

Romans 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

Analysis

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me—Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1, where God laments Israel's rebellion and announces His availability to those who didn't seek Him. Ἐσαίας δὲ ἀποτολμᾷ καὶ λέγει, "Isaiah is very bold and says"—apotelmaō (ἀποτολμάω, "dare, be bold") indicates Isaiah's courageous prophecy of Gentile inclusion. **I was found of them that sought me not** (Heurethēn tois eme mē zētousin, εὐρέθην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ζητοῦσιν)—God's sovereign initiative in Gentile salvation.

I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me (emphanēs egenomēn tois eme mē eperōtōsin, ἐφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν)—God revealed Himself to those who didn't inquire. This is radical grace: God saves those who neither seek nor ask. The Gentiles, spiritually dead and indifferent (Eph 2:1-3, 12), were sovereignly apprehended by grace (Acts 10; 16:14). Meanwhile, Israel—who possessed Scripture, temple, and covenant—rejected their Messiah. Grace inverts human expectation.

Historical Context

Isaiah 65:1-7 contrasted rebellious Israel with God's availability to outsiders. In Paul's day, this prophecy found dramatic fulfillment: Gentiles like Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16:14), and countless pagans were transformed, while synagogues

expelled gospel messengers (Acts 13:50; 17:5; 18:6). The irony was bitter: covenant insiders became outsiders, while outsiders became insiders (Matt 8:11-12; 21:43). This pattern continues: often the least religious, most broken people respond to the gospel while the self-righteous resist.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's seeking of non-seekers (Gentiles) magnify the freeness and sovereignty of grace?
2. Were you a seeker when God found you, or did He awaken desire in a dead heart?
3. How should this verse shape evangelism—should we target "seekers" or boldly proclaim to the indifferent?

Interlinear Text

Ἡσαΐας	δὲ	ἀποτολμᾷ	καὶ	λέγει	Εὐρέθην	τοῖς	ἐμὲ	μὴ
Esaias	But	is very bold	and	saith	I was found	G3588	me	not
G2268	G1161	G662	G2532	G3004	G2147		G1691	G3361
ζητοῦσιν	ἐμφανῆς	ἐγενόμην	τοῖς	ἐμὲ	μὴ			
of them that sought	manifest	I was made	G3588	me	not			
G2212	G1717	G1096		G1691	G3361			
ἐπερωτῶσιν								
after								
G1905								

Additional Cross-References

Romans 9:30 (Parallel theme): What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Isaiah 49:6 (Parallel theme): And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Luke 14:23 (Parallel theme): And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Isaiah 58:1 (Parallel theme): Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Isaiah 52:15 (Parallel theme): So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Proverbs 28:1 (Parallel theme): The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Matthew 20:16 (Parallel theme): So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.