

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
The Indestructible Nation – Blinded
Romans 11:7-10

1. Two Turkish Jews have been brutally murdered in an identical manner within the past three weeks. Muiz Konor, 32, an owner of a catering company was bound and shot at close range. Yosef Yehyeh, 35 year old dentist and father of two was bound and shot in his clinic as Konor. 22,000 Jews live in Turkey.

2. The 104 year old active synagogue in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe was burned to the ground two days before Yom Kippur. 170 Jews currently live in Bulawayo, down from 3000 four decades ago.

3. U.K. Jews have been warned by Scotland Yard that they face imminent terrorist attacks (Newsweek). A carload of Iranian "tourists" were spotted covertly taking videos of obscure Jewish buildings in London.

4. These late reports from the October 24, 2003 issue of The Jerusalem Post clearly point out why only 27 Jews remain in Baghdad and do not open their synagogue. Jews are in a death struggle for survival as a legitimate nation and land.

5. God has made His promises for Israel. Consider Gen. 13:15; 15:18 and the repeating of these promises to Abraham (Gen. 17:8), to Isaac (Gen. 25:5; 26:2-7) to Jacob (Gen. 28:4), to Jacob's children (Ps. 105: 6-8, 11; Isa. 62:4; Jer. 7:7; Ezek. 37:25 (cf. vv. 15-28). Remember the grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of God shall stand forever (Isa. 40:8).

6. Supportive of God's O.T. statements about Israel are the N. T. arguments. Boldly the Spirit of God inspired Paul to write that God has not cast away His people (Ro. 11:1-7). This is affirmed: 1) personally (v. 1), 2) historically (vv. 2-4), and 3) presently (v. 5).

7. Therefore, in that God has not rejected Israel, it is because of infinite sovereign grace (v. 6). So now what is the state of affairs? How does it stand with Israel. What saith the Scriptures?

1. INDICATION OF FACT v. 7

a. A Summation

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

b. An Explanation

1) Negatively The nation as a group sought (ἐπιζητεῖ epizetei , present), an intensified effort, something (righteousness!). This is given elsewhere (9:31, 32; 10:2-4) and zealously sought, but they did not obtain it (ἐπέτυχεν epetuchen , aorist). This verb signifies "to light upon, to attain" (cf. Heb. 6:15; 11:33; James 4:2). Utter failure is described. The "sought for" was unobtainable.

2) Positively The small particle "but" (δὲ de) affirms how the "righteousness" was "obtained" (same verb and tense). Now what caused the difference? The key is the word "election" (ἐκλογή ekloge). This abstract word is used rather than the concrete one (elect). By this the emphasis is thrown on the means (or idea involved) rather than on the result (or the individual).

3) Discriminatingly So what happens with "the rest" (οἱ λοιποὶ hoi loipoi)? This has reference to the mass of Israel not included in the "election" (ἐκλογή ekloge). These were "blinded" (ἐπωρώθησαν eporothesan). This aorist passive verb means to be hardened, become callous, dull, covered with a thick skin. Since the election is a matter of sovereign divine grace, there is no injustice in this. Who could complain if salvation came to "some" where "none" deserved it? Indeed, those hardened is because they failed and not God (cf. Ro. 1:24ff where sin is represented as God' s punishment inflicted on man for his rebellion).

2. QUOTATION OF SCRIPTURE vv. 8-10

a. Passage #1 v. 8

Baldly Paul writes "it stands written" (perfect γέγραπται gegraptai). The quotation is from Deuteronomy 29:4 and modified by Isaiah 29:10; 6:9, 10). Note that "God has given" what is recorded (v. 8). The "spirit of slumber" is dull insensibility to everything spiritual such as would be evidenced by drunkenness, torpor of mind, hence not affected by the offer of salvation. This includes "eyes" which do not see and "ears" which do not hear (present tense verbs). What an awful punishment from God for faithlessness! Sadly, by the use of two words for "day" (σήμερον semeron; ἡμέρας hemeras) the text shows that this judgment persists "now" i.e. Paul' s day. Stephen affirmed this (Acts 7:51). Only grace could change this history of Israel!!

b. Passage #2 v. 9

Here is Psalm 69:22, 23 attributed to "David." What does he record? It' s all about "their table" which is a reference to the feasts in which Israel was to worship the Lord (cf. Ex. 12; 24:11; Lev. 6:16; 7:18, 20; 23:6; Num. 15:17-21; 18:26, 30, 31; Deut. 12:7, 18; 14:23; 27:7). The text uses a hortatory aorist passive indicating the "table" experiences "became" (Γενηθίτω Genetheto) into (εἰς eis) four despicable situations:

1) A snare (παγίδα pagida) i.e. a sudden and unexpected deadly peril (cf. Lk 21:35).

2) A trap (θήραν theran) i.e. a spring to hunt wild beasts to destroy them. Only here in the N.T.

3) A stumbling-block (σκάνδαλον skandalon) i.e. any impediment meant to cause one to stumble or fall.

4) A recompense (ἀνταπόδομα antapodoma) i.e. a requital, a thing paid back. Only here and Lk 14:12 in N.T.

Note: All these Scriptures are confirmations of the hardening of the "rest." They also point to the sad spiritual condition of Israel during the present time, albeit not utterly rejected.

Conclusion Here (v. 10) is another hortatory aorist passive verb expressing some sort of sudden blinding and spiritual servitude so that they have no insight. Moreover, their backs are to be bent like men who are continually (διὰ παντός dia pantos) groping about in the darkness. This is God' s judicial hardening of Jewish hearts clearly predicted by Isaiah (6:9, 10) and affirmed in the N.T. (Mt. 13:15; Jn 12:29; Acts 28:25-28). Such will be the case with national Israel until the future changes things (Zech. 12:10). Don' t be deceived, Israel will not be turned until the Son of Man comes for them (Mt. 24:20). Meanwhile, it is for us to boast in Christ, His salvation, and provoke the election according to grace, as sinners, to come to Messiah Jesus. Amen.