

# Romans 11:5-8 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Romans 11:1](#)  
[Romans 11:2](#)  
[Romans 11:3](#)  
[Romans 11:4](#)  
[Romans 11:5](#)  
[Romans 11:6](#)  
[Romans 11:7](#)  
[Romans 11:8](#)  
[Romans 11:9](#)  
[Romans 11:10](#)  
[Romans 11:11](#)  
[Romans 11:12](#)  
[Romans 11:13](#)  
[Romans 11:14](#)  
[Romans 11:15](#)  
[Romans 11:16](#)  
[Romans 11:17](#)  
[Romans 11:18](#)  
[Romans 11:19](#)  
[Romans 11:20](#)  
[Romans 11:21](#)  
[Romans 11:22](#)  
[Romans 11:23](#)  
[Romans 11:24](#)  
[Romans 11:25](#)  
[Romans 11:26](#)  
[Romans 11:27](#)  
[Romans 11:28](#)  
[Romans 11:29](#)  
[Romans 11:30](#)  
[Romans 11:31](#)  
[Romans 11:32](#)  
[Romans 11:33](#)  
[Romans 11:34](#)  
[Romans 11:35](#)  
[Romans 11:36](#)

## Summary of Romans 9-11

Romans 9	Romans 10	Romans 11
<b>Past Election</b>	<b>Present Rejection</b>	<b>Future Reception</b>
God's Sovereignty Israel's Election by God	Man's responsibility Israel's Rejection of God	God's Ways Higher God Not Rejecting Israel

Romans 11:5 In the [same way then](#), there has [also come](#) to be at the [present time](#) a [remnant according](#) to God's [gracious](#)

**Greek:** [houtos oun kai en to nun kairo leimma kat' eklogen charitos gegonen: \(3SRAl\)](#)

**Amplified:** So too at the present time there is a remnant (a small believing minority), selected (chosen) by grace (by God's unmerited favor and graciousness).

**ESV:** So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

**ICB:** It is the same now. There are a few people that God has chosen by his grace.

**NIV:** So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

**NKJV:** Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

**NLT:** It is the same today, for not all the Jews have turned away from God. A few are being saved as a result of God's kindness in choosing them.

**Phillips:** In just the same way, there is at the present time a minority chosen by the grace of God.

**Wuest:** Therefore, thus also at this present season a remnant according to a choice of grace has come into being.

**Young's Literal:** So then also in the present time a remnant according to the choice of grace there hath been;

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	WORK OF SALVATION

#### Related resources

- Summary on the Attributes of God
- Spurgeon on the Attributes of God
- Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?
- [Table Comparing/contrasting Israel & Church](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program? - John Walvoord](#)
- [The Jewish People, Jesus Christ and World History - S Lewis Johnson](#)
- [Eschatological Problems IX- Israel's Restoration - John Walvoord](#)
- [Will Israel Build a Temple in Jerusalem- Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems V - Is the Church the Israel of God- Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems VI- The Fulfillment Of The Abrahamic Covenant - Walvoord](#)
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- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 2 - Walvoord](#)
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#### Online Book by Dr John Walvoord - Israel in Prophecy

- [Chapter I The New State Of Israel](#)
- [Chapter II The Promise To Abraham](#)
- [Chapter III Israel's Future As A Nation](#)
- [Chapter IV The Promise Of The Land To Israel](#)
- [Chapter V The Kingdom Promised To David](#)
- [Chapter VI The Suffering Of Israel](#)
- [Chapter VII The Glorious Restoration Of Israel](#)

- [Selected Bibliography](#)

#### Online Articles by Arnold Fruchtenbaum related to Israel

- [Israelology: Part 1 of 6 Introduction: Definition of Terms](#)
- [Israelology: Part 2 of 6 Israel Present \(Note: Article begins on Page 2\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 3 of 6 Israel Present \(Continued\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 4 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part One\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 5 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part Two\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 6 of 6 Other Relevant Topics - Illustrations of Israel \(including marriage\)](#)

**Are you confused about God's plan for Israel?** Then I highly recommend Tony Garland's 12 Hour Course on **Romans 9-11** in which he addresses in depth the question of What Will Happen to Israel? (click) or see the individual lectures below)

- [Romans 9:1-5 Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel](#)
- [Romans 9:6-13 Children of the Promise](#)
- [Romans 9:14-24 The Potter and the Clay](#)
- [Romans 9:25-33 A Remnant Will be Saved](#)
- [Romans 10:1-13 The Righteousness of God](#)
- [Romans 10:14-21 Has Israel Not Heard?](#)
- [Romans 11:1-6 God Has Not Cast Away The Jews](#)
- [Romans 11:7-15 Life from the Dead](#)
- [Romans 11:16-24 Two Olive Trees](#)
- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#)

Note that when you click the preceding links, each link will in turn give you several choices including an **Mp3 message** and brief transcript notes. The Mp3's are long (avg 70+ min) but are in depth and thoroughly Scriptural with many quotations from the Old Testament, which is often much less well understood than the NT by many in the church today. Garland takes a literal approach to Scripture, and his love for the Jews and passion to see them saved comes through very clearly in these 12 hours of teaching! Take your home Bible Study group through this series if you dare. Take notes on the tapes as the transcripts are a very abbreviated version of the audio messages. This course is highly recommended for all who love Israel! I think you will agree that Tony Garland, despite coming to faith after age 30 as an engineer, clearly has been given a special anointing by God to promulgate the truth concerning Israel and God's glorious future plan for the Jews. Garland has also produced more than 20 hours of superb audio teaching in his verse by verse commentary on the [Revelation](#) (in depth transcripts also available) which will unravel (in a way you did not think was possible considering the plethora of divergent interpretations) God's final message of the triumph and return of the our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords! Maranatha!

**IN THE SAME WAY THEN THERE HAS ALSO COME TO BE AT THE PRESENT TIME A REMNANT: houtos oun kai en to nun kairo leimma kat ekloghen charitos gegonen (3SRAI):**

- Ro 11:6,7; 9:27
- Ro 11:28; 9:11; Ephesians 1:5,6
- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE GLORIOUS DOCTRINE OF THE REMNANT

**In the same way** - This phrase relates to the previous statement that "I have kept for myself" (Ro 11:4) which reflects God's gracious choice ~ God's Sovereignty in salvation.

**Come to be** ([1096](#)) (**ginomai**) means to cause to be ("gen"-erate), to become or to come into existence. The verb **come to be** is in the **perfect tense** which means that this remnant has come into existence at a point in time in the past and is a permanent part of the great host of the saved. (just another small "jot or tittle" supporting the great truth that one cannot lose his or her salvation).

**Remnant** ([3005](#)) (**leimma** from **leipo** = to leave or to lack) describes that which is left or that which remains. Ro 11:5 is the only NT use and speaks of those in Israel who will be saved by God's gracious choice. There are two uses of **leimma** in the **Septuagint 2**

**Webster** = a usually small part, member, or trace remaining; a small surviving group.

**Gilbrant** - The **Septuagint** uses **leimma** to refer to the forces of Israel in Jerusalem. When Sennacherib invaded the land and threatened to destroy Jerusalem, King Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray for "the remnant" who were left (2 Kings 19:4). Those left in Israel under Gedaliah (Jeremiah 40) were the "remnant." When they went to Egypt, no remnant remained (in Israel). Then, those who returned from Babylon became the "**remnant**" (Hertrich, "leimma," Kittel, 4:197). **Leimma** is a two-edged sword in Isaiah's writings. He prophesied that a **remnant** would return, a promise of hope. Involved in this, however, Isaiah was prophesying that only a **remnant** would return. Hence, **leimma** speaks of salvation and judgment at the same time. The only New Testament use of **leimma** is in Romans 11:5 where Paul said of Israel: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." God has always preserved a remnant who would serve Him. The **remnant** is grounded in God's action (ibid., 4:204). Paul saw the partial fulfillment of the **remnant** prophecies in his day and wrote of it in Romans 9–11. Those (JEWS, BUT ALSO APPLICABLE TO GENTILES) who are now part of the **remnant** are people who put their faith in Jesus Christ. God will again deal with His people Israel when He establishes the Messianic Kingdom (ibid., 4:209ff.). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- See onsite study of the important Biblical doctrine of remnant
- [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - remnant](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Remnant](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Remnant](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Remnant](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Remnant](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Remnant](#)
- Webster Dictionary
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Remnant](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Remnant of Israel](#)
- [What does the Bible mean when it refers to a remnant?](#)
- [Will all Israel be saved in the end times?](#)

Paul uses **leimma** in this verse to describe that group of Jews in national Israel which was left (so to speak) out of the general apostasy (abandonment of a previous loyalty) of most of Israel. Yes, most of the "chosen people" chose not to bow down to Jehovah, the great "I Am" but to bow down and kiss Baal, the pitiful "is not" (i.e., an idol is nothing). This remnant of Jews who placed their faith in the Messiah were "left" because God graciously elected them. Remember that "elect" is from **ekloge** which means to select or pick out some from a larger number.

**Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** defines **remnant** as "the part of a community or nation that remains after a dreadful judgment or devastating calamity, especially those who have escaped and remain to form the nucleus of a new community. The survival of a righteous remnant rests solely on God's providential care for His Chosen People and His faithfulness to keep His Covenant promises. The concept of the remnant has its roots in the Book of Deuteronomy (Dt 4:27, 28, 29, 30, 31), where Moses warned the people of Israel that they would be scattered among the nations. But God also promised that He would bring the people back from captivity and establish them again in the land of their fathers. This concept was picked up by the prophets, who spoke of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. The concept was extended to apply also to the gathering of a righteous remnant at the time when the Messiah came to establish His kingdom." ([Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K](#))

The **Tyndale Bible Dictionary** summarizes the **remnant** concisely explaining that it refers to a "group of people who survive a catastrophe brought about by God, ordinarily in judgment for sin. This group becomes the nucleus for the continuation of mankind or the people of God; the future existence of the larger group depends on this purified, holy remnant that has undergone and survived the judgment of God. The **remnant** concept is found in all periods of redemptive history where catastrophe—be it natural disaster, disease, warfare, or other instruments—threatens the continuity of God's purposes. From the Creation account to the end of the OT, the concept is progressively sharpened. ([Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W](#))

**Time** (2540) (**kairos**) means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It means a moment or period as especially appropriate the right, proper, favorable time (at the right time). A season. A point of time. A moment. An opportunity. Something that lasts for a season and so is transient, temporary or enduring only for a specific period of time.

**Trench** says **kairos** = the seasons... the critical epoch-making periods foreordained of God ... when all that has been slowly, and

often without observation, ripening through long ages is mature and comes to the birth in grand decisive events which constitute at once the close of one period and the commencement of another.

The time to which Paul had reference was a strategic one, one marked by the inclusion of the Gentiles together with the Jew in the one Body of Christ, a time at which, while the Gentiles gladly received the Word, Israel was apostate, a time at which in spite of Israel's apostasy, there was a remnant in Israel saved in the sovereign grace of God.

Although the nation had rejected Jesus, thousands of individual Jews had come to faith in Him (Acts 2:41 4:4; 6:1).

**Remnant Summary** (Click study on **remnant**): In the history of Israel a remnant may be discerned, a true heart circumcised born again by faith remnant of "spiritual" Israel within the nation of Israel. In Elijah's time 7000 had not bowed the knee to Baal (1Ki 19:18). In Isaiah's time, Israel had been reduced to only a few godly "survivors" (Isa 1:9), for whose sake God still forebore to destroy the nation. During the captivities the remnant appears in Jews like Esther, Mordecai, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. At the end of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity it was the remnant that returned under Ezra and Nehemiah. At the advent of our Lord, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and those "who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) were the remnant. During the Church Age the remnant is composed of believing Jews (Ro 11:4-5). But an important aspect of the remnant is prophetic. During the great tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah, including the "sealed" Israelites of [Rev 7:3-8]. A great multitude of Gentiles [Rev 7:9] will also be saved during the great tribulation. Some of these will undergo martyrdom (Rev 6:9-11), some will be spared to enter the millennial kingdom (Zec 12:6-13:9). Many of the Psalms express, prophetically, the joys and sorrows of the remnant.

#### ACCORDING TO GOD'S GRACIOUS CHOICE (lit = choice of grace): kat ekloghen charitos:

- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Why did God keep a remnant? Grace.

**Gracious** (5485) (**charis**) is God's unmerited favor. They (as did we all) deserved hell but God granted them "heaven" so to speak!

**Grace** is genitive of description. The ground or motivating factor in this choice of certain in Israel who were to be the objects of the sovereign choice of God for salvation, was grace, the spontaneous overflowing love of God bestowing the gift of salvation upon one who does not only not deserve that gift, but deserves appropriate punishment for his sins (compare a vessel of wrath otherwise prepared for destruction).

God did not choose this remnant because of its natural or racial descent or their "good works" (for as Jesus says "apart from Me you can do nothing"), but solely because of His grace, His unmerited favor (Dt 7:7-8 Ep 2:8-9 2 Ti 1:9).

**Choice** (1589) (**ekloge** in turn from **ek** = out + **lego** = select, choose, **eklegomai** [**eklego**] meaning to choose or select for oneself, but not necessarily implying rejection of what is not chosen. See study of related word **eklektos** = elect) means literally a choosing out, a picking out, a selection or an election (2Pe 1:10, 1Th 1:4 - referring to God's selection of believers). In the passive sense **ekloge** refers to God's selection for a purpose or task. In other words it represents a special choice as when God referred to Paul as "my chosen instrument" (Acts 9:15). In Ro 11:28 ekloge speaks of God's choice of Israel, who were selected by Him to carry out His specific plan of redemption for mankind.

#### Related Resources:

- [Elect, Election - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Elect, Election - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Elect, Elected, Election - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#)
- [Election - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [How can I know if I am one of the elect?](#)
- [Who are the elect of God?](#)
- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?](#)

Romans 11:6 But **if** it is by **grace**, it is **no longer** on the **basis** of **works**, **otherwise grace** is **no longer grace**.

Greek: [ei de chariti, ouketi ex ergon, epei e charis ouketi ginetai](#) (3SPMI) [charis](#)

**Amplified:** But if it is by grace (His unmerited favor and graciousness), it is no longer conditioned on works or anything men have done. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace [it would be meaningless].

**ESV:** But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

**ICB:** And if God chose them by grace, then it is not for the things they have done. If they could be made God's people by what they did, then God's gift of grace would not really be a gift.

**NIV:** And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

**NKJV:** And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

**NLT:** And if they are saved by God's kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God's wonderful kindness would not be what it really is--free and undeserved.

**Phillips:** And if it is a matter of the grace of God, it cannot be a question of their actions especially deserving God's favour, for that would make grace meaningless.

**Wuest:** But since it is by grace, no longer is it out of a source of works. Otherwise no longer is grace, grace.

**Young's Literal:** and if by grace, no more of works, otherwise the grace becometh no more grace; and if of works, it is no more grace, otherwise the work is no more work.

#### **BUT IF IT IS BY GRACE IT IS NO LONGER ON THE BASIS OF WORKS: ei de chariti, ouketi ex ergon**

- Ro 3:27,28; 4:4,5; 5:20,21; Gal 2:21; 5:4; Eph 2:4-9; 2Ti 1:9; Titus 3:5
- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But** - Always pause to ponder this **term of contrast**.

**Grace** (5485) (**charis**) is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32-note where "freely give" is **charizomai** from charis = a grace gift!). Grace addresses man's sin, while mercy addresses man's misery. The gift of grace makes men fit for salvation, miraculously making separated strangers into God's beloved sons (1Th 1:4-note, 1Jn 3:1-note, 1Jn 3:2-note, 1Jn 3:3-note).

**J H Jowett** summarizes grace as God's "holy love on the move" (Another source attributes this quote to H G C Moule). This reminds me of the phrase that God is like the "hound of heaven" chasing after sinners, sinners who before Christ saved them by grace through faith, chased after sin but now because of the transforming power of sanctifying grace, they no longer chase after sin but sin "chases" after them! And so we see the continual need for God's grace!

**Eadie** in his commentary on Ephesians writes that grace (charis) is "that goodwill on God's part which not only provides and applies salvation, but blesses, cheers, and assists believers. As a wish expressed for the Ephesian church, it does not denote mercy in its general aspect, but that many-sided favour that comes in the form of hope to saints in despondency, of joy to them in sorrow, of patience to them in suffering, of victory to them under assault, and of final triumph to them in the hour of death. And so the (writer of Hebrews) calls it grace in order to well-timed assistance. (He 4:16-note) ([Commentary on Ephesians](#))

**Barclay - Charis** (5485) is a lovely word; the basic ideas in it are joy and pleasure, brightness and beauty; it is, in fact, connected with the English word charm. But with Jesus Christ there comes a new beauty to add to the beauty that was there. And that beauty is born of a new relationship to God. With Christ life becomes lovely because man is no longer the victim of God's law but the child of his love. ([Philippians 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) **Grace** has always two main ideas in it. The Greek word is **charis** (5485) which could mean charm. There must be a certain loveliness in the Christian life. A Christianity which is unattractive is no real Christianity. **Grace** always describes a gift; and a gift which it would have been impossible for a man to procure for himself, and which he never earned and in no way deserved. Whenever we mention the word **grace**, we must think of the sheer loveliness of the Christian life and the sheer undeserved generosity of the heart of God. ([Ephesians 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Note that the **remnant** is saved by grace and not by works (cf Ro 4:4-5) which parallels the truth Paul taught in [Ro 9:30-33]. It is impossible to mix grace and works, for the one cancels the other. Israel's main concern had always been in trying to please God with good works (Ro 9:30-10:4). The nation refused to submit to Christ's righteousness (Ro 10:4-5), just as religious, self-righteous people refuse to submit today.

This truth is found in a parallel verse in **Deuteronomy** where **Moses** warns the nation of Israel...

"Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people. (Deuteronomy 9:4-6)

#### OTHERWISE GRACE IS NO LONGER GRACE: epei e charis ouketi ginetai (3SPMI) charis

- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

We see the same thought in Ro 4:4 "Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor (charis - grace), but as what is due."

If it were on the basis of works God's grace would not be what it really is -- free and undeserved. Human effort and God's grace are therefore mutually exclusive ways to salvation.

Writing to the Galatian churches Paul stated that...

If you seek to be justified and declared righteous and to be given a right standing with God through the Law, you are brought to nothing and so separated (severed) from Christ. You have fallen away from grace (from God's gracious favor and unmerited blessing). (Galatians 2:21, Amplified)

Paul understood grace as shown by his testimony to the Corinthians that...

by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1Corinthians 15:10-note)

**Henry Alford**, commenting on the contents of verse six, says "And let us remember, when we say an election of grace, how much those words imply: namely, nothing short of the entire exclusion of all human work from the question. Let these two terms be regarded as, and kept distinct from one another, and do not let us attempt to mix them and so destroy the meaning of each." ([Romans 11](#))

**Romans 11:7** [What then](#) ? [What Israel](#) is [seeking](#), it has not [obtained](#), but [those](#) who were [chosen](#) [obtained](#) it, and the [rest](#) were [hardened](#);

**Greek:** [ti oun? o epizetei](#) (3SPMI) [Israel](#), [touto ouk epetuchen](#), (3SAAI) [e de ekloge epetuchen](#): (3SAAI) [oi de loipoi eporothesan](#) (3PAPI)

**Amplified:** What then [shall we conclude]? Israel failed to obtain what it sought [God's favor by obedience to the Law]. Only the elect (those chosen few) obtained it, while the rest of them became callously indifferent (blinded, hardened, and made insensible to it).

**ESV:** What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

**ICB:** So this is what has happened: The people of Israel tried to be right with God. But they did not succeed. But the ones God chose did become right with him. The others became hard and refused to listen to God.

**NIV:** What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened,

**NKJV:** What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

**NLT:** So this is the situation: Most of the Jews have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have--the ones God has chosen--but the rest were made unresponsive.

**Phillips:** What conclusion do we reach now? That Israel did not, on the whole, obtain the object of his striving, but a chosen few "got there", while the remainder became more and more insensitive to the righteousness of



God.

**Wuest:** What then? That which Israel is constantly seeking, this it did not obtain. But those chosen out obtained it. And the rest were hardened

**Young's Literal:** What then? What Israel doth seek after, this it did not obtain, and the chosen did obtain, and the rest were hardened,

**WHAT THEN? THAT WHICH ISRAEL IS SEEKING FOR IT HAS NOT OBTAINED: Ti oun o epizetei (3SPMI) Israel, touto ouk epetuchen (3SAAI):**

- Ro 3:9; 6:15; 1 Cor 10:19; Php 1:18
- Ro 9:31,32; 10:3; Pr 1:28; Luke 13:24; Heb 12:17
- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Seeking** (1934) (epizeteo from epi = intensifies meaning + zeteo = try to learn location of something, searching for) means to search or look for (people [Jesus] Lk 4:42). To seek in order to know describing an intellectual inquiry (Acts 19:39). To have a strong desire for and so to wish for (Mt 6:32, Lk 12:30 Ro 11:7). To desire (a sign = Mt 12:39, 16:4, Lk 11:29). Inquire of (Lxx = 2Ki 1:3). Seek a charge (Lxx = 2Sa 3:8)

What was Israel "so earnestly" seeking? The answer can be found in [Ro 9:30-10:3] -- They were pursuing righteousness, a right standing before God. The situation was ironic. The Jews zealously sought to be accepted by God on the basis of works and the righteousness of the Law (cf. Romans 10:2-3). However, they were not accepted by God; only the elect were, because of God's sovereign choice by grace.

So this is the situation: Most of the Jews have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. Why? [Ro 9:32] Because it is obtained only by faith and they were stubborn and rebellious.

The writer of **Hebrews** says that...

(NASB) indeed we have had good news (gospel) preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard."

(Amplified " For indeed we have had the glad tidings [Gospel of God] proclaimed to us just as truly as they [the Israelites of old did when the good news of deliverance from bondage came to them]; but the message they heard did not benefit them, because it was not mixed with faith (with the leaning of the entire personality on God in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness) by those who heard it; neither were they united in faith with the ones [Joshua and Caleb] who heard (did believe)." (Hebrews 4:2)

**BUT THOSE WHO WERE CHOSEN OBTAINED IT AND THE REST WERE HARDENED: e de ekloge epetuchen (3SAAI) oi de loipoi eporothesan (3PAPI):**

- Ro 11:5; Ro 8:28-30; 9:23; Ephesians 1:4; 2Th 2:13,14; 1Peter 1:2
- Isaiah 6:10; 44:18; Matthew 13:14,15; John 12:40; 2Cor 3:14; 4:4; 2Th 2:10-12
- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

**Multiple related passages dealing with "judicial hardening" and the related topic of Jesus speaking in parables** - Dt 29:4+, Isa 6:9,10+ Mt 13:11-15+ Mk 4:11-12+ Lk 8:10+ Jn 9:39-41, Jn 12:38-40 Acts 28:26,27+ Ro 11:7-10+, 2Co 3:14-15+, Eph 4:17-18+, 2Th 2:10-12+.

## GOD'S ELECTION

**But** - Always pause to ponder this **term of contrast**.

**Chosen** (1589) (ekloge from eklegomai in turn from ek = out + légo = select, choose, eklegomai meaning to choose or select for oneself, but not necessarily implying rejection of what is not chosen) means literally a choosing out and in Scripture speaks of



election, the benevolent purpose of God by which **any** are chosen unto salvation so that they are led to embrace and persevere in Christ's bestowed grace and the enjoyment of its privileges and blessings here and hereafter. Although not used in this way in the present context, *ekloge*, can describe election which is vocational. The Lord called out the tribe of Levi to be His priests, but Levites were not thereby guaranteed salvation. Jesus called twelve men to be apostles but only eleven of them to salvation. After Paul came to Christ because of God's election to salvation, God then chose him in another way to be His special apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom. 1:5).

**Obtained** (2013) (**epitugchano** from **epí** = intensifier + **tugcháno** = obtain, meet by chance, meet with, fall in with a person, hit the mark, to attain) means to hit, especially hit a mark with an arrow, to chance upon, and to to attain or obtain. The idea is to obtain or gain what is sought after.

**The rest were hardened** - the remainder.

**Rest** (others, finally, remaining, other things) (3062)(**loipos** from **leipo** = to leave or to lack) is an adjective which refers to that which remains over - where it refers to people the sense is the rest, those that are left, the remainder (cf. Mt 22: 6; Mk 16:13; Lk 24: 9; Acts 2:37; Ro 11: 7; 1Co. 7:12; Rev. 12:17; 19:21). In the plural, *loipos* means remaining ones (Mt. 25:11; Acts 2:37; Ro 1:13; 2Cor. 12:13; 2Pet. 3:16) *Loipos* is used several times with the meaning of "other" which Webster defines as being the one (as of two or more) remaining or not included (Mk 4:19, 16:13, Lk 18:9, Acts 17:19, Rev 9:20)

They were "covered with a thick skin" or "hardened by covering with a callous" which was a metaphor meaning to make the heart dull as in (Jn 12:40). (Lk 8:10) perfectly illustrates the elect remnant & the rest being hardened to not be able to understand what He was saying.

The Lord says to **Isaiah** after he cries "*Send me*" to...

"Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' 10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed." 11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered, "Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people, And the land is utterly desolate... ([Isaiah 6:9-11](#))

**Comment:** Isaiah's preaching would not be that the people would repent but that they would harden their hearts against his messages. Isaiah's message was to be God's instrument for hiding the truth from an unreceptive people. Centuries later, Jesus' parables were to do the same

Matt 13:14 "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

Matt 13:15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'

John 12:40 "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED, AND I HEAL THEM."

2Cor 3:14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

2Cor 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Note in the passage in Isaiah, the prophet asks "How Long?" and God explains that Israel's spiritual hardening will not be forever thus implying that there would be a remnant of believing Israel (see Isaiah 6:13).

**Hardened** (4456) (**poroo** from **poros** = small piece of stone broken off from a larger one) means to make hard like a stone, and so to make callous or insensitive to touch. Here as elsewhere in the New Testament, **poroo** is used only figuratively and specifically only in a spiritual sense referring to the effect on one's heart and mind. **Poroo** is used in this verse (and the noun form, **porosis**, is used in Romans 11:25) with a meaning similar to the verb **skleruno** in Ro 9:18 ("So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He **hardens** whom He desires").

Some versions translate **poroo** in this verse as "**blinded**".

**NIDNTT** has the following note on **poroo** "(from Hippocrates on) is derived from **poros**, tufa or tuff (porous stone), and means to

harden, to form a callus (when broken bones heal), and thus to petrify, to become hard. (Colin Brown: New International Dictionary of NT Theology)

**Kenneth Wuest** comments that **poroo** means "to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callous," metaphorically, "to make the heart dull" (John 12:40). (Wuest's Word Studies in the New Testament)

**William Barclay** has a lengthy comment

**Poroo** is the verb and **porosis** is the noun which are used in the NT to express the idea of what the AV calls 'the hardening of the hearts of men'. These words are interesting, not only for their history, but also for a most suggestive shift of meaning which they undergo.

At the back of both of them there is the word **oros**. **Poros** is used in a variety of senses. Basically it means a kind of stone, which Theophrastus in his work on stones describes as a stone like Parian marble in colour and in texture but lighter. Aristotle used the word for a stalactite, one of these solidified drippings of water in a cavern. In the papyri the word is used of the kind of stone that is used to pack the foundation course of a building. Medically the words have certain technical uses. **Poros** means the chalk stone that forms in the joints and paralyses action. It also means a stone in the bladder; and **porosis** means the process by which a callus forms at the joining of the break when fractured bones unite. **Porosis** does not mean a callus on the skin, as, for instance, a callus formed on the hand by digging; the Greek for that is *tule*, which is not a NT word. **Porosis** is the much harder and much more irremovable bone callus that forms when a fracture unites. In all these cases it is easy to see that the basic meaning of the word is an impenetrable hardness, a hardness like bone or even marble.

The words then acquire two different sets of meanings.

(i) They are used in connexion with something which has 'lost all power of sensation'. Athenaeus has a queer story of Dionysius of Heracles. He became overfat from over-eating. He became subject to fits of coma. His surgeons could only arouse him by pricking him with long needles. And even then certain parts of his body had lost all power of feeling because the fat had lost its sense of feeling. It had become *peparomene*, which is the perfect participle passive of the verb *poroun*. The words have now become definitely connected with 'loss of feeling'.

(ii) The words become connected with the idea of 'blindness' and 'inability to see'. The word *poroun* is the only one of the group which occurs in the Septuagint, and it only occurs once, in Job 17.7 where the AV has it : 'Mine eyes have grown dim by reason of sorrow.'

So then we may say that at the back of them this group of words has three ideas—the idea of 'hardness', the idea of 'lack of the power to feel', and the idea of 'blindness', lack of the power to see. With this background in our minds we turn to the NT.

**Poroo** and **porosis** together occur eight times in the NT.

(i) They describe the mental condition of a man 'who cannot see the lesson that events are designed to teach him'. In Mark 6.52 the disciples were bewildered when Jesus came to them walking on the water because they did not see the meaning of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, because their hearts were 'hardened' (*peporomene*). When they were crossing the lake, they were worried about the fact that they had forgotten to bring bread with them. This episode in Mark follows the feeding of the four thousand; and Jesus asked them why they were so worried about having no bread. 'Have you your hearts yet hardened?' He asks (*pepbromene*) (Mark 8.17). The word here describes the blind insensitiveness which will not learn a lesson. We sometimes say that things make no 'impression' on a person. Now there were certain Greek thinkers who believed that things did literally make an 'impression' on the mind. It was as if words and sights and ideas impinged on the soft, wax-like substance of the mind, and literally left an 'impression'. But clearly if the mind becomes hardened there can be no such thing as an 'impression' on it. Here the word describes unteachability. It describes the man who is so wrapped up in his own little world that nothing from any other world can touch him, the man whose mind is shut to all ideas but his own, the man who is impervious to the lessons that events are designed to teach him.

(ii) They describe the mental condition of the man 'who has made himself incapable of seeing the meaning of God's word for him'. Paul says of the Jews that their minds are 'blinded' when they hear the word of God read to them (2 Cor. 3.14). A man can lose any faculty if he will not use it. Darwin lamented the fact that he had lost

the power to appreciate music and poetry, because he had given all his time to biology. He said that if he had life to live over again he would keep that faculty of appreciation alive. If a man erects his ideas into supreme authority for long enough he will in the end be incapable of receiving the ideas of God.

(iii) They describe 'the attitude of the Jews' to God. In spite of the miracles they did not believe in Jesus because God had blinded their eyes and 'hardened' their hearts (John 12:40). These are the words that Paul twice uses to describe what had been happening to Israel throughout all her history (Rom. 11:7, 25). They describe the man who stubbornly takes his own way, who is deaf to the appeal of God, because he has been busy making God in his own image. They describe the man who thinks he knows better than God.

(iv) The immoralities of the Gentile world are due to the fact that their understandings were darkened because of the porosis of their hearts (Eph. 4:18). The idea is that they have so long stifled conscience that conscience has ceased to function. Conscience has petrified. It is so calloused that it has no sensitiveness left.

(v) When Jesus was about to heal the man with the withered hand in the Synagogue and when he saw the bleak looks of the orthodox because the deed was going to be done on a Sabbath he was grieved at the 'hardness' (porosis) of their hearts (Mark 3:5). There are two things there.

(a) They had so long identified religion with rules and regulations that they could not recognize real religion when they saw it.

(b) They had so legalized religion that they had forgotten human sympathy. Because they had so long taken their way and not God's way they were completely insensitive alike to the appeal of God and the appeal of human need.

Whenever a man sets his own ideas in the place that God should take, whenever he stubbornly goes his own way, he is on the way to a condition in which his heart is petrified, in which his heart and his conscience have become insensitive and when his eyes are blind. (adapted from from William Barclay's treatise on "New Testament Words". Westminster. John Know Press)

Those chosen and the rest hardened equate with the "**vessels of wrath**" prepared for destruction and "**vessels of mercy**" prepared beforehand for glory (Ro 9:22,23) You say if He Hardened it's "not fair" -- don't take God to court Oh man. God is fair and just. Who are we to question His justice. That any are shown mercy should cause us to give Him glory in the highest for none deserved or earned His mercy. We must look at salvation from God's viewpoint not from man's where we think we can earn His favor or since we are so good in serving Him He owes us something. Modern day Christianity has a "small" God made in man's image and needs a fresh infusion of His divine perspective on life & eternity that he might simply bow in reverential awe at so great a salvation and so wonderful a Savior!

**Why are they hardened?** It is in essence a judicial act of God for Israel's refusal to heed the Word of God (cf God's hardening in Ex 4:21 7:3 9:12 10:20, 27 11:10 14:4, 8, 17; Dt 2:30 Jn 12:40) and in response to them first hardening their hearts (Ex 8:15, 32 9:34 10:1 2Ch 36:13 Ps 95:8 Pr 28:14 Mt 19:8 Mk 3:5 Ep 4:18 Heb 3:8, 15 4:7).

Let us be very clear on what Paul is **not** saying. He is **not** saying that **divine hardening** is the cause of Israel's rejection of the gospel, but a punishment for it. Their hardening was the result of their resisting the truth, just as Pharaoh's heart was hardened because he first resisted the truth and thus first hardened his own heart. It is not surprising to see Pharaoh, a pagan idol worshipping despot, harden himself against the Lord, but it might come as a surprise that most of God's "chosen people" would do the same thing! Indeed, most of Israel was hardened because they deserved it and it was a just recompense (v9) for their sin against so great a light.

The noted Christian scholar Charles Feinberg, like Paul a believing Jew, tells the following story that gives contemporary evidence that God will never be without a believing remnant of His chosen people Israel.

Over a quarter of a century ago a Russian Jew of great learning named Joseph Rabinowitz was sent to Palestine by the Jews to buy land for them. He went to Jerusalem. One day he went up on the Mount of Olives to rest. Someone had told him to take a New Testament as the best guidebook about Jerusalem. The Christ He had known was the Christ of the Greek and Roman churches, who were his persecutors and the persecutors of his people. But as he read the New Testament he became acquainted with the real Christ of whom the Old Testament Scriptures had foretold, and his heart grew warm. He looked off toward Calvary and thought: Why is it that my people are persecuted and cast out? And his conviction gave the answer: It must be because we have put to death our Messiah. He lifted his eyes to that Messiah and said: "My Lord and my God." He came down from the mount a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He went home to Russia and erected a synagogue for the Jews, over the door of which was written: "Let all the house of Israel know that God hath

made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" [Ac2:36]. He was one of the many present remnant of Israel, which proves conclusively and better than words that God has not cast away His people.

In the following verses, **Romans 11:8-9**, Paul explains this hardening in Old Testament terms using quotes from **Deuteronomy** and **Isaiah**. Deuteronomy is used to represent the Law and Isaiah the Prophets. Thus both the Law and the Prophets testify to God's sovereign and predetermined hardening of hearts. But remember that Israel's hardening is neither capricious nor unjust.

**Romans 11:8** **just** as it is **written**, "**GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.**"

**Greek:** [kathos gegraptai](#), (1SRAI) [Edoken](#) (3SAAI) [autois o theos pneuma](#) katanuxeos, [ophthalmous tou me blepein](#) (PAN) [kai ota tou me akouein](#), (PAN) [eos tes semeron hemeras](#).

**Amplified:** As it is written, God gave them a spirit (an attitude) of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, [that has continued] down to this very day.

**ESV:** as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."

**ICB:** As it is written in the Scriptures: "God gave the people a dull mind so they could not understand." Isaiah 29: 10 "God closed their eyes so they could not see, and God closed their ears so they could not hear. This continues until today." Deuteronomy 29: 4

**NIV:** as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."

**NKJV:** Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day."

**NLT:** As the Scriptures say, "God has put them into a deep sleep. To this very day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear."

**Phillips:** This is borne out by the scripture: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day'.

**Wuest:** even as it stands written, God gave them a spirit of insensibility, eyes for the purpose of not seeing, and ears for the purpose of not hearing, until this day.

**Young's Literal:** according as it hath been written, 'God gave to them a spirit of deep sleep, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear,' -- unto this very day,

**JUST AS IT IS WRITTEN: kathos gegraptai (1SRAI):**

- Isaiah 29:10
- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

**Multiple related passages dealing with "judicial hardening" and the related topic of Jesus speaking in parables** - Dt 29:4+, Isa 6:9,10+ Mt 13:11-15+ Mk 4:11-12+ Lk 8:10+ Jn 9:39-41, Jn 12:38-40 Acts 28:26,27+ Ro 11:7-10+, 2Co 3:14-15+, Eph 4:17-18+, 2Th 2:10-12+.

**It is written** and stands forever as the final word and authority. This is God's Word. Do you believe that?

**Written** (1125) (**grapho**) is in the **perfect tense** which emphasizes the lasting and binding authority of that which was written. It has been written at some point in time in the past and it "stands" written. This is a common introduction to OT quotations (Romans 1:17 2:24; 3:4 Mt 4:4, 6-7, 10). The **perfect tense** stresses continuity and permanence, and implies the divine authority of the Scripture.

So here Paul presents a rather free translation and paraphrase of both Deuteronomy and Isaiah (the first line from Isa 29:10,13 & last line from Dt 29:3,4) noting that Israel as a nation has been judicially blinded and deafened by God because of their stubborn

refusal to see or hear the true revelation and will of God. In context Moses said they had

"seen all that the LORD did before (their) eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh" and their "eyes (had) seen... great signs & wonders." (Dt 29:2-3).

These truths also emphasize that seeing the miraculous does not necessarily result in genuine belief.

Sometimes a person who has been struck on the head may seem to be fully conscious but is mentally confused and unaware of his surroundings. Just so, says Paul (as did Isaiah before him), God has enveloped Israel in a state of spiritual numbness, in an attitude of deadness towards spiritual things in a mental and moral dullness or apathy.

**GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT (and it has continued) DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY: : edoken (3SAI) autois o theos pneuma katanuxeos ophthalmous tou me blepein (PAN) kai ota tou me akouein (PAN) eos tes semeron hemeras:**

- Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26
- Romans 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

**Multiple related passages dealing with "judicial hardening" and the related topic of Jesus speaking in parables** - Dt 29:4+, Isa 6:9,10+ Mt 13:11-15+ Mk 4:11-12+ Lk 8:10+ Jn 9:39-41, Jn 12:38-40 Acts 28:26,27+ Ro 11:7-10+, 2Co 3:14-15+, Eph 4:17-18+, 2Th 2:10-12+.

## GOD'S RETRIBUTIVE JUDGMENT

**Retribution** is defined as follows - Retributive justice, a theory of justice that considers proportionate punishment an acceptable response to crime

Here is a note by **S Lewis Johnson** on Isaiah 59:1-21 that describes God's **retributive justice** against Israel...

Now that is what Isaiah is speaking about here, but he is talking about something that is even more I think terrifying because of course here he is talking about people who are in captivity because they have sinned against God and apparently, the great majority of those in captivity were not within the family of God at all.

And I think when we read these terrible words that your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear, then we have a case of the judgment that comes to an unbeliever because he does not respond to the word of God. You see we can have so much light as an unbeliever, we can have so much light, and we can reject that light and reject that light and reject that light until finally God will not give us light because we have failed to respond to all that he can do and yet not force us. And so there comes a time when **retributive judgment** takes place....Now you can see that the condition, the spiritual condition of the leaders of the nation is not of neutrality. They have become opposed to the truth of God. They have had light, light, light; and they have refused this light until now. They not only are rejecting the light, but they are attributing to him satanic agency.

In other words, they have become so blinded that they cannot see. So what is left for people like that? What is left for the people who have made the ultimate judgment? Well judgment, retributive judgment. ([The Power of Human Sin - Isaiah 59](#))

In Isaiah 6 we read of God's retributive judgment...

He (JEHOVAH TO ISAIAH) said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' 10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

**W E Vine** explains - The commands in Isa 6:10, to make the heart of the people fat, to make their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes, involved the punitive measures which God Himself would carry out. Isaiah's message would be God's own instrument in doing it. Prophets were often said to do themselves by their messages what God actually did through them (see, e.g., Jer. 1:10; 31:28; Ezek. 43:3; Hos. 6:5). What follows is in the inverse order of what has just preceded; "lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their

ears, and understand with their heart.” This inverted parallelism is called Chiasm, from the shape of the Greek letter Chi (X). It lends vigor and emphasis in the handling of a subject. For a simple example see Matthew 12:22. The people had so persistently perverted their ways that they had gone beyond the possibility of conversion and healing. A man may so harden himself in evil as to render his condition irremediable, and this by **God’s retributive judgment** upon him (**ED**: WOE! I THINK THIS IS THE [unpardonable sin](#)!). The prophet, while willing and obedient, was so weighed down by the nature of his message, that he cried, “**Lord, how long?**” (Isa 6:11) For Isaiah knew that He would not cast off His people forever (cp. Ex. 32:9-14). The Lord responds by foretelling the wasted, depopulated condition of the cities, the uninhabited state of the houses, the utter desolation of the land, the removal of the people far away, and a multitude of forsaken places in the very heart of the country (Ex 32:11, 12). There is always a “**remnant**” of faithful ones in the nation and God shows His mercy to it in and through such. Accordingly He now says, “But in it shall be a tenth, and it shall again be eaten up.” Even so this remnant will come through a time of trouble. It will be “eaten” (or “burnt”), i.e., by a purifying fire (see Mal. 3:3+). This was the case with those who returned from captivity by the decree of Cyrus, as recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. So in the coming day, in “**the time of Jacob’s trouble**” under the Antichrist (Jer 30:7).

**Isaiah** records that “the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, the seers. (Isaiah 29:10)

**Stupor** (2659) (**katanuxis** from **katá** = an intensifying preposition. + **nússo** = to prick, pierce) literally a piercing through, a striking violently, a stunning. It is used of numbness resulting from a bite or poisonous sting. In the present context **katanuxis** signifies the dulling of Israel’s spiritual senses. They were in effect [stupefied](#), made senseless (morally speaking), as is one’s state after receiving a wound or blow!

**A T Robertson** on Romans 11:8 - The quotation is a combination of Deut. 19:4; Isaiah 29:10; Isaiah 6:9-10. This phrase (A SPIRIT OF STUPOR) is from Isaiah 29:10. **Katanuxis** is a late and rare word from katanusso, to prick or stick (Acts 2:37+), in LXX, here only in N.T (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

Katanuxis is used twice in the Septuagint:

Ps 60:3 You have made Your people experience hardship; You have given us wine to drink that makes us stagger (or “made us drink intoxicating wine.” (Lxx = katanuxis = they are now senseless).

Isaiah 29:10 (quoted here in Ro 11:8) For the LORD has poured over you **a spirit of deep sleep** (Lxx = katanuxis), He has shut your eyes, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, the seers.

**NET Note** - Through this mixed metaphor (sleep is likened to a liquid which one pours and in turn symbolizes spiritual dullness) the prophet emphasizes that God himself has given the people over to their spiritual insensitivity as a form of judgment.

“**Spirit of stupor**” is thus more literally “the spirit of stinging.”

**Denney** notes that while “It is God Who sends this spirit of stupor, but He does not send it arbitrarily nor at random: it is always a judgment.” (Expositor’s Greek Testament)

**Ralph Earle** - Sanday and Headlam describe the condition thus: “**a spirit of torpor**, a state of dull insensibility to everything spiritual, such as would be produced by drunkenness, or stupor” (p. 314). A drunkard may claim that he is not responsible for what he does. But he is accountable for getting into that state. **So with those whose hearts are dulled by disobedience.** Robertson suggests the seriousness of this guilt when he writes: “The torpor seems the result of too much sensation, dulled by incitement into apathy” (WP, 4:393). Goodspeed uses the phrase “a state of spiritual insensibility.” Probably the best translation is “stupor” (Phillips, RSV, Weymouth). (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

These OT quotes both illustrate God’s judicial hardening of unbelieving Israel, and show that what Paul is teaching is not in violation of or inconsistent with the OT. The gospel writers also used a similar expression to indicate the Jews’ failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

God silenced the prophets (Isa 29:10) because Israel refused to hear them (Isa 30:10-11); thus God would make his message plain through the Assyrian invasion (Isa 28:9-13). Israel had become blind and deaf to God’s word (Isa 29:9-10), having excuses (Isa 29:11-12) and a pretense of righteousness (Isa 29:13-14); but someday they would see and hear again (Isa 29:18, 24).

This tragic condition rings out over and over in the Old Testament...

"Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear. (Deuteronomy 29:4)

And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' (Isaiah 6:9)

'Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes, but see not; Who have ears, but hear not. (Jeremiah 5:21)

"Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house. (Ezekiel 12:2)

Jesus reiterates (in His explanation of the parable of the seed, the Word of God, and the different responses of the "soils" it fell upon) this same sad state of most of Israel still present in the New Testament times even in the very presence of the Light of the World...

And He was saying to them, "To you (His disciples) has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, in order that WHILE SEEING, THEY MAY SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE; AND WHILE HEARING, THEY MAY HEAR AND NOT UNDERSTAND LEST THEY RETURN AND BE FORGIVEN." (Mark 4:11,12)

Moses' point was that after forty years of wilderness wandering the Israelites still had not come to understand and appreciate what God had done for them in delivering them from Egypt and giving them their own land, even on the very eve of their possession of that land. Paul seems to be saying that the Jews of his day were still laboring under the same spiritual blindness that caused them to crucify their Messiah

In **Kings** we read "**To this day** they do according to the earlier customs: they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances or the law, or the commandments which the LORD commanded the sons of Jacob, whom He named Israel... 41 So while these nations feared the LORD, they also served their idols; their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did, **so they do to this day**. (2Kings 17:34,41)

**Paul** explained Israel's spiritual blindness and deafness this way to the **Corinthians** "But their minds were hardened; for **until this very day** at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart (2Corinthians 3:14,15)

Compare **Stephen's** speech in **Acts 7**...

You men who are stiff-necked (Hard, obstinate, proud ) and uncircumcised in heart (see Scriptures on Circumcision) and ears are **always resisting** (rush against or upon in a hostile manner, assault, resist by force and violence!) the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it." (And just prior to stoning Stephen to death) 54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

**Charles Spurgeon** - Fate says the thing is and must be, so it is decreed. But the true doctrine is- God has appointed this and that, not because it must be, but because it is best that it should be. Fate is blind, but the destiny of Scripture is full of eyes. Fate is stern and adamant, and has no tears for human sorrow. But the arrangements of providence are kind and good.