

Luke 11:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

Analysis

This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet (Γενεὰ πονηρά ἐστιν· σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ)—Jesus pronounces this generation *ponēra* (evil, morally corrupt) for persistent *epizēteō* (sign-seeking). Despite witnessing miracles, they demand more authenticating wonders. The 'sign of Jonah' is deliberately cryptic, pointing to Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection.

This refusal confronts human tendency to demand God prove himself on our terms. True faith trusts God's self-revelation in Scripture and Christ without requiring constant miraculous validation. A generation witnessing Jesus's compassion, teaching, healings, exorcisms yet demanding 'a sign from heaven' demonstrates willful unbelief no evidence can overcome.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism expected spectacular signs to authenticate Messiah. Jesus's ministry challenged expectations by emphasizing humble service, suffering, spiritual transformation over political liberation and supernatural spectacle. The scribes and Pharisees' demand for signs reflected their rejection of Jesus's messianic credentials despite overwhelming evidence.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'signs' do you demand from God before trusting him fully—how might sign-seeking reveal deeper control issues?
2. How does Jesus's refusal to perform on demand challenge contemporary expectations for constant experiential validation of faith?
3. In what ways might seeking miraculous signs distract from the greater sign of Christ's death and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

Τῶν G3588	δὲ G1161	ὄχλων G3793	ἐπαθροισμένων G1865	ἤρξατο G756	λέγειν G3004	
	And	when the people	were gathered thick together	he began	to say	
Ἡ G3588	γενεὰ G1074	αὕτη G3778	πονηρὰ G4190	ἐστίν· G2076	σημεῖον G4592	ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ G1934 G2532
	generation	This	an evil	is	a sign	they seek and
σημεῖον G4592	οὐ G3756	δοθήσεται G1325	αὐτῇ G846	εἰ G1487	μὴ G3361	τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ G3588 G4592 G2495
	a sign	no	be given	it		a sign of Jonas
τοῦ G3588	προφήτου· G4396					
	the prophet					

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:16 (Parallel theme): And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

1 Corinthians 1:22 (Parallel theme): For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

Luke 12:1 (Parallel theme): In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

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