

Acts 28:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Analysis

For the heart of this people is waxed gross (ἐπαχύνθη, epachynthē, 'has become dull/thickened')—Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9-10, Jesus' most-cited Old Testament text explaining Jewish rejection. The triple problem—gross hearts, dull ears, closed eyes—depicts willful spiritual insensitivity, not divine causation. **Lest they should see... and hear... and understand... and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

This 'lest' (μήποτε, mēpote) is tragic irony: they avoid healing by rejecting the means of healing. The Greek ἐπιστρέψωσιν (epistrepsōsin, 'be converted') means 'turn back'—they refused the very repentance that would bring God's healing. Paul's final word to Roman Jews diagnosed their fatal pattern: the veil remains when Christ is rejected (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

Historical Context

Acts concludes (AD 61-62) with Paul under house arrest, teaching all who came (28:30-31). His final statement to Roman Jewish leaders explained why Gentiles predominantly filled the church. Isaiah's prophecy provided biblical framework for understanding Israel's rejection and Gentile inclusion in God's purposes.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What spiritual 'dullness' might you be cultivating by avoiding uncomfortable biblical truth?
2. How does understanding judicial hardening inform your evangelism to those who persistently reject the gospel?

Interlinear Text

ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου καὶ τοῖς
is waxed gross For G3588 the heart G2588 people G2992 of this G5127 and G2532 G3588
G3975 G1063 G2588 G2992 G5127 G2532 G3588

ώστιν βαρέως ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τοὺς ὄφθαλμοῖς αὐτούς
ears are dull hear and G3588 eyes G3788 their G846
G3775 G917 G191 G2532 G3788 G846

ἐκάμμυσαν· μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὄφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς
have they closed lest they should see G3588 eyes G3788 and G2532 G3588
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ώστιν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ
ears hear and G3588 the heart understand and G4920 G2532
G3775 G191 G2532 G2588 G4920 G2532

ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ιάσωμαι αὐτούς
should be converted and I should heal their
G1994 G2532 G2390 G846

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 6:10 (Parallel theme): Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

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