

Acts 28:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

Analysis

Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand (ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε)—The Hebrew construction (infinitive absolute + finite verb) intensifies meaning: 'You will indeed hear but never understand.' This describes judicial hardening—God gives people over to their chosen blindness (Romans 1:24-28). **Seeing ye shall see, and not perceive** (βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ὁδητε—Physical senses function but spiritual perception fails. Isaiah witnessed this after his temple vision (Isaiah 6:1-13); Israel would experience sensory exposure to God's word without heart-transformation.

Jesus applied this to his parables (Matthew 13:14-15), explaining why he taught in stories—to reveal truth to disciples while concealing it from hardened hearts. Paul now uses it to explain Jewish rejection of Messiah. The tragedy isn't lack of evidence but willful blindness. They possessed Scriptures and saw miracles yet refused to believe, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.

Historical Context

Isaiah 6:9-10 was spoken around 740 BC after Isaiah's throne-room vision. God warned that Israel would reject prophetic ministry, hardening under prolonged exposure to divine truth. By Paul's time (AD 60), seven centuries of prophetic witness had culminated in rejecting the Messiah himself, confirming Isaiah's prediction.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does repeated exposure to biblical truth without obedience lead to spiritual hardening rather than growth?
2. What safeguards prevent you from 'hearing but not understanding' when God's Word is preached?

Interlinear Text

λέγοντες Πορεύθητε πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπὲ,

Saying **Go** **unto** **G3588** **people** **this** **and** **say**
G3004 G4198 G4314 G2992 G5126 G2532 G2036

Ἄκοντες ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέψετε

Hearing **ye shall hear** **and** **G3756** **G3361** **shall** **and** **seeing**
G189 G191 G2532 G4920 G2532 G991

βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε·

seeing **and** **G3756** **G3361** **perceive**
G991 G2532 G1492

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 12:2 (Parallel theme): Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

Mark 4:12 (Parallel theme): That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Luke 8:10 (Parallel theme): And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Luke 24:45 (Parallel theme): Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Luke 24:25 (Parallel theme): Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Isaiah 29:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Isaiah 66:4 (Parallel theme): I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

Isaiah 29:10 (Parallel theme): For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

Jeremiah 5:21 (Parallel theme): Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

Deuteronomy 29:4 (Parallel theme): Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.