

1 CORINTHIANS

1:20-31 | STUDY GUIDE

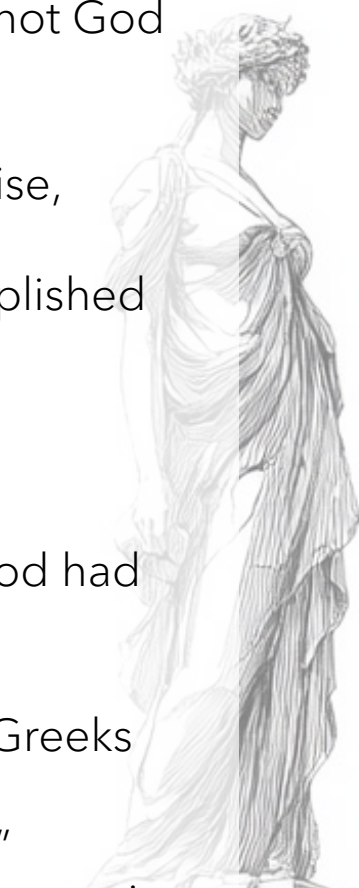
Signs

1 CORINTHIANS 1:20, "Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (ESV)

- Following quote from Isaiah
 - Isaiah 29:14, "'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."
 - The point is simple: no one could have accomplished what Christ did.
 - A "crucified Messiah" defies earthly wisdom
- Wise men and Debaters = Philosophers and Rhetoricians
 - None would have predicted salvation the way God had arranged

1 CORINTHIANS 1:22, "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom..." (ESV)

- Both groups are looking for what "makes sense"
 - The Jews wanted a conquering king—divine rescue, as in the case of the Exodus
 - The Greeks also wanted God to conform to their idea of wisdom—to be "better" or victorious in the eyes of the world



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1 CORINTHIANS 1:23, "...but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles..." (ESV)

- Stumbling block = "scandal"
 - Greek = **σκάνδαλον**
- The Gentiles would have viewed any crucified person as the most deplorable
 - It was incomprehensible that reputable person would die in such a humiliating way

1 CORINTHIANS 1:25, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (ESV)

- Paul points out that God's plan shows the weakness of even the most well-educated and influential humans
 - God is not against knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 16:16), but he is against making it an idol
 - "How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver."

1 CORINTHIANS 1:27, "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong..."

- God's plan was deliberate and calculated
 - "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5)

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- Scripture consistently reminds us that we do not see or understand the way God does
- It's a rebuke that comes with a promise

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30, "And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption..."

- Our hope doesn't come from earthly wisdom
 - It's "because of Him" that we have hope
- Therefore, "as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 1:31)
 - Jeremiah 9:24

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Craig Keener, 1-2 Corinthians, Bruce W. Winter, After Paul Left Corinth, N.T. Wright, The New Testament in Its World, Zondervan, Archeological Study Bible

