

Isaiah 42:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears,
but he heareth not.

Analysis

The indictment continues: 'Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.' Physical capacity exists but functional awareness absent. The Hebrew 'ra'ah' (seeing) and 'shama' (hearing) happen, yet comprehension fails—a willful obtuseness more culpable than simple ignorance.

Historical Context

This describes Israel's persistent failure to understand God's ways despite continuous revelation through Law, prophets, and history. Exposure to truth without response produces greater guilt than ignorance.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What biblical truths do you see and hear yet fail to observe and understand?
2. How does repeated exposure without response harden rather than soften the heart?

Interlinear Text

רָא יֵת	רַבּ וְת	וְלֹא	תִּשְׁמַר	פֶּקֶחַ	אָזְנוֹ יָם	וְלֹא
Seeing	many things	H3808	but thou observest	not opening	the ears	H3808
H7200	H7227		H8104	H6491	H241	
וְשָׁמַע:						
but he heareth						
H8085						

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