

Text: 1 Co 2.6-8

Proposition: The wisdom of this age dominates our world, and leads it to catastrophic choices; the wisdom of God leads to true light.

We continue to live in the era of Covid 19, and there may be developments in our province soon that we are not going to like. We will need wisdom if the government once again interferes with regular worship services.

The hint of this came after my brother participated in a Zoom meeting with Adrian Dix and Bonnie Henry.

These people trouble us! (Not with malice, I think, but they trouble us nonetheless.)

I don't want to debate the pros and cons of anything you are hearing from the government on the subject.

We all have opinions, and if you want more opinions, just go to the internet and you will find plenty.

I am concerned, however with the way we think. I wondered how to communicate this, then came across the passage in 1 Cor 2.6-8. I think we can gain some wisdom here that might help us.

Read 1 Cor 2.6-8

In the context, Paul declared God's wisdom:

1 Cor 1.23-24 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

He continues the theme in verse 30:

1 Cor 1.30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us **wisdom from God**, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

This fits in well with our text. Yet Paul also gives a hint about how others might view this wisdom *and* his presentation of this wisdom:

1 Cor 1.17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in **cleverness of speech...**

¹ Cor 2.1 ¶ And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with **superiority of speech or of wisdom**, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. cross of Christ would not be made void.

¹ Cor 2.4 and my message and my preaching were **not in persuasive words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

Clearly, there is a contrast between God's wisdom and the wisdom of this age, worldly wisdom.

Paul makes it even more explicit in our passage. I'm going to work on this proposition for the message:

Proposition: The wisdom of this age dominates our world, and leads it to catastrophic choices; the wisdom of God leads to true light.

I. The wisdom of this age (passing away) (6)

A. Characteristics of the wisdom of this age

1. It belongs to this age, the world we live in

It's the thing that "everybody" thinks.

2. It is passing away

- a. Never constant
- b. Never reliable
- c. Never lasts

B. An extended illustration

1. Letter from researchers at Brown University to the President¹

Dear Mr. President:

Aware of your deep concern with the future of the world, we feel obliged to inform you on the results of the scientific conference held here recently. The conference dealt with the past and future changes of climate and was attended by 42 top American and European investigators. We enclose the

¹ Letter and timeline notes from Larry Kummer and Editor, "An Important Letter Sent to the President about the Danger of Climate Change," Fabius Maximus website, October 21, 2009, <https://fabiusmaximus.com/2009/10/21/letter/>.

summary report published in Science and further publications are forthcoming in Quaternary Research.

The main conclusion of the meeting was that a global deterioration of climate, by order of magnitude larger than any hitherto experience by civilized mankind, is a very real possibility and indeed may be due very soon.

The cooling has natural cause and falls within the rank of processes which produced the last ice age. This is a surprising result based largely on recent studies of deep sea sediments.

Existing data still do not allow forecast of the precise timing of the predicted development, nor the assessment of the man's interference with the natural trends. It could not be excluded however that the cooling now under way in the Northern Hemisphere is the start of the expected shift. The present rate of the cooling seems fast enough to bring glacial temperatures in about a century, if continuing at the present pace.

The practical consequences which might be brought by such developments to existing social institution are among others:

(1) Substantially lowered food production due to the shorter growing seasons and changed rain distribution in the main grain producing belts of the world, with Eastern Europe and Central Asia to be first affected.

(2) Increased frequency and amplitude of extreme weather anomalies such as those bringing floods, snowstorms, killing frosts, etc. ...

With best regards,

George J. Kukla (Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory)
R. K. Matthews (Chairman, Dept of Geological Sciences,
Brown U)

Date of letter: **3 December 1972**; sent to **President Nixon**

2. A timeline of News Stories about climate

a. Headlines 1895-1924 predicting an Ice Age

“Prospects of another glacial period; Geologists Think the World May Be Frozen Up Again“, New York Times, 24 February 1895

“Fifth Ice Age Is on the Way“, Los Angeles Times, 7 October 1912

“Sees Glacial Era Coming: Prof. Schmidt Warns Us of an Encroaching Ice Age“, New York Times, 7 October 1912

“Mac Millian Reports Signs of New Ice Age“, New York Times, 18 September 1924

b. Headlines 1933-1952 predicting global warming

“America in Longest Warm Spell Since 1776; Temperature Line Records a 25-Year Rise“, New York Times, 27 March 1933

“A warmer Earth evident at poles“, Gladwin Hills, New York Times, 30 May 1947 — “A mysterious warming of the climate is slowly manifesting itself in the Arctic, engendering a “serious international problem,” Dr. Hans Ahlmann, noted Swedish geophysicist, said today.”

“Is the World Getting Warmer?“, Albert Abarbenel and Thomas McCluskey, Saturday Evening Post, 1 July 1950

“Our Changing Climate ... the world has been getting warmer in the last half century“, New York Times, 10 August 1952

c. Whoops, back to a coming ice age, 1954-1994

“Climate – the Heat May be Off“, Fortune, Francis Bello, August 1954 — “Despite all you may have read, heard or imagined, it’s been growing cooler – not warmer since the Thirties”

“The Coming Ice Age“, Betty Friedan, Harper’s Magazine, September 1958 — “A true scientific detective story”

“Colder Winters Held Dawn of New Ice Age”, Washington Post, 22 April 1970

“The Present Interglacial, How and When Will it End?”, Science, October 1972 — Summary of conference held in January 1972 at Brown U.

“Brace Yourself for Another Ice Age”, Science Digest, February 1973

“Another Ice Age?”, Time, 24 June 1974

“Report of the Ad Hoc Panel on the Present Interglacial”, the panel was created by the US government’s Interdepartmental Committee for Atmospheric Sciences, August 1974

“Climate Change: Chilling Possibilities”, John F. Douglas, Science News, 1 March 1975

“The Cooling World”, Newsweek, 28 April 1975 (posted with permission at the Washington Times here; or read this image)

“Scientists Ask Why World Climate is Changing; Major Cooling May Be Ahead”, The New York Times, 21 May 1975

“In the Grip of a New Ice Age”, Nigel Calder (was editor of New Scientist), International Wildlife, July 1975

The Cooling, Lowell Ponte (Prentice Hall, 1976)

“Global Cooling?”, P E Damon and S M Kunen, Science, 6 August 1976 (abstract)

The Weather Conspiracy: The Coming of the New Ice Age, (Ballantine Books, 1977)

“The Ice Age Cometh?” Time, 31 January 1994

“The end of the present interglacial” W.S. Broecker, Quaternary Science Reviews, 1 August 1998

d. With a few “warming articles” thrown in

“A Warmer Earth Evident At Poles”, New York Times, 15 February 1959

“Expert Says Arctic Ocean Will Soon Be Open Sea”, New York Times, 20 February 1969

“Climatic Change: Are We on the Brink of a Pronounced Global Warming?”, Wallace S. Broecker, Science, 8 August 1975 (abstract)

C. A few comments

1. These reports were widespread in the media
2. This was the “wisdom of this age” when I was a teenager
3. Today, as you know, the “wisdom of this age” is just as confident about global warming – the “ice age” wisdom ... passed away
4. The things the 1st century pagans were very confident about... passed away

Can you see parallels between our current wisdom, including almost everything you hear about Covid?

II. The wisdom of God (hidden, till now, but revealed) (7)

A. The wisdom of God is for the mature (6)

1. Mature = believers as opposed to unbelievers (the rulers of this world)
2. May imply that some believers don’t understand all the wisdom of God, but they will over time

B. The wisdom of God is the hidden wisdom (mystery) (7)

1. The hidden wisdom is not hidden for those who hear it: now revealed
2. The hidden wisdom is God’s plan for the ages, intending the faithful for glory

C. Paul doesn’t explain the wisdom of God in detail in our passage

1. He gives us the source (God)
2. He explains its nature (hidden mystery)

3. He will explain the content more in Ephesians and Colossians (which come later)

The major theme of the hidden wisdom is the gospel of Jesus Christ (many details accompany this major theme).

The hidden wisdom contradicts the ever-changing wisdom of the world

III. The effect of wisdom (true choices) (8)

A. The wisdom of this age blinds the rulers to truth

1. If they had understood the hidden wisdom, they would not have crucified Jesus
2. Consider how close Pilate came to the truth about Christ

Jn 18.33-38 ¶ Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." ³⁷ Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸ ¶ Pilate said to Him, "**What is truth?**" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him.

Jn 19.6-12 So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." ⁷ The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because **He made Himself out to be the Son of God.**" ⁸ Therefore when Pilate heard this statement,

he was *even* more afraid;⁹ and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.¹⁰ So Pilate said to Him, “You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?”¹¹ Jesus answered, “**You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin.**”¹² ¶ As a result of this Pilate **made efforts to release Him**, but the Jews cried out saying, “If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out *to be* a king opposes Caesar.”

B. Pilate went with the wisdom of this age, instead of the hidden wisdom

1. He chose to crucify Jesus, and washed his hands of him
2. What would result, if he chose not to crucify? [but to this doom he was appointed]

Conclusion:

Proposition: The wisdom of this age dominates our world, and leads it to catastrophic choices; the wisdom of God leads to true light.

No doubt much of what grips our world today will eventually look foolish in days to come.

There is one sure wisdom to which we can cling: the wisdom of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.