

A Warning Label

I Corinthians 2:6-16

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March 16, 2008

The Messiah was supposed to defeat the Romans, not be crucified by them! In Jewish theology to hang on a cross meant being cursed by God (Deuteronomy 21:23). Thus, to the Jews, Jesus is a cursed criminal who failed to bring deliverance to his people. The Greeks, on the other hand,

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sought wisdom. To the high minded philosophers the cross as a symbol of one's religion was foolishness. Why belong to such a weak, humiliating religion? Only a fool would commit himself to a religion like Christianity.

Therefore, for all humanity the crucifixion of Jesus is an offense.

Benjamin Merkle

As Fee explains, 'It is hard for those in the Christianized West, where the cross for almost nineteen centuries has been the primary symbol of faith, to appreciate how utterly mad the message of a God who got himself crucified by his enemies must have seemed to the first-century Greek

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or Roman.’ But Paul did not yield to the temptation to alter the gospel. Instead of power and wisdom Paul preached the weak and foolish message of ‘Christ crucified.’

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What it means to be ‘spiritual’ is profoundly tied to the cross, and nothing else. More precisely, to be spiritual, in this passage, is to enjoy the gift of the Holy Spirit – and this means understanding and appropriating the message of the cross, ‘God’s secret wisdom.’ Those who are most mature are

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most grateful for the cross and keep coming back to it as the measure of God’s love for them and the supreme standard for self-denial.

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We never, therefore, move on from the Cross of Christ, only to a more profound understanding of the Cross.

David Prior

Even though God has now so definitively brought his all-wise plan to fruition in the gospel of the crucified Messiah, people still do not believe. They still do not see that his plan is wise. If we the 'mature' have come to grasp it, it is because 'God has revealed it to us by his Spirit' (2:10). In other words,

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there has not only been an objective, public act of divine self-disclosure in the crucifixion of God's own Son, but there must also be a private work of God, by his Spirit, in the mind and heart of the individual. That is what distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever, the 'mature' from the

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people of this age and the rulers of this age. If we 'see' the truth of the gospel, therefore, it has nothing to do with our brilliance or insight; it has to do with the Spirit of God. If we should express unqualified gratitude to God for the gift of his Son, we should express no less gratitude to God for the gift of the

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Spirit who enables us to grasp the gospel of his Son...What a great God we have! Not only does he redeem us through the ignominious crucifixion of his much-loved Son, but he sends his Spirit to enable us to understand what he has done. So obtuse and blind are we that we would not

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**have begun to grasp 'what God has
freely given us unless God had
taken this additional step.'**

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