

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 12:37-50

Lesson #45

The hardened heart

08/14/2016

**Why do some people believe and others do not?**



1

Unbelief is sometimes ascribed to  
**man's willful suppression of the truth.**

*Romans 1*

"18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, . . . 21 **For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**"

2

Unbelief is sometimes ascribed to  
**the condition of the heart.**

*Matthew 13*

"3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; 4 and as he sowed, some seeds **fell beside the road**, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 And others **fell upon the rocky places**, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And others **fell among the thorns**, and the thorns came up and choked them out. 8 And others **fell on the good soil**, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

9 **He who has ears, let him hear.**" 3

Unbelief is sometimes ascribed to  
**a person hardening their heart.**

*Psalms 95*

"6 . . . 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 would hear His voice,**

8 **Do not harden your hearts**, as at Meribah,  
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,"

4

Unbelief is sometimes ascribed to  
**having not heard the Gospel.**

*Romans 10*

"13 for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? **And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?** And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"

5



Unbelief is sometimes ascribed to  
**the work of Satan.**

*2 Corinthians 4*

“3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 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.”

6

**Does God's sovereign choice have something to do with it?**

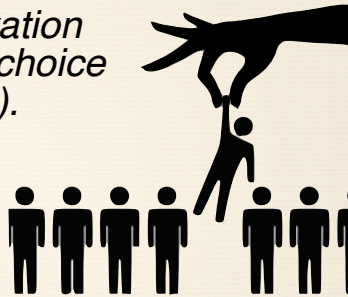


7

**Election**

predestined to salvation  
by God's sovereign choice  
(not human will).

The Greek  
word means  
**"chosen"** or  
**"picked out."**



**Does God harden the hearts of some so that they will not and can not believe?**

8

**Divine Election seems clearly Biblical and beyond our understanding.**

*Romans 9*

“<sup>16</sup> So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. . . <sup>18</sup> So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” <sup>20</sup> On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it?”

**Or are we misunderstanding something?**

9

**Two Great Gospel Mysteries**

**Grace**

Who are the objects of God's redemption through Christ - the elect only or all (conditioned on faith)?

**Election**

How is God's choice related to human choice?

10

**Three views of Divine Election to salvation.**

1. God has chosen from before creation of the world to save a **limited number of individuals** to be ransomed from sin and given faith to be justified through Christ.
2. God has elected **Christ** and all who willfully choose to place their faith in him.
3. God provided redemption for **all sinners** and ultimately all will be redeemed.

11



## My objectives in this lesson

1. It is not to **refute** Calvinism.
2. It is to help those who equate Calvinism with **orthodoxy** to see that Scripture is not as clear on this issue as they think.
3. It is to show that Calvinist's are not the only Christians who have a high view of God's **grace and sovereignty**.

12

## John 12

"<sup>37</sup> But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; <sup>38</sup> 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?"* <sup>39</sup> For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, <sup>40</sup> **"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."**

13

## Isaiah 6

"<sup>8</sup> Then 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!" <sup>9</sup> He said, "Go, and tell this people:

Keep on listening, but do not perceive;  
Keep on looking, but do not understand.'  
<sup>10</sup> "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.'"

14

## John 12

"<sup>37</sup> But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him;

### 1. Many chose not to believe the signs.

<sup>38</sup> 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?"* <sup>39</sup> **For this cause they could not believe**, for Isaiah said again, <sup>40</sup> *"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."*

### 2. The hardening was the work of Isaiah whose preaching solidified unbelief.

15

## Consideration #1

Is God's loving, sovereign, power  
**SELF LIMITED IN THIS AGE?**

Did God give moral creatures (those who bear God's image) a measure of real freedom to choose with the subsequent consequences?

Could God's love and respect for them limit His absolute control of them?

16

## Consideration #2

Is God's loving, sovereign, power  
threatened by MY CHOICES?





### Consideration #3

Is God's loving, sovereign, power  
a function of His **CREATIVE WISDOM**?

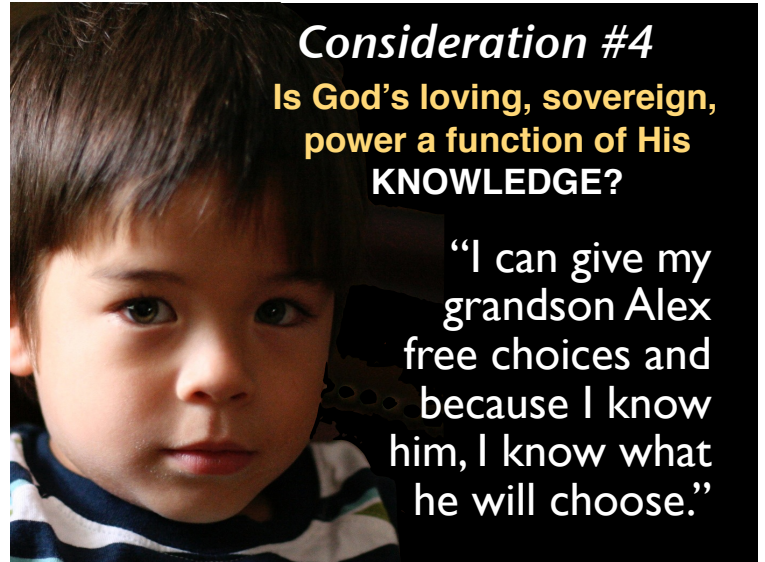


Whose Line  
is it Anyway?

"They create  
humor out  
of anything."

### Consideration #4

Is God's loving, sovereign,  
power a function of His  
**KNOWLEDGE**?



"I can give my  
grandson Alex  
free choices and  
because I know  
him, I know what  
he will choose."

### Consideration #4

Is God's loving, sovereign, power  
a function of His **KNOWLEDGE**?

#### *Psalms 139*

"<sup>1</sup> O Lord, You have searched me and known me. <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup> You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. . . <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it."

### Consideration #5

Is God's loving, sovereign, power  
in sync with His **FOREKNOWLEDGE** .



Carlsen Magnus

Like a grandmaster in  
chess, God can see how  
history is set up to  
enable certain things  
to unfold, and He  
uses this as a part  
of His providential plan.

### Consideration #6

Does God's loving, sovereign, power  
use **SECONDARY MEANS**?



"Did God use  
secondary (natural)  
processes in  
changing chaos to  
cosmos?"

Genesis 1

*God, not only created the cosmos  
but also all of the ages (history)  
before time.*

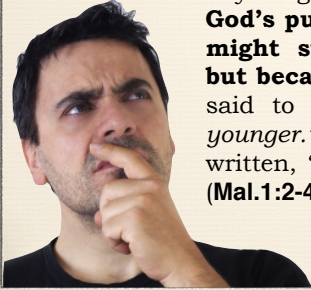
#### *Hebrews 11:3*

"By faith we understand that  
the worlds (**aions** "ages") were  
prepared by the word of God, so  
that what is seen was not made  
out of things which are visible."



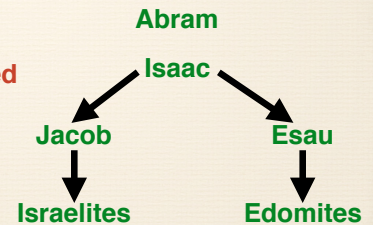
## What about Romans 9?

"<sup>9</sup> For this is a word of promise: *"At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."* <sup>10</sup> And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; <sup>11</sup> for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order **that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls**, <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, *"The older will serve the younger."* (Gen.25:23) <sup>13</sup> Just as it is written, *"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."* (Mal.1:2-4)



## Our presuppositions shape our interpretation.

- Paul is addressing the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's plan. **(not individual salvation.)**
- The hardening of Pharaoh is a part of his role in Israel's story. **(not his salvation.)**
- The O.T. quotations clearly speak of Israel and Edom. **(represented by Jacob and Esau.)**



## Two nations Israel & Edom (not individuals) are in view.

### Malachi 1

"<sup>1</sup> The oracle of the word of the Lord **to Israel** through Malachi. <sup>2</sup> "I have loved you." says the Lord. But you say, "How have You loved **us**?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "**Yet I have loved Jacob; <sup>3</sup> but I have hated Esau**, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness." <sup>4</sup> Though **Edom** says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; thus says the Lord of hosts, "**They** may build, but I will tear down; and men will call them the wicked territory, and **the people** toward whom the Lord is indignant forever."

### Romans 9

"<sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."* <sup>16</sup> So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.** <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, *"For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."* <sup>18</sup> So then **He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.** <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" <sup>20</sup> On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?"

### Peter Kreeft



"It is the Godfather, not God the Father, who makes you an offer you can't refuse."

"Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty and free grace; Arminianism emphasizes human responsibility. The one restricts the saving grace to the elect; the other extends it to all men on the condition of faith. Both are right in what they assert; both are wrong in what they deny. If one important truth is pressed to the exclusion of another truth of equal importance, it becomes an error, and loses its hold upon the conscience. The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them."

*Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vo. VIII:815-6*