

Romans 10:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Analysis

But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world—Paul answers potential objection: perhaps Israel didn't hear? Menoun ge eis pasan tēn gēn exēlthen ho phtongos autōn (μενοῦν γε εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν, "Indeed, into all the earth went out their sound"). He quotes Psalm 19:4, David's praise of general revelation in creation. Phtongos (φθόγγος, "sound, tone, voice") and rhēmata (ρήματα, "words, utterances") describe creation's wordless witness to God.

Paul's application is debated:

1. He may argue typologically that as creation's witness is universal, so gospel witness has gone to Israel.
2. He may combine general revelation (which Israel has received) with special revelation (the gospel proclaimed by apostles throughout the Roman world) to establish Israel's comprehensive exposure to truth.

Either way, Paul's point stands: Israel has heard—their unbelief is willful rejection, not innocent ignorance. The widespread apostolic mission (Rom 15:19-23; Col 1:23) ensured gospel saturation.

Historical Context

By AD 57 (Romans' composition), Paul had evangelized from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Rom 15:19), a massive geographic region. Peter, John, and other apostles were active. The early church multiplied rapidly (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7). Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire heard gospel testimony in synagogues (Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4). Jews had extraordinary access to gospel witness—more than any other people group. Their rejection was therefore highly culpable.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does general revelation (creation's witness) prepare hearts for special revelation (the gospel)?
2. Does familiarity with the gospel breed contempt and hardness in your heart?
3. How accountable are we in the modern West, where Bibles and preaching are abundant but often ignored?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ	λέγω	μὴ	οὐκ	ῆκουσαν	μενοῦνγε·	εἰς	πᾶσαν	τὴν
But	I say		G3361	G3756	Have	Yes verily	into	all
G235	G3004				G191	G3304	G1519	G3588
γῆν	έξηλθεν	ό	φθόγγος	αὐτῶν	καὶ	εἰς	τὰ	πέρατα
the earth	went		G3588	G5353	their	and	into	the ends
G1093	G1831				G846	G2532	G1519	G4009
τῆς	οἰκουμένης	τὰ	ρήματα	αὐτῶν				
G3588	of the world	G3588	words	their				
		G3625			G4487			
						G846		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 19:4 (Word): Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Matthew 24:14 (Parallel theme): And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Romans 1:8 (Parallel theme): First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Mark 16:15 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

1 Thessalonians 1:8 (Word): For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

Colossians 1:6 (Parallel theme): Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

Colossians 1:23 (Parallel theme): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and

which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Matthew 28:19 (Parallel theme): Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Jeremiah 16:19 (Parallel theme): O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.

Matthew 26:13 (Parallel theme): Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

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