

Romans 11:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

(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.

Analysis

Paul now supports verse 7's hardening claim with Scripture: **(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber**—pneuma katanyxeōs (πνεῦμα κατανύξεως), literally "spirit of stupor" or deep sleep. This conflates Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4, showing a divine judicial act. God gave (edōken, ἔδωκεν) this stupor—the hardening is not merely permissive but active, though in response to their rejection.

Eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear—this echoes Isaiah 6:9-10, the paradigmatic hardening text Jesus quoted (Matthew 13:14-15). The phrase **unto this day** (heōs tēs sēmeron hēmeras, ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας) shows the hardening continued into Paul's era. Israel's spiritual insensitivity was not new—it marked their history from Moses forward. Yet Paul's "unto this day" implies this condition is temporal, not eternal—a key point he'll develop (vv. 25-26).

Historical Context

Isaiah 29:10 warned of spiritual dullness during Judah's declining years before exile. Paul applies this prophetic pattern to first-century Israel's rejection of Messiah. The 'hardening' explains why Jesus taught in parables (Mark 4:11-12)—judicial blinding of those who persistently rejected light.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's judicial hardening differ from simply abandoning people to their choices?
2. What warning does this verse provide about the danger of persistent rejection of revealed truth?
3. How does the phrase 'unto this day' suggest both continuity (ongoing hardening) and limitation (not forever)?

Interlinear Text

καθὼς	γέγραπται	Ἐδωκεν	αὐτοῖς	ό	θεὸς	πνεῦμα	
(According as	it is written	hath given	them	G3588	God	the spirit	
G2531	G1125	G1325	G846	G2316	G4151		
κατανύξεως	όφθαλμοὺς	τοῦ	μὴ	βλέπειν	καὶ	ὤτα	τοῦ
of slumber	eyes	G3588	not	see	and	ears	G3588
G2659	G3788	G3361	G991	G2532	G3775		
μὴ	ἀκούειν	ἔως	τῆς	σήμερον	ἡμέρας		
not	hear	unto	G3588	this	day		
G3361	G191	G2193	G4594	G2250			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 29:4 (Parallel theme): Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

Isaiah 29:10 (Spirit): For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

Ezekiel 12:2 (Parallel theme): Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

Jeremiah 5:21 (Parallel theme): Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

Luke 8:10 (References God): And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Acts 28:26 (Parallel theme): Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

Isaiah 6:9 (Parallel theme): And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

2 Kings 17:41 (Parallel theme): So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

2 Kings 17:34 (Parallel theme): Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;