

Arminianism – Judicial Hardening

Great question, but there is a major flaw to point out in your question. This is the same error that Flowers repeatedly makes. He assumes that we (Calvinists) are saying that one is born judicially hardened which is the equivalent to one being born in sin, predisposed to sin. Which in turn generates the question “why would God harden what is already judicially hardened?”. This is the first flaw to the question. These two things are conflated (Born in Sin & Judicially Hardened). Judicial hardening and the state in which man is born are not the same thing.

Secondly, Calvinists believe that mankind is born with a sin nature (Federal Headship). We are not however as sinful as we *could be* which is the difference. We are God haters, it doesn't mean that God cannot *give us over* to the lusts of our hearts, or *harden* us as individuals or as a nation.

Thirdly, the main concern brought up in the OP is the question of why should God judicially harden a dead person. The purpose here for the hardening to the Jews is to invoke judgment on the Jews and to hide the Kingdom from the self-righteous Pharisees.

There is a two fold reason for the parables as MacArthur rightly points out:

“While the parables do illustrate and clarify truth for those with ears to hear, they have precisely the opposite effect on those who oppose and reject Christ. The symbolism hides the truth from anyone without the discipline or desire to seek out Christ's meaning. That's why Jesus adopted that style of teaching. It was a divine judgment against those who met His teaching with scorn, unbelief, or apathy. In short, Jesus' parables had a clear twofold purpose: They hid the truth from self-righteous or self-satisfied people who fancied themselves too sophisticated to learn from Him, while the same parables revealed truth to eager souls with childlike faith – those who were hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Jesus thanked His Father for both results: '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. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight (Matt. 11:25-26).”

— John MacArthur, Parables (Thomas Nelson, 2015), 21.

To conclude. One can be born in sin and still be judicially hardened because he is not as sinful or wicked as he could be. Jesus spoke in parables as a form of judgment to the Jews and to hide the wisdom of God from the Pharisees. We were never told that the Jews *could* understand the words spoken by Jesus but rather that Jesus enables them to hear. The reason they couldn't hear was because they couldn't understand spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NASB

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.