

Romans 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Analysis

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Continuing the catena from Psalm 14:2. Ouk estin ho syniōn (οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων, "there is none who understands")—intellectual corruption. Ouk estin ho ekzētōn ton theon (οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν, "there is none who seeks God")—volitional rebellion.

Human depravity is both noetic (affecting the mind) and moral (affecting the will). No one naturally comprehends spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:14) or desires God. This contradicts the Pelagian notion of human ability to initiate seeking God. In biblical theology, God always seeks first (Luke 19:10); human seeking is always responsive to prevenient grace. Paul's anthropology is bleak: left to ourselves, we neither understand nor desire our Creator.

Historical Context

Against Greek philosophy's optimism about human reason and Jewish confidence in Torah knowledge, Paul asserts radical noetic effects of sin. Even possessing Scripture (v. 2) does not guarantee understanding—spiritual illumination requires divine initiative (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge the popular notion that "everyone is seeking God in their own way"?
2. What does it mean that fallen humans lack both the understanding and desire for God?
3. How should this truth shape your evangelism and apologetics—what must happen before anyone seeks God?

Interlinear Text

οὐκ	ἔστιν	ὁ	συνίων	οὐκ	ἔστιν	ὁ	ἐκζητῶν
none	There is	G3588	that understandeth	none	There is	G3588	that seeketh after
G3756	G2076		G4920	G3756	G2076		G1567
τὸν	θεόν						
G3588	God						
	G2316						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 53:2 (References God): God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.

Romans 8:7 (References God): Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Hosea 4:6 (References God): My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Titus 3:3 (Parallel theme): For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Isaiah 65:1 (Parallel theme): I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

Isaiah 55:6 (Parallel theme): Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Jeremiah 4:22 (Parallel theme): For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

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