

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"Israel, Elect of God"
Romans 11:7-10

2-15-87
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(didn't hear)

INTRODUCTION

1. Romans 9-11--what a triad of chapters concerning the Jewish people. Chapter 9 speaks of God's absolute freedom against any claim of man. Chapter 10 records the sinfulness of the Jew in rejecting Christ. What a sad verse: 10:21. May it never leave us! Chapter 11 gives an account of present events which are to be overruled for the future glory of both Jew and Gentile.

2. So, God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Rather, as represented in Paul, Elijah, and the present grace-election, God has a remnant in Israel. They are the true elect of God in that nation.

3. Look, then, at the text to see how things stand. The thrust of the passage is this: God cannot regard sin with indifference. The rebellious majority become monuments of God's eternal justice. It is noted in these ways:

1. INDICATION OF FACT v. 7

a. Summation

The phrase "what then" is the result of the discussion just given (vv 1-6). The inferences of the previous verses, particularly vv. 5, 6, are now about to be given.

b. Explanation

1) Negatively The nation as a group sought (present tense) for (prefixed preposition) righteousness. This is noted in several verses (9:31, 32; 10:2-4). While zealous seeking is not mentioned here, the idea is biblical. So what happened? They did not obtain it. The verb means to "light upon" or "attain to." This shows utter failure.

2) Positively Where the nation did not succeed the election did. The abstract word is used (election) rather than the concrete (elect) to throw emphasis on the means (or idea) rather than on the result (or individual).

3) Discriminatingly The "rest" or the mass of natural Israel were blinded (rather, "hardened"). The "remnant" was saved by grace, hence there is no injustice to the "rest." Who could complain if salvation came to "some" where "none" deserved it? In fact, the rest were hardened because they failed,

not vice versa (cf. 1:24ff where sin is represented as God's punishment inflicted on man for His rebellion.

NOTE: The verb "harden" is a medical term used in Hippocrates of a bone or hard substance growing when a bone is fractured or a stone forms in the bladder. Note its use in the N.T. of a hard heart (Mk 6:52; Jo 12:40; 2 Cor. 3:14 and the noun in the same sense Mk 3:5; Ro. 11:25; Eph. 4:18).

2. QUOTATION OF SCRIPTURE vv. 8-10

a. Deuteronomy 29:4

Scripture is quoted to set forth Divine action underlying the statement of v. 7. The quote from Deuteronomy is modified by passages from Isa. 29:10; 6:9, 10. The phrase "spirit of slumber" is really a dull insensibility to everything spiritual such as would be produced by drunkenness or stupor. The idea of torpor or deep sleep is clearly meant. Israel's "eyes" and "ears" are affected as well as her senses. What an awful punishment from God for faithlessness! Moreover, what was true in the days of Moses and Isaiah is "unto this day" (Paul's). Stephen illustrates this (Acts 7:51). Obstinacy and resistance from the beginning--that's Israel's history.

b. Psalms 69:22, 23

The noun "table" has reference to the feasts in which Israel was intended to worship the Lord (cf. Ex. 12; 24:11; Lev. 6:16; 7:18-20; 23:6). These wonderful opportunities to really know God became (were turned into) four despicable situations: 1) Snare (Lk 21:35). 2) Trap (a net; only used here in the N.T.). 3) Stumbling block (that over which they fall and hence what causes destruction). 4) Recompense (a requital, only used here and Lk 14:12 in N.T.) i.e. Israel becomes a spoil to every form of retribution.

The final thought expressed in v. 10 refers to some sort of sudden blinding plus spiritual servitude because of weakness.

CONCLUSION Consider how God has a remnant according to grace, not works (Amos 9:8-10; Micah 2:12; 5:3; Zephaniah 3:12, 13; Jeremiah 23:3; Ezekiel 14:14-20:22; Isaiah 6:9-13). While this is true, remember God's judicial hardening of Jewish hearts: three times Isaiah is quoted (Mt. 13:15; Jn 12:39; Acts 28:25-28). God have mercy on the nation! Amen.