

Romans 11:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

Analysis

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for—*ho epitēdei* (ὁ ἐπιτηδεῖ) refers to righteousness and covenant blessing. National Israel as a whole failed to obtain the goal pursued, because they pursued it by works (9:31-32). **But the election hath obtained it**—*hē ekloge* (ἡ ἐκλογή, "the elect") refers to the remnant chosen by grace. They obtained righteousness through faith in Christ.

And the rest were blinded (*epōrōthēsan*, ἐπωρώθησαν)—the verb means to harden, petrify, or make callous. The passive voice suggests divine agency (theological passive): God judicially hardened those who persistently rejected truth. This hardening is not arbitrary cruelty but a response to willful unbelief. Paul will quote Isaiah 29:10 and Psalm 69:22-23 (vv. 8-10) to show this hardening was prophesied. The remnant/hardening distinction explains first-century Israel: some believed (elect remnant), most rejected (judicially hardened).

Historical Context

By the late 50s AD, most synagogues had expelled Jewish believers in Jesus (John 9:22; 12:42). The majority of Israel did not recognize Jesus as Messiah, fulfilling prophetic patterns of remnant theology throughout Israel's history (Isaiah 6:9-10; 10:22-23).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the doctrine of election comfort believers while also sobering them regarding unbelief?
2. What is judicial hardening, and how does it differ from arbitrary divine cruelty?
3. How should we balance the mystery of election with genuine evangelistic urgency for those who are 'hardened'?

Interlinear Text

τί	οὐν	ὅ	ἐπιζητεῖ	Ἰσραήλ	τούτου	οὐκ	ἐπέτυχεν·
What	then	which	he seeketh for	Israel	that	not	hath
G5101	G3767	G3739	G1934	G2474	G5127	G3756	G2013
ἢ	δὲ	ἐκλογὴ	ἐπέτυχεν·	οἱ	δὲ	λοιποὶ	ἐπωρώθησαν
G3588	and	the election		G3588	and	the rest	were blinded
G1161		G1589		G1161		G3062	G4456

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 4:4 (Parallel theme): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Romans 9:18 (Parallel theme): Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Romans 11:25 (References Israel): For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Romans 11:5 (Parallel theme): Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

2 Corinthians 3:14 (Parallel theme): But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

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