

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 δὲ ὥχλων ἐπαθροιζομένων ἤρξατο λέγειν
G3588 And when the people were gathered thick together he began to say
G1161 G3793 G1865 G756 G3004

Ἐγενέατη πονηρά ἐστιν· σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ
G3588 generation This an evil is a sign they seek and
G1074 G3778 G4190 G2076 G4592 G1934 G2532

σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ
a sign no be given it G1487 G3361 G3588 a sign of Jonas
G4592 G3756 G1325 G846 G4592 G2495

τοῦ προφήτου·
G3588 the prophet
G4396

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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