

The Tragedy of Unbelief pt 2

John 12:37-43

John 12:37–43 (NKJV)

³⁷ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

“Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.”

⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

⁴² Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of

the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Introduction

Isaiah 55:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Seek the Lord while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.

Psalms 95:6–8 (NKJV)

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
⁷ For He *is* our God,
And we *are* the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.

Today, if you will hear His voice:

⁸ “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion,
As *in* the day of trial in the wilderness,

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)

...Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

Hebrews 2:1–3 (NKJV)

2 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*,

Hebrews 3:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called “*Today*,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Hebrews 6:1–3 (NKJV)

6 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ **And this we will do if God permits.**

Hebrews 6:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

Hebrews 10:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Review

Lesson

I. The Shock of Unbelief

II. The Seriousness of Unbelief

III. The Sign of Unbelief

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³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

“Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore **they could not believe**, because Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.”

⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

This sobering response of the Jews and the subsequent Judgment of hardening was what Jesus was warning in John 12:35 and 46

These are warning mixed with mercy.

John 12:35–36 (NKJV)

³⁵ Then Jesus said to them, **“A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light,**

lest darkness **overtake** you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.

³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

overtake

37.19 καταλαμβάνω^d: to gain control over—‘to overcome, to gain control of.’ καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν ‘and the darkness did not gain control over it’ Jn 1:5. It is also possible to understand καταλαμβάνω in Jn 1:5 as meaning ‘to understand’ (see 32.18).

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 473). New York: United Bible Societies.

John 12:46–48 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷ And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges

him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

Instead of walking in the light and believing in the Light, they reject the light and turn to darkness.

John 1:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

Acts 13:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

Luke 19:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this *man to reign over us.*’

Acts 7:51–53 (NKJV)

⁵¹ “*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers

did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*”

But the Reasons given are hard truths taught throughout the Bible

1. Sovereign Reprobation
2. Human Responsibility

Gods Willful Commitment of Human beings to unbelief and ultimate eternal Hell.

In this passage we are given a glimpse into the divine purposes of God, the perfect plan of a Sovereign God that will be carried out flawlessly and at the same time hold man fully responsible and culpable for his willful choices in carrying out the plan.

First it needs to be noted that there is a progression in the text.

1.

John 12:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ But although He had done so many signs before them, they **did not believe** in Him,

Imperfect Active Indicative

They are actively continually unwilling to believe
then it moves to the inability to believe in verse 39

2.

John 12:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

Imperfect Middle/ Passive Indicative

dunamai: to be able, to have power

Original Word: δύναμαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: dunamai

Phonetic Spelling: (doo'-nam-ahee)

Definition: to be able, to have power

Usage: (a) I am powerful, have (the) power, (b) I am able, I can.

Cognate: 1410 δύναμαι (a primitive verb) – to show ability (power); able (enabled by God), empowered.

See the cognate-noun, 1411 /δύναμις ("ability, power").

whether is taken middle or passive

middle= they could not of themselves believe

Passive = they where not given the ability to believe.

Both are a direct result of God not enabling them to believe

John 6:44 (NKJV)

44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

God, Sovereignly, Righteously, Justly
Hardens their hearts.

This is not Passive, this is Active. God is actively hardening the hearts. The passage is taken from Isa 6 and is a judicial act of Gods part within the Context of Isa 5 and 6

40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.”

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Isaiah 5:8–30 (NKJV)

Impending Judgment on Excesses

8 Woe to those who join house to house;
They add field to field,
Till *there is* no place

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning,
That they may follow intoxicating drink;
Who continue until night, *till* wine inflames them!

12 The harp and the strings,
The tambourine and flute,
And wine are in their feasts;
But they do not regard the work of the Lord,
Nor consider the operation of His hands.

- 18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of
vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope;
- 19 That say, "Let Him make speed *and* hasten His
work,
That we may see *it*;
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw
near and come,
That we may know *it*."
- 20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
- 21 Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!
- 22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,
- 23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from the righteous man!
- 24 Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the law of the Lord of
hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

²⁵ Therefore the anger of the Lord is aroused against
His people;
He has stretched out His hand against them
And stricken them,
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

Isaiah 6:1 (NKJV)

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple.

John 12:41

⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Isaiah 6:8–11 (NKJV)

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here *am* I! Send me.”

⁹ And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

¹⁰ “Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”

¹¹ Then I said, “Lord, how long?”
And He answered:

“Until the cities are laid waste and without
inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,

Please note in Isa 6:10

¹⁰ “Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”

Lest

6435. לֵּסַת **pen** (814c); of unc. der.; *lest*:—
because(2), fear(1), might(4), no(2), none(1), or(36),
or else(6), otherwise(16), otherwise you might(1),
perhaps(1), so(12).

Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

John 12:40 (NKJV)

⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts
and turn,
So that I should heal them.”

Lest

Lest they should see (ὅτινα μὴ ἰδῶσιν [*hina mē idōsin*]). Negative purpose clause with ἵνα μὴ [*hina mē*]

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 12:40). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Matthew 13:10–15 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

¹¹ He answered and said to them, “**Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the**

kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

*'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;*

¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

*Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear
with *their* ears,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts
and turn,
So that I should heal them.'*

this is stated in Luke 8:10 and Mark 4:12

Paul quotes it in Acts 28:26

40. **He hath blinded**, etc. These words of Isaiah are repeated five times in the New Testament as the description of the Jewish people in its latest stage of

decay. Matt. 13:13; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26.

Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 2, p. 221). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

In each instance the words of Isaiah are interpreted as forecasting the doom of the Jews for rejecting the Messiah

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 12:40). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

[12:37–43] Jesus has done many signs, but as elsewhere in biblical narratives, God's gracious and saving work on behalf of his people does not inevitably produce understanding or faith. Moses laments that although God had done "signs and great wonders" in the land of Egypt, Israel had neither seen nor understood what the Lord had done for his people (Deut 29:2–4). Isaiah speaks of the lack of belief or response to the work and word of God,

But others have not "believed our report," thus fulfilling Isaiah's words that God has "blinded their eyes and hardened their heart." These difficult utterances echo the Johannine note that no one sees or responds to Jesus unless they are taught or drawn by God, unless their eyes are opened to see

(see comments on 6:44, 65; 9:38–41; and Excursus 8: “The Johannine Vocabulary of Faith and Discipleship”).
Thompson, M. M. (2015). *John: A Commentary* (First edition, p. 274). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

It is clear from this passage and many others that the divine hardening of the Jews in John 12 is a Judicial act on Gods part. Men are held responsible for there unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, and the Hardening is a confirmation and eternal condemnation in unbelief.

However, it should be noted that this is easier to understand than the obvious elephant in the room.

For those who might find the phrase “elephant in the room” confusing, all that is meant is that there is an obvious truth that needs to be addressed that usually no one wants to talk about.

The truth that no one wants talk about is this:

Although it is true that the Jews in this passage were unwilling to believe, and are justly held responsible for not believing, and justly hardened and confirmed in there unbelief yet they only way they could have ever believed is if God granted it.

In other words, there is no way for them to believe unless God opens there eyes to see,

and their ears to hear and their hearts to believe.

Remember verses like these

John 3:3 (NKJV)

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”

John 6:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ **No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

John 6:45 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ **It is written in the prophets, ‘*And they shall all be taught by God.*’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.**

John 6:64–66 (NKJV)

⁶⁴ **But there are some of you who do not believe.”**

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

⁶⁵ And He said, “**Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.**”

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

John 8:43 (NKJV)

⁴³ Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

John 10:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Matthew 11:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. ²⁶ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²⁷ All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

Philippians 1:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

2 Timothy 2:24–25 (NKJV)

²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

James 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Now the reason that a large portion of the evangelical church has a hard time with these truths are 2 primary reasons

1. A misunderstand and misrepresentation of the God of Scripture.
2. A misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the Biblical view of Man.

God is often considered to be like man who is full of Love, Mercy and Grace who desire nothing but the best for you. Very little of God's Holiness and Justice are emphasized, only when we won't to see God judge those bad sinners around us.

While Man is considered basically good and worthy of the gospel.

The God that the Reformers and Puritans and Preachers of the Great Awakening preached is foreign to the average pulpit.

Very few have ever heard a message like Jonathan Edwards preached "Sinners in the hands of an Angry God"

To even consider that God is Angry with the Wicked every day is tantamount to heresy in the local church.

We have preached Grace, Love and Mercy so long to the exclusion of the boiling hatred God has for Sin and evil, that we have grown accustomed to Love We fully expect Grace and Mercy and Love.

We are shocked and do all kinds of Hermeneutical no no's to rid ourselves of the reality of verses we hear like

Romans 9:13 (NKJV)

¹³ As it is written, “*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.*”

To Believe that God could hate anyone is not in our vocabulary.

But on the contrary, we believe that God is obligated to at least give you a chance, or He's, not loving or not Just.

In one of his letters to Erasmus, Luther said, "Your thoughts of God are too human."

God complained to an apostate Israel,
"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such
an one as thyself" (Psa. 50:21)

How different is the God of the Bible from the God of modern Christendom! The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of a maudlin sentimentality. The God of many a present-day pulpit

is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence.[1]”

The "god" of this twentieth century no more resembles the Supreme Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle the glory of the midday sun.

— Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God

So

The First essential, foundational truth to all the Bible is that God is Sovereign.

This is best defined in

Daniel 4:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴ And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing;

He does according to His will in the army of heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, “What have You done?”

That means he is God you are not
 He is in control, you are not
 He makes the decisions, you do not.
 He is in control of the future, you are not.
 He is the Judge of all and your are not the of any.
 He is the determiner of all that is good and holy, you
 are not.
 Your Salvation is dependent on Him and Not you.
 IF He does not act, you will not be saved.

The is seen clearly in Romans 9 that addresses
 the complicated question as to why did Israel
 reject the Messiah, Has God’s plan failed,

Romans 9:6–18 (NKJV)

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called.*”

⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. ⁹ For this *is* the word

of promise: *“At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”*

¹⁰ And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac ¹¹ (for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), ¹² it was said to her, *“The older shall serve the younger.”* ¹³ As it is written, *“Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”*

¹⁴ What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, *“For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”* ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

The Second Essential and foundational Truth is that men are sinful, Depraved, and not worthy of the gospel but are deserving only of Hell and Death.

This is hugely missing today. To many churches pulpits, and church attenders hear very little believe less that they are miserably wretched sinners not deserving of even a gospel invitation much less salvation.

We are a generation full of ourselves in complete love of self.

We are affected by Evolutionary thought that says we are getting better

We are affected by Freudian Psychology that says we are basically Good

We are affected by the redefining of sin as a sickness.

We are victims of our own fallenness that tells us that we are ok and better than the next person.

We compare ourselves with the worst of humanity and pride ourselves in our on supposed lack of evil.

Very few really believe they are wretched sinners deserving only of Hell.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ezekiel 18:4 (NKJV)

⁴ “Behold, all souls are Mine;

The soul of the father
 As well as the soul of the son is Mine;
The soul who sins shall die.

Romans 5:12 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned

—

Matthew 25:41 (NKJV)

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

2 Thessalonians 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹ These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power

“... under the righteous government of God no one is wretched who does not deserve to be so. The objects of mercy, then, are those who are miserable, and all misery is the result of sin, hence the miserable are deserving of punishment

not mercy. To speak of deserving mercy is a contradiction of terms.”

— Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God

Pink in Depravity of Man

The theology of the last century has failed lamentably at two essential points, namely, its teaching concerning God and its teaching concerning fallen man. As one writer expressed it, "On the one hand, they have not ascended high enough . . . on the other hand, they do not descend low enough." God is infinitely greater and His dominion far more absolute and extensive than most theologians admit, and man has sunk much lower and is far more depraved than they will allow. Consequently man's conduct toward his Maker is vastly more evil than is commonly supposed.

J. M. Stifler, "It cannot be said too often that a false theology finds its source in inadequate views of depravity."

Pink States in The Depravity of Man

It is our deep conviction that the vital question most requiring to be raised today is this: Is man a totally and thoroughly depraved creature by nature? Does he enter the world completely ruined and helpless, spiritually blind and dead in trespasses and sins? According as is our answer to that question, so will be our views on many others. It is on the basis of this dark background that the whole Bible proceeds. Any attempt to modify or abate, repudiate or tone down the teaching of Scripture on the matter is fatal. Put the question in another form: Is man now in such a condition that he cannot be saved without the special and direct intervention of the triune God on his behalf? In other words, is there any hope for him apart from his personal election by the Father, his particular redemption by the Son, and the supernatural operations of the Spirit within him? Or, putting it in still another way: If man is a totally depraved being, can he possibly take the first step in the matter of his return to God?

“Until we really behold the horror of the pit in which by nature we lie, we can never properly appreciate Christ's so-great salvation. In man's

fallen condition we have the awful disease for which divine redemption is the only cure, and our estimation and valuation of the provisions of divine grace will necessarily be modified in proportion as we modify the need it was meant to meet.”

— Arthur W. Pink, The Total Depravity of Man

Closing Conclusions

1. God is sovereign and can do with us as he pleases
2. We we are much worse sinners than we believe
3. God owes us nothing but justice and hell
4. We do not even deserve a presentation of the Gospel message
5. God has done no wrong if he saves no one.
6. We all deserve the Judgement of God and the Eternal Hell to come.
7. If God would pass us all by and Harden our hearts, he as only acted justly.

8. If we are offered the gospel it is only because of the underserved Mercy and Grace

9. If we are saved, it is only because God did not justly pass us by and sovereignly thru Mercy and Grace granted to us sight to see, ears to hear, and faith and repentance to come and follow Christ.

He has resurrected my dead unrepentant heart of stone and given me a heart of Flesh to Love Him.

(1) God's sovereignty in these matters is *never* pitted against human responsibility (*cf.* notes on v. 38); (2) God's judicial hardening is not presented as the capricious manipulation of an arbitrary potentate cursing morally neutral or even morally pure beings, but as a holy condemnation of a guilty people who are condemned to do and be what they themselves have chosen; (3) God's sovereignty in these matters can also be a cause for hope, for if he is *not* sovereign in these areas there is little point in petitioning him for help, while if he is sovereign the anguished pleas of the prophet (Is. 63:15–19)—and of believers throughout the history of the church—make sense; (4) God's sovereign hardening of the people in Isaiah's day, his commissioning of Isaiah to apparently fruitless ministry, is a stage in God's 'strange work' (Is. 28:21–22) that brings God's ultimate redemptive purposes to pass.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (pp. 448–449). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.