

1 Corinthians 1:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

Analysis

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (alla ta mōra tou kosmou exelexato ho theos hina kataischyne tous sophous, kai ta asthene tou kosmou exelexato ho theos hina kataischyne ta ischyra, ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς ἵνα καταischύνη τοὺς σοφοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς ἵνα καταischύνη τὰ ἰσχυρά)—God's choice is deliberate and purposeful: exelexato (ἐξελέξατο, "He chose, selected") is aorist middle, emphasizing God's sovereign initiative. He chose **the foolish** and **the weak** by worldly standards **to confound** (hina kataischyne, ἵνα καταischύνη, "in order to shame, disgrace") the wise and strong.

The verb kataischynō (καταischύνω, "to put to shame") is strong: God exposes worldly wisdom and power as bankrupt. By choosing the despised and weak, God demonstrates that salvation is His work, not human achievement. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: barren women bearing covenant sons (Sarah, Hannah), a shepherd boy defeating a giant (David), fishermen as apostles—God delights to work through the unlikely to magnify His glory.

Historical Context

The Corinthian church included slaves, women, poor laborers, and social outcasts alongside a few wealthy patrons. That such a motley crew could be transformed

into a temple of God's Spirit (3:16) was itself a testimony to divine power, not human wisdom or strength. The gospel inverted social hierarchies, giving dignity to the despised—a revolutionary message in a stratified society.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does God choose "the foolish and weak" rather than recruiting the best and brightest?
2. How does God's choice of the unlikely "confound" and shame worldly wisdom and power?
3. In what areas of your life do you rely on worldly credentials rather than trusting God to work through your weakness?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς
But ^{G3588} **the foolish things** ^{G3588} **of the world** **hath chosen** ^{G3588} **God**
^{G235} ^{G3474} ^{G2889} ^{G1586} ^{G2316}

ἵνα τοὺς σοφούς κατασχύνη καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ
to ^{G3588} **the wise** **confound** **and** ^{G3588} **the weak things** ^{G3588}
^{G2443} ^{G4680} ^{G2617} ^{G2532} ^{G772}

κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς ἵνα κατασχύνη τὰ
of the world **hath chosen** ^{G3588} **God** **to** **confound** ^{G3588}
^{G2889} ^{G1586} ^{G2316} ^{G2443} ^{G2617}

ἰσχυρά
the things which are mighty
^{G2478}

Additional Cross-References

James 2:5 (References God): Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Matthew 11:25 (Parallel theme): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

1 Corinthians 1:20 (References God): Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

Psalms 8:2 (Parallel theme): Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

Isaiah 29:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Luke 21:15 (Parallel theme): For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (References God): But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Matthew 21:16 (Parallel theme): And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

2 Corinthians 10:10 (Parallel theme): For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

Zephaniah 3:12 (Parallel theme): I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.