

CONVERSION OR HARDNESS OF HEART

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In admonishing Christians of their responsibility to continue to speak the God-saving truth that they may grow thereby (**1 Peter 2:2**), the apostle Peter reminds them of how the Jews did not accept Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. Peter declared: "THEY STUMBLE AT THE WORD, BEING DISOBEDIENT" (**1 Peter 2:8**). We learn from the Greek word translated being disobedient that its meaning is not to allow oneself to be persuaded (see Thayer or any reputable Greek lexicon).

Implied is the fact that man has the power to reject obvious Truth. He can close his understanding to adequate evidence if he does not love the Truth above everything else (**2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**). When the Truth is offered to an honest man in error, one of two things can happen:

1. He will keep his honesty by giving up his error and embracing the Truth,
or
2. He will reject the Truth, give up his honesty, and keep his error.

Speaking for God, Isaiah said to Israel: "COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER" (**Isaiah 1:18**). God created man a rational creature and has never bypassed man's rationality in seeking to lead and guide him. God does not force Himself upon man against man's will (**Romans 1:28**). If men will not receive the abundant and adequate evidence regarding their spiritual needs, God is not going to force it on him.

The people in Isaiah's day were unreasonable and would not accept God's Word. They simply would not allow themselves to be persuaded (**Isaiah 6:9-13**). Thus, they lost their honesty and retained their error. In the words of Peter: "THEY STUMBLE[D] AT THE WORD, BEING DISOBEDIENT." Hence, Paul's request to the Thessalonians that they pray "THAT WE MAY BE DELIVERED FROM UNREASONABLE AND WICKED MEN: FOR ALL MEN HAVE NOT FAITH" (**2 Thessalonians 3:2**). If you want to become wicked, just stop being reasonable. In doing so, you will lose your honesty and harden your heart as you embrace the strong delusion of error.