

Romans 11:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Analysis

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes—*kata men to euangelion echthroi di hymas* (κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι’ ὑμᾶς). With regard to the gospel, Israel is currently in enmity (echthroi, ἐχθροὶ)—not God's enemies, but enemies of the gospel, opposing it. This enmity serves a purpose: **for your sakes** (Gentile inclusion, as argued in vv. 11-12). Yet Paul immediately contrasts: **but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes** (*kata de tēn eklogēn agapētoi dia tous pateras, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοὺς πατέρας*).

This is the paradox: Israel is simultaneously enemy (functionally, in unbelief) and beloved (covenantally, in election). The basis of their beloved status is *dia tous pateras* (διὰ τοὺς πατέρας, "because of the fathers")—God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God's love for the patriarchs extends to their descendants. Israel's election is irrevocable, even when they oppose the gospel. This dual status—enemy yet beloved—is the mystery of God's dealings with Israel.

Historical Context

First-century Israel largely rejected the gospel, yet Paul insists they remain 'beloved' due to election. This tension persists: Jewish opposition to Christianity coexists with God's covenant love. Paul holds both truths without resolving the tension prematurely (v. 33 acknowledges mystery).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How can Israel be simultaneously 'enemies' concerning the gospel and 'beloved' concerning election?
2. What does it mean that God's love for Israel is 'for the fathers' sakes'—how do the patriarchs' promises apply today?
3. How should this dual status shape Christian attitudes toward Jewish people who reject Jesus?

Interlinear Text

κατὰ	μὲν	τὸ	εὐαγγέλιον	ἐχθροὶ	διὰ	ὑμᾶς
As concerning	G3303	G3588	the gospel	they are enemies	for	G5209
G2596			G2098	G2190	G1223	

κατὰ	δὲ	τὴν	ἐκλογὴν	ἀγαπητοὶ	διὰ	τοὺς
As concerning	but	G3588	the election	they are beloved	for	G3588
G2596	G1161		G1589	G27	G1223	

πατέρας·

the fathers

G3962

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 10:15 (Love): Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Romans 9:5 (Parallel theme): Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Matthew 21:43 (Parallel theme): Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org