

Romans 11:7~8, part 1

Q: Do you think God is a FOOL?

Knowing that AWISE man describes one who is full of wisdom, very intelligent, and one who knows everything. Contrast that with a FOOL, (which is just the opposite) describes someone who is Ignorant, someone void of intelligence, one that doesn't have a clue of what's going on. Given that, do you think God is a FOOL?

Well, the answer of MANY might surprise you... Though they would NEVER say that with their lips...that is exactly what they are saying with their lives. Now, God is certainly no fool, but there are many who "believe" in their heart...that God is a fool.

This passage reveals an extremely interesting truth about the nation Israel. Israel took God for a FOOL...and as a judgment from God, they were smitten "*Spiritually Blind & Deaf.*"

Here in this passage, Paul is talking about the "*Spiritual Condition*" of the Nation Israel... *As it was in the days of Elijah*... Paul's day was much like Elijah's day. In that, the "Majority" of the nation had forsaken God to pursue their vanities.

Between the days of "King David's" reign (**Highpoint** in Israel's history) and the "days of Elijah," a literal "Landscape & Architectural" change had taken place! Elijah's generation of children could not imagine "what use to be." They had "torn down the altars," and replaced them with "new alters," built for the worship of "new gods." They had "killed the prophets," to the point, that Elijah thought he was the only one left! Basically, they did away with anything that was associated with the worship of the God of Abraham. From Elijah's standpoint, "the whole nation" had **apostatized!** But to Elijah's surprise, God revealed to him that there were yet 7000 men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. There was a "small remnant" that had remained loyal to the *God of Abraham*.

Here, Paul points to the "*days of Elijah*" and declares, that the same was true of Israel in the current day!

(Vs 5) ⁵**Even so** then at this present time also there is a **remnant** according to the election of grace. "*Just as it was in the days of Elijah...so it is in our day*..." To his countrymen, his brethren the Jews, comparing the current Israel "of Paul's day," with the Israel in "Elijah's day," no doubt would be taken as an insult, and considered a great reproach upon the nation. In their mind, there was "no comparison!" The "current Israel" was NOTHING like the Israel of "Elijah's day." They had no alters to strange gods, they never killed the prophets of God. They served only one God, the God of Abraham. The Temple had been rebuilt, and everyone attend on the prescribed days. They had not abandoned the "ways of God!" They diligently taught the ways of God as prescribed in the "*Law of Moses.*" They observed the Lord's Sabbath, no work was done in them, they kept every feast and festival ordained of the Lord.

Paul... "**LOOK AROUND**" ...how could you *even begin* to compare us with those of "Elijah's day?"

Q: Can you NOT SEE...Are you blind?

Paul's answer... *No, it's you who are blind...*

⁷*What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were **blinded*** ⁸*(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.*

True, on the SURFACE, by what is SEEN with the physical EYE...there “*Appears*” to be a worship and devotion to the God of Abraham. Paul says, “*I agree*, by keeping the ordinances outlined in the Law, by observing the traditions of the Fathers, the nation has an “*appearance*” of faithfulness and devotion to God. But LOOKING past the outward, to the INWARD, there is a much different picture... When you “*Look Past*” what is SEEN with the EYE, to the spiritual, the nation is no different that it was in the “*days of Elijah*.” Spiritually speaking, their hearts are as “*far from God*” as the nation was in Elijah’s day.

It is not I my brother, who is blind...it is you. It is just as Isaiah said it would be... Isaiah foretold of your blindness, and how that as a result of your blindness, how you would not “*recognize*” who Christ was! A **Blindness** that hindered nearly the entire nation not able to see that Christ was God’s promised Messiah! No matter what you “**SAW**” Him do...no matter what you “**HEARD**” Him say...it would make no difference, because it were as though you were both “**Blind & Deaf**.” Seeing you would SEE not, Hearing you would HEAR not...

Paul declares Israel’s rejection and crucifixion of Christ, was simply the fulfillment of the words of Isaiah. He declares that Isaiah prophesied that God would give Israel a “*Spirit of Slumber*.” Slumber carries the meaning of to “*doze*.” It describes someone who is “*half-asleep*.” Someone who is Lethargic, is sluggish, indifferent, apathetic... I think the best definition is that of “*Stupor*,” which describes a “*greatly dulled*” or “*completely lacking*” of sensitivity to the things around them.

In this case, it describes a “*greatly dulled*” or “*complete lacking*” of sensitivity to “*Spiritual Matters...Spiritual Things*.”

Given the fact that Israel had been given the law of God and the prophecies of God, they above all people should have KNOWN about “*Spiritual Matters...*” **they don’t have a clue.**

They were “*Spiritually Blind*” and “*Spiritually Deaf*” to the things of God...

Q: Which brings the question... **Why did God bring this upon Israel?**
Why did God give them the spirit of Slumber? We find that answer in Isaiah 29, the text from which Paul quotes from here. *Here we will learn, that...*

God did not bring this upon Israel, Israel brought this upon themselves!

The “*Spirit of Slumber*” was an act of Judgment from God, an act of Chastisement upon Israel for “*their rebellion*” against God. It was not that of outward rebellion against the ways of God, for “**by all appearances**,” Israel was faithful to observe the traditions and customs of the forefathers, they attended synagogue on the prescribed days, they gave tithes offerings to the Lord, they sacrificed animals in the temple according to Levitical law... By “**all outward appearances**,” the nation appeared to be faithful in their devotion to the God of Abraham. The problem was...their heart.

¹³*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as **this people draw near me with their mouth**, and with **their lips do honor me**, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

Israel’s “*Worship*” of God was External Only...**their HEART wasn’t in it!**
Their hearts were not in it... *They were just going through the motions of worship...*

God punished Israel for the “*Sin of Hypocrisy...*”

Hypocrisy is defined as...an *actor* who plays a role... the wearing of a mask!

God “**SAW**” “*behind the scenes*” as it were...He saw the man behind the make-up. They may have professed to love Him and Fear Him, but God saw a much different man on the inside. God wasn't FOOLED by their vain, empty words of adoration. He knew better, He knew what was in their Hearts!

(Mark 7) Jesus cited this very scripture against the Pharisees and Scribes... ⁶*He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you **hypocrites**, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. ⁷Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

Their “Worship” of Him was ALL EXTERNAL... Their heart was DEFILED!

They had no “**genuine** fear of God,” God wasn't FOOLED by their vain, empty words of adoration. He knew better, He knew what was in their Hearts!

(Vs15~16) ¹⁵**Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who sees us? and who knows us?**

★ They were playing God for a “Fool”, as though He couldn't SEE they're little masquerade.

Israel was living as though God couldn't SEE what they were doing in the dark, as though **HE WAS BLIND** to what was going on... There was no “FEAR of GOD...” They lived their lives, as though if no one SAW them, they were ok, but God was looking all the time...

In Psalms 14:1, it says...*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*

We often refer to that as a statement of an Atheist...someone who “*declares*” THERE IS NO GOD... An atheist is someone who doesn't believe God exists. Here we see that Paul is speaking of lost men who live as though there is no God.

So as a result... Of trying to “Cover up” their sinful heart, because they tried to “Hide it” from God... God “**HID**” as it were, HIS Things from them!

They lived as though God was BLIND TO THE TRUTH...thus GOD “**BLINDED THEM TO TRUTH!**”

(Vs 11~12) Illustrates how “**Spiritually BLIND**” Israel would be... ¹¹*And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: ¹²And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.*

The Christ of Scripture would be completely hidden from them!

In their hands, Israel would hold the “*Holy Scriptures*” of God...yet not understand them in the least. They thought they did, they thought they KNEW much...but in the end, God revealed to the whole world the fools that they were. The ones to who possessed the scripture, the laws and commands of God, the written prophecies concerning their Messiah...the one people that should have known Christ when He came on the scene, did not! Because of the spiritual blindness and spiritual deafness God placed upon them, no matter what Christ did, or what Christ said...**they wouldn't have a clue it was Him!**

(Vs 14) In Christ, God would “Unmask” Israel and reveal the “*Hidden Man*” behind it...

¹⁴***Therefore***, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

God was going to EXPOSE them...by revealing the true condition of their heart to the whole world. Israel's great scholar's, the scribes, Pharisee's, lawyers, etc...those who boasted of their great wisdom, knowledge, and understanding...**(as a result of God's blinding them)** had NO CLUE WHO He was!

God "*HID*" from Israel WHO Christ was...so they wouldn't "*Pretend*" to love Him too...
By "***Blinding***" them to Who He was, made way for their
"TRUE FEELINGS" towards God to be shown!

Israel didn't love God as they professed too...but rather hated Him, and wanted nothing to do with Him! There was "*No Room*" in their heart for God...they wanted to do their own thing, go their own way! God did this to make it clear, that being right with God would not come by the works of the Law...but by a changed heart through the Grace of God.

I want to close how I started...by asking you the question,

Q: Do you think God is a FOOL?

Israel did...They partook in the activities of worship, but their heart was not right. Instead of repenting and humbling themselves before God, they thought it was hidden...but it wasn't.