

Romans 11:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

Analysis

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see—skotisthētōsan (σκοτισθήτωσαν) is an aorist passive imperative, expressing David's prayer for judicial blinding. The continuation of Psalm 69:23 adds: **and bow down their back alway** (synkampson dia pantos, σύγκαμψον διὰ παντός). This depicts permanent subjugation, a bent back that cannot straighten—a posture of burden and bondage.

The imagery is powerful: spiritual blindness leads to perpetual slavery. Those who reject truth become enslaved to error. Yet Paul's use of this text is not to declare Israel's permanent rejection but to explain their temporary hardening (v. 25). The phrase "alway" (dia pantos) seems permanent, but Paul will reinterpret this in light of Israel's future restoration (vv. 26-27). The judicial hardening is real but not final.

Historical Context

The imagery of a 'bent back' would resonate with Roman readers familiar with conquered peoples bearing burdens of slavery. Ironically, Israel—called to be a kingdom of priests—bears the burden of judicial hardening for rejecting their King. Yet this is not the end of their story.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual blindness lead to spiritual bondage, and what does this teach about the progressive nature of rejecting truth?
2. What hope is implied by Paul quoting this 'permanent' judgment in a context where he will argue for Israel's future restoration?
3. How do we avoid the hardening that comes from misusing spiritual privileges?

Interlinear Text

σκοτισθήτωσαν	οἱ	ὀφθαλμοὶ	αὐτῶν	τοῦ	μὴ	βλέπειν
Let G4654	G3588	eyes G3788	their G846	G3588	not G3361	see G991
καὶ	τὸν	νῶτον	αὐτῶν	διαπαντός	σύγκαμψον	
and G2532	G3588	back G3577	their G846	alway G1275	bow down G4781	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 69:23 (Darkness): Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

2 Peter 2:4 (Darkness): For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Romans 11:8 (Parallel theme): (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

Romans 1:21 (Darkness): Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

