given"
anthropinos, human, man's	G442	7	7	5 occ.	Four of the five are in 1 Corinthians; joined to "wisdom" only at 2:4 and 2:13
didaktos, taught	G1318	2	3	2 occ.	John 6:45 and 1 Corinthians 2:13 only; both with a genitive of the teacher
pneumatikos, spiritual (adj.)	G4152	21	26	24 occ.	All but two are Paul's; 3:1's dative plural is masculine
pneumatikos, spiritually (adv.)	G4153	2	2	1 occ.	1 Corinthians 2:14 and Revelation 11:8 only

sunkrino, compare/interpret	G4793	2	3	3 occ.	1 Corinthians 2:13 and 2 Corinthians 10:12 (twice) only
psuchikos, natural, soulish	G5591	5	6	4 occ.	1 Corinthians 2:14, 15:44 (twice), 15:46; James 3:15; Jude 19
moria, foolishness	G3472	5	5	5 occ.	All five are 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1:21, 1:23, 2:14, 3:19 — nowhere else in Scripture
dechomai, receive, welcome	G1209	47	58	13 occ.	A verb of welcoming, not of physical capacity
anakrino, examine, judge	G350	14	16	10 occ.	Sifting examination; Acts 17:11's Bereans; 1 Corinthians 4:4 of Paul himself
nous, mind	G3563	22	24	21 occ.	Understanding, not attitude; nearest parallel Romans 12:2
sumbibazo, instruct, knit together	G4822	6	6	4 occ.	From the Greek of Isaiah 40:13; elsewhere Paul uses it of a body knit together

Appendix D — Textual Variants in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Every place inside the passage where the Received Text behind the King James differs from the modern critical text. The list was produced by direct word-by-word comparison, not from a secondary source. In each case the question asked is the same: does anything in this study's argument change?

Verse	Received Text	Critical text	King James	Does anything turn on it?
2:7	*sophian theou*	*theou sophian*	"the wisdom of God"	No. Word order only; identical sense.
2:9	*ha hetoimasen*	*hosa hetoimasen*	"the things which God hath prepared"	No. *Ha* is "which things," *hosa* "whatsoever things." The second is slightly broader; the argument is unaffected.
2:10	*hemin de*	*hemin gar*	"But God hath revealed"	**Slightly.** *De* is adversative ("but"), *gar* causal ("for"). The King James's "But" makes the contrast with verse 9 explicit. On the critical reading verse 10 gives the *reason* rather than the *contrast* — but either way verse 10 answers verse 9, and Chapter 7's argument stands on the logic rather than the particle.
2:10	*tou pneumatos autou*	*tou pneumatos*	"his Spirit"	No. The pronoun is implied by the context in either case.
2:10	*ereuna*	*eraunai*	"searcheth"	No. A spelling variant of the same verb.
2:11	*oudeis oiden*	*oudeis egnoken*	"knoweth no man"	No. *Oida* and the perfect of *ginosko* both give "knows"; the King James renders either.
2:13	*pneumatos hagiou*	*pneumatos*	"the Holy Ghost"	**Noted, not used.** The Received Text has "Holy"; the critical text omits it. Chapter 11 makes its case without leaning on the word, and the identification of the teacher as the Holy Spirit is secured by verses 10-12 regardless.
2:15	*anakrinei men panta*	*anakrinei ta panta*	"judgeth all things"	No. "Indeed all things" versus "the all things"; the sense is the same.

One variant just outside the passage is worth recording because it affects how verse 7 is heard:

Verse	Received Text	Critical text	King James	Comment
2:1	*to marturion tou theou*	*to musterion tou theou*	"the testimony of God"	If the critical reading is right, Paul says at 2:1 that he came "declaring unto you the mystery of God," which makes verse 7 a resumption rather than an introduction. The manuscript evidence is genuinely divided. Nothing in this study depends on it, and the study follows the King James.

Summary. Eight variants inside the passage, none of which changes a conclusion. Two are worth a reader's attention — the particle at 2:10 and "Holy" at 2:13 — and both are flagged in the body of the study where they arise.

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Sources Consulted

Primary text. The King James Version is the base text throughout. Every quotation was checked against the text rather than reproduced from memory.

Greek New Testament. The Byzantine Textform with morphological parsing and Strong's numbers (Robinson-Pierpont, public domain) was used for the Received-Text side of every comparison and for all occurrence counts. The SBL Greek New Testament with morphological parsing (MorphGNT, public domain) was used for the critical-text side in Appendix D. Every Greek form cited in this study was read out of one or both of these texts word by word.

Greek Old Testament. Swete's edition of the Septuagint was consulted for Isaiah 40:13, Isaiah 64:4, Isaiah 65:17, Jeremiah 3:16 and Genesis 40:8, 16 and 22 — the passages behind 1 Corinthians 2:9, 2:13 and 2:16.

Hebrew. The Hebrew of Isaiah 40:13 and Isaiah 64:4 was checked word by word for Chapters 7 and 14, in particular the *ruach/nous* difference at Isaiah 40:13 and the *ûme'olam* opening of Isaiah 64:4.

E. W. Bullinger, The Giver and His Gifts — also published as *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*. Used for its classified list of the usages of *pneuma*, which supplies the sorting of the five occurrences in 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 given in Chapter 10 §A, and for its treatment of *sunkrino* at 2:13 and of the hendiadys at 2:4. Bullinger is used here, as elsewhere in this library, for his linguistic and structural apparatus rather than as a doctrinal authority; his own theological conclusions are weighed independently.

E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible (1898), through this library's own index of it. Used for the naming of *Erotesis* at 2:11, *Polyptoton* at 2:7-8 and 2:13-15, *Hendiadys* at 2:4, and *Sumplexis* for the framing repetition at 2:4 and 2:13.

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. Used for cross-references at 2:6-16, and cited directly at 2:9 for its own note that Paul's citation is taken neither from the Septuagint nor as an exact translation of the Hebrew, and at 2:13 for Bishop Pearce's rendering "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men."

Origen and Jerome, on the source of 1 Corinthians 2:9 — Origen's remark in his commentary on Matthew at 27:9, and Jerome's answer in his letter to Pammachius and in his Commentary on Isaiah, book 17. Used as extra-biblical tradition, at corroboration-only weight, in Chapter 7 §C.

Jon O. Nessle, Repetitions: A Key to Understanding the Heart of Scripture — through this library's standing summary of it. Used for the principle that a dense concentration of a term and its cognates marks a passage's theme, applied to the *pneumatik-* cluster at 2:13-15.

This library's own standing documents. `Research-Method.md` for the governing interpretive method; `Book-Formatting-Standard.md` for the format of this deliverable; and the Seven Administrations project's own study and project overview for the framework used in Chapter 15, including its settled position that the Administration of the Mystery is the fuller content of the Grace administration rather than a distinct period within it.

Scripture Index

Every verse quoted or cited in this study, in canonical order, with the chapter and section where it appears. Locations are given to the section where a verse is discussed; where a verse appears in more than one section of a chapter, the chapter alone is given.

Genesis 2:7 Ch 9B, Ch 12A, App A

Genesis 40:8, 16, 22 Ch 11B

Leviticus 24:12 Ch 11B

Numbers 15:34 Ch 11B

Job 32:8 Ch 9B

Psalms 24:8, 10 Ch 6D

Proverbs 20:27 Ch 9B

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Ch 9B

Isaiah 40:13 Ch 14, App A, App C

Isaiah 54:13 Ch 11A

Isaiah 64:4 Ch 7, App A

Isaiah 65:17 Ch 7B

Jeremiah 3:16 Ch 7B

Zechariah 12:1 Ch 9B

Matthew 5:48 Ch 2B

Matthew 9:34 Ch 3B

Matthew 11:25 Ch 4B

Matthew 12:24 Ch 3B

Matthew 13:5 Ch 8D

Matthew 13:11 Ch 2E, Ch 4C

Matthew 19:21 Ch 2B

Matthew 25:18 Ch 4B

1 Corinthians 2:12 IntroA, Ch 10, Ch 12B, Ch 14A, Ch 15B, Ch 16

1 Corinthians 2:13 IntroA, Ch 1E, Ch 11, Ch 12B, Ch 15B, Ch 16, App C

1 Corinthians 2:14 IntroA, Ch 1B, Ch 12, Ch 15B, Ch 16, App C

1 Corinthians 2:15 IntroA, Ch 13, Ch 15B, Ch 16

1 Corinthians 2:16 IntroA, Ch 14, Ch 15B, Ch 16, App A

1 Corinthians 3:1 Intro, Ch 2C, Ch 10C, Ch 11B, Ch 13E, Ch 14E, Ch 16C, App A

1 Corinthians 3:2 Ch 2, Ch 10C, Ch 16

1 Corinthians 3:3 Ch 2C, Ch 10C, Ch 12B, Ch 16C

1 Corinthians 3:4 Ch 2C

1 Corinthians 3:16 Ch 2E

1 Corinthians 3:18-19 Ch 1C

1 Corinthians 3:21 Ch 1D

1 Corinthians 4:1 IntroD, Ch 5C, Ch 16D, App A

1 Corinthians 4:3 Ch 13

1 Corinthians 4:4 Ch 13, Ch 14D, Ch 16A, App C

1 Corinthians 4:5 Ch 13C

1 Corinthians 4:6 Ch 13C, Ch 16A

1 Corinthians 5:12 Ch 13B

1 Corinthians 6:13 Ch 3C

1 Corinthians 6:19 Ch 2E

1 Corinthians 7:31 App B

1 Corinthians 9:3 Ch 13A

Mark 3:22 Ch 3B
Mark 4:5 Ch 8D
Mark 4:11 Ch 4C
Luke 5:4 Ch 8D
Luke 8:41 Ch 3B
Luke 10:21 Ch 4B
Luke 11:15 Ch 3B
Luke 12:58 Ch 3B
Luke 13:7 Ch 3C, App C
Luke 22:3 Ch 6B
Luke 23:13 Ch 3B
Luke 23:14 Ch 13A
Luke 23:34 Ch 6B
John 3:1 Ch 3B
John 5:39 Ch 8C
John 6:45 Ch 11A, App C
John 7:52 Ch 8C
John 12:31 Ch 3B
Acts 3:17 Ch 6
Acts 3:19 Ch 6C, App A
Acts 4:9 Ch 13A
Acts 4:26-27 Ch 6, Ch 16B
Acts 4:28 Ch 5A, Ch 6C, App C
Acts 7:2 Ch 6D
Acts 7:35 Ch 3B
Acts 8:15 Ch 10A, App A
Acts 12:19 Ch 13A
Acts 13:27 Ch 6, Ch 16B
Acts 15:39 Ch 14D, App A
Acts 16:19 Ch 3B
Acts 17:11 Ch 13A, App C
Acts 23:5 Ch 3B
Acts 24:8 Ch 13A
Acts 28:18 Ch 13A
Romans 1:20 Ch 9C, Ch 12D, App A
1 Corinthians 10:11 App B
1 Corinthians 10:25, 27 Ch 13A
1 Corinthians 13:8, 11 Ch 3C
1 Corinthians 13:10 Ch 2B, Ch 3C
1 Corinthians 14:20 Ch 2B, Ch 16A
1 Corinthians 14:24 Ch 13
1 Corinthians 14:29 Ch 13B, Ch 16A
1 Corinthians 14:31 Ch 13D
1 Corinthians 14:37 Ch 11A
1 Corinthians 15:24 Ch 3C, Ch 15C
1 Corinthians 15:26 Ch 3C, App A
1 Corinthians 15:44, 46 Ch 12A
1 Corinthians 15:45 Ch 12A, App A
2 Corinthians 3:7 Ch 3C
2 Corinthians 3:11 Ch 15C
2 Corinthians 4:4 IntroD, Ch 3B, Ch 10B, Ch 16B, App A
2 Corinthians 8:2 Ch 8D
2 Corinthians 10:12 Ch 11B, App C
Galatians 1:4 Ch 15D
Galatians 2:11 Ch 14D, App A
Galatians 3:17 Ch 3C
Galatians 5:4, 11 Ch 3C
Galatians 6:1 Ch 13B, App A
Ephesians 1:5 Ch 5A, App C
Ephesians 1:11 Ch 5A
Ephesians 1:17-18 Ch 10C
Ephesians 2:2 Ch 3B, Ch 10B, App A, App C
Ephesians 2:3 Ch 10B
Ephesians 2:15 Ch 3C
Ephesians 3:2 Ch 15B, App A
Ephesians 3:3 Ch 4C, Ch 15B
Ephesians 3:4 Ch 4C
Ephesians 3:5 Ch 4C, Ch 8B, Ch 15B
Ephesians 3:9 Ch 3B, Ch 4B, Ch 5B, Ch 15A
Ephesians 3:10 IntroD, Ch 3B, Ch 6B, Ch 16B, App A

Romans 3:3, 31 Ch 3C
Romans 4:14 Ch 3C
Romans 6:6 Ch 3C
Romans 7:2, 6 Ch 3C
Romans 8:5-7 Ch 14C
Romans 8:27 Ch 8C, App C
Romans 8:28 Ch 7B
Romans 8:29 Ch 5A, App C
Romans 8:30 Ch 5, App C
Romans 8:39 Ch 8D
Romans 10:14 Ch 12D
Romans 11:33 Ch 8, Ch 14A, App A, App C
Romans 11:34 Ch 8C, Ch 14A, App A
Romans 11:35-36 Ch 14A
Romans 12:2 Ch 2B, Ch 14C, App A, App C
Romans 13:3 Ch 3B, App C
Romans 16:25 Ch 4C, Ch 5B, Ch 15A
Romans 16:26 Ch 4C
1 Corinthians 1:11-12 Ch 1A
1 Corinthians 1:17 Ch 1B
1 Corinthians 1:18 Ch 1B, Ch 5C, Ch 12C, App C
1 Corinthians 1:19 Ch 1C
1 Corinthians 1:20 Ch 1C, Ch 3A
1 Corinthians 1:22-26 Ch 1D
1 Corinthians 1:27 Ch 1D, Ch 12D
1 Corinthians 1:28 Ch 1D, Ch 2E, Ch 3C
1 Corinthians 1:29 Ch 1D, Ch 2E, Ch 5C
1 Corinthians 2:1-2, 4 Ch 1E
1 Corinthians 2:3 IntroA, Ch 1E
1 Corinthians 2:5 Ch 1E, Ch 5C
1 Corinthians 2:6 Intro, Ch 2, Ch 3, Ch 4, Ch 6B, Ch 15B, Ch 16, App C
1 Corinthians 2:7 IntroA, Ch 4, Ch 5, Ch 15, Ch 16, App C
1 Corinthians 2:8 IntroA, Ch 3B, Ch 4B, Ch 6, Ch 15B, Ch 16
Ephesians 3:11 Ch 5B, Ch 15A, App A
Ephesians 3:18 Ch 8D, App C
Ephesians 4:13-14 Ch 2B, Ch 16A
Ephesians 6:12 Ch 3B, Ch 16B, App A
Ephesians 6:19 Ch 4, Ch 16A
Philippians 2:5 Ch 14C, App A
Philippians 3:12 Ch 2F, App A
Philippians 3:15 Ch 2, Ch 16A
Colossians 1:25 Ch 15B, App A
Colossians 1:26 Ch 4, Ch 5B, Ch 15
Colossians 1:27 Ch 4C, Ch 5C
Colossians 1:28 Ch 2B, Ch 16A
Colossians 4:12 Ch 2, Ch 16A
1 Thessalonians 5:21 Ch 13B
2 Thessalonians 2:8 Ch 3C, App A
1 Timothy 1:13 Ch 6B
2 Timothy 1:9 Ch 5B, Ch 15A
2 Timothy 1:10 Ch 3C
Titus 1:2 Ch 5B, Ch 15A
Hebrews 2:14 Ch 3C, App C
Hebrews 5:12 Ch 16A
Hebrews 5:13-14 Ch 2B, Ch 16A
Hebrews 9:11 Ch 2B
James 1:4, 17, 25 Ch 2B
James 1:12 Ch 7B
James 2:1 Ch 6D
James 2:5 Ch 7B
James 3:2 Ch 2B
James 3:14 Ch 12B
James 3:15 Ch 12, App A, App C
James 3:16-17 Ch 12B, App A
1 Peter 1:11 Ch 8C
1 John 4:18 Ch 2B

1 Corinthians 2:9 IntroA, Ch 4B, Ch 7, Ch 15B, Ch 16

1 Corinthians 2:10 IntroA, Ch 4B, Ch 8, Ch 14A, Ch 15B, Ch 16, App C

1 Corinthians 2:11 IntroA, Ch 9, Ch 14A, Ch 15B, Ch 16

Jude 1:19 Ch 12

Revelation 2:23 Ch 8C

Revelation 11:8 Ch 12C, App C