



## Patristics and Christian Learning with Dr. Jordan Wood

### Lecture 1: Christ our Wisdom: Early Christian Ambiguity towards Human Knowledge

#### Outline:

The Church fathers pursued human wisdom, learning, and education.

- Christianity has always had an ambiguity of human wisdom and the revelation of divine wisdom in Christ.
- Christ crucified has become for us the power and wisdom of God.
  - Christ is presented as wisdom incarnate in the synoptic gospels.
  - Christ associates himself with the wisdom of God.
  - Matthew presents Christ as the mediator of wisdom like Moses.
- Proverbs 8:22: Through wisdom God created and ordered the entire world. Wisdom infuses the entirety of the Cosmos. The wisdom of God is the ordering principle of all things.
- The very truth revealed in Christ is the same wisdom that you can find in all of creation. This embeds Christ within the Cosmos as himself creator of the Cosmos (Colossians 1, John 1, John 1:14).
- On the one hand you should expect a resonance from the self-revelation of God in Christ and our investigation of the natural world. There should be a kind of harmony.
- On the one hand Christ is wisdom. On the other hand the world turns on the Divine wisdom and crucifies him.
- Even though Christ is the light shining in the darkness, there is still darkness. There is still tension.
- “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”
- Christians came to see very early on that you should also expect to see conflict, disharmony, cacophony, and discord. Both harmony and discord are true at once.
- What do we do with human learning? Is it good to investigate the world or not?
- I Corinthians 21:26-31: Paul is saying that not many are well educated, and yet God chose you because it highlights the contrast between divine wisdom and world’s wisdom. The early Christians were a motley crew, and there were also signs of the well-educated being present too (Paul).
- According to Acts 17, Paul knows Greek philosophy. Paul was brilliant and well educated. Apollos was a learned man.



- The same world that taught human learning (science, quest for truth) also crucified divine wisdom in Jesus.
- How do we relate our education to what we learn of God and Christ (Scriptures & tradition)? The answer is the power that gives rise to creative reflection on both sides of that tension.