

**Theme:** The human heart is *hard!* If signs and miracles won't change it, we shouldn't be surprised when our testimony is rejected. But we rejoice greatly when a heart is broken open and the light of Christ shines in.

**Background:** Jesus is soon to be “lifted up”. We hear the last words of his public ministry.

**Introduction:** Rob's new job – with a taste of the “goodness” of humanity.

## **I. The Root of Unbelief (37)**

Why did they not believe?

### A. A fallen nature

- From Genesis 3 to Romans 3 and beyond

### B. Hard hearts

#### 1. Rejection of evidence

- Both his *signs* and words (10:38; 5:18)

- Hard hearts evidenced (Matthew 19:8; Mark 3:5; Ephesians 4:18)

#### 2. Seeking the “glory of this world” (45)

#### 3. Fear! (42)

## **II. The Consequences of Unbelief (38-40)**

### A. God's Word is upheld (38)

#### 1. Genesis 2:17 fulfilled

#### 2. The words of prophets fulfilled

a. In Isaiah's day

b. In the days of Jesus' ministry

c. In his own day (which correlates to ours)

### B. God's judgment falls

#### 1. Confirmed in their unbelief

- Darkness deepens!

#### 2. Don't walk in truth, light (47)

#### 3. Comes under God's judgment (48)

NOTE: God hardens the hearts of men and women judicially. Expressed in...

- The Old Testament (Isaiah 6:10; Exodus 9:12; Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Chronicles 36:13)

- The New Testament (Acts 28:26,27; Matthew 13:13-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Romans 9:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:11)

C. His sovereignty affirmed (40)

NOTE: This is God's judicial action. Is it harsh or unfair?

1. Mankind's *responsibility* is not negated
2. God's judicial hardening is neither capricious nor arbitrary.
  - The objects of his action are neither morally pure or morally neutral.
3. God is working out his plan of redemption even here. (cf. Romans 9:22,23)
4. We can pray because God is sovereign in salvation.

D. God's plans are fulfilled

1. Unbelieving Jews send Jesus to death
2. Sinful acts of wicked people are used to fulfill the plan of redemption and deliverance from sin.

### III. The Root of Faith

A. The light of the world (46)

B. The Word made flesh

1. What Isaiah "saw" (41)
2. What we "see" in Jesus (45)

C. The power of God

- To open the eyes of the blind
- To shut the eyes and ears of those who claim sight

### IV. The Consequences of Faith

A. Bearing witness

1. Not just "believing" in Jesus
2. Bearing witness before men (Luke 12:8,9)

B. Walking in the light (47)

C. Knowing God

1. Isaiah and the glory of God (41)
2. Jesus and the glory of God (45, 50)

### V. The Path of Faith

A. Human responsibility affirmed

B. A crucial message to share