

“THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS”

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-21

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:25

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

NKJV

Concerns

Concerns

- Jews – sign

1 Corinthians 1:22a

For Jews request a sign, ...

Matthew 12:38-39

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." ³⁹ But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

Matthew 12:40

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Concerns

- Jews – sign
- Greeks – “wisdom”

1 Corinthians 1:22b

... and Greeks seek after
wisdom;

Acts 17:21

For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Christ

Christ

- **Cross preached**

1 Corinthians 23a

but we preach Christ crucified,

...

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Christ

- Cross preached
- Jews – stumbling block

1 Corinthians 23b

... to the Jews a stumbling
block ...

Luke 2:34

Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against

Christ

- Cross preached
- Jews – stumbling block
- Greeks - foolishness

1 Corinthians 23c

... and to the Greeks foolishness,

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Called

Called

- Inclusion

1 Corinthians 1:24a

but to those who are called,
both Jews and Greeks, ...

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Called

- Inclusion
- Power & wisdom

1 Corinthians 1:24b

... Christ the power of God
and the wisdom of God.

Romans 1:4

and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Colossians 2:2-3

² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Contrast (paradoxical hyperbole)

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- God is wiser

1 Corinthians 1:25a

Because the foolishness of
God is wiser than men, ...

Proverb 9:10

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Contrast (paradoxical hyperbole)

- God is wiser
- God is stronger

1 Corinthians 1:25b

... and the weakness of
God is stronger than men.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Conclusion

Preach the cross

1 Corinthians 1:17-18

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. ¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.