

# Faith Versus Intellect

## 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

### 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (NASB)

<sup>18</sup> “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

<sup>19</sup> For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.”

<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

<sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know* God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

<sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

<sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

<sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

<sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

In Paul’s day, unbelievers rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ as foolishness and tried to approach God purely through their intellect. Today many people still propose views of God and salvation that are contrary to what Scripture teaches. Their ideas sometimes sound so reasonable that they lead many astray. According to human logic, the man with the highest education, the most degrees, and the greatest intelligence should have the wisest plan to reach God. But, as the apostle explained, the “**wisdom**” of mankind is folly.

The Lord promised to destroy the false wisdom of the world ([Isaiah 29:14](#); [1 Corinthians 1:19](#)), and for good reason: Human wisdom is used to glorify man.

### Isaiah 29:14 (NASB)

<sup>14</sup> “Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed.”

### 1 Corinthians 1:19 (NASB)

<sup>19</sup> “For it is written, ‘I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.’”

Those who dismiss faith in favor of a strictly intellectual approach to God attempt to gain His approval by means of reasoning, rationalizing, or working. For instance, every religion other than Christianity has a plan or ritual by which one supposedly gains acceptance with that belief system’s god. Such plans all boil down to this: “**If I *do* better, I will *be* better. If I *am* better, then I will *be more acceptable to my god*.**” A person does the work and thereby earns the glory for being a good member of his or her religion. The end result, of all that work, however, is death—eternal separation from the one true God.

Christianity, on the other hand, glorifies God and His work. We are considered faithful believers when we trust in Him alone and believe that Jesus gave His life, so we could be free from the chains of sin. Only He has made a way for believers to be reconciled to the Father and righteous in His eyes.