

HEAR O ISRAEL
THE LORD OUR GOD
IS ONE LORD

12

REASONS

Why People Resist

BIBLICAL TRUTH

*“Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:
as your fathers did, so do ye.”*

— Acts 7:51 KJV



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12 Reasons Why People Resist Biblical Truth

Not everyone who opposes the word is consciously serving the devil. Some believe they are protecting truth, tradition, authority, income, reputation, or personal freedom.

The apostles did not treat every opponent as demon-possessed. They exposed the motive, answered the error, and continued preaching Christ.

1. Love of sin

Jesus identified the most basic reason people reject light:

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

— John 3:19 KJV

The gospel does more than offer comfort. It calls people to repentance. A person may resist not because the message is difficult to understand, but because accepting it would require abandoning something they love.

The problem is not always insufficient evidence.

Sometimes it is an unwilling heart.

2. Jealousy and envy

When the Gentiles gathered to hear Paul:

“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.”

— Acts 13:45 KJV

Their opposition appeared theological, but Luke identifies **envy** as the underlying motive. Paul was receiving the attention and influence they wanted.

Some opposition to revival is not really concern for doctrine.

It comes from resentment that God is using someone else.

3. Fear of losing influence

The religious leaders asked:

“What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.”

— John 11:47–48 KJV

They saw the evidence but feared losing their place and influence. Later, the apostles encountered the same resistance from leaders who wanted to retain control over the people. The gospel threatens anyone whose identity depends upon being indispensable, unquestioned, or spiritually superior.

4. Financial self-interest

In Philippi, Paul cast the spirit of divination out of a woman:

“And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas...”

— Acts 16:19 KJV

The woman had been delivered, but her masters were angry because they had lost their income. They then disguised their financial motive as concern for public order.

The same thing occurred in Ephesus. Demetrius opposed Paul because the gospel threatened the business of manufacturing idols—Acts 19:24–27.

Sometimes people oppose truth because obedience would cost them money.

5. Religious tradition

Stephen said:

“Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

— Acts 7:51 KJV

People can become so attached to inherited religious systems that they resist anything challenging them—even when God is speaking.

Tradition can become intertwined with family identity, culture, community, and personal security. Accepting truth may feel like betraying one’s parents or entire history.

This helps explain opposition without excusing it.

6. Pride and self-righteousness

The gospel declares that everyone has sinned and must be saved by grace. This offends human pride.

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted

themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

— Romans 10:3 KJV

Some reject the gospel because they do not believe they need repentance. Others want a religion that allows them to feel morally superior without submitting to God.

The gospel removes every reason for boasting.

7. Desire for human approval

Some leaders believed Jesus but would not confess Him:

“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

— John 12:43 KJV

People may recognize truth privately while rejecting it publicly because they fear:

- Family rejection
- Loss of friendships
- Damage to reputation
- Professional consequences
- Removal from a religious community

Being labeled extreme or intolerant

Their opposition may sometimes hide an internal conviction they are afraid to obey.

8. Fear of change

The gospel disrupts established patterns. It changes beliefs, behavior, relationships, priorities, and loyalties.

Felix trembled when Paul reasoned with him about righteousness, temperance, and judgment:

“Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

— Acts 24:25 KJV

Felix did not refute Paul. He postponed the decision. Conviction threatened his present way of life.

Delay can be a quiet form of resistance.

9. Political expediency

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but surrendered Him to satisfy

the crowd. Felix kept Paul imprisoned because he wanted to please the Jews—Acts 24:27.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Acts 24:27 KJV

Leaders sometimes oppose the gospel because supporting truth would be politically costly. Their decision is governed by public reaction rather than righteousness.

The question becomes not “What is true?” but “What decision best protects my position?”

10. Misguided religious zeal

Paul understood this motive personally:

“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.”

— Philippians 3:6 KJV

Before his conversion, Paul believed he was defending God while persecuting God’s people. Jesus told the disciples:

“The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”

— John 16:2 KJV

Sincerity does not guarantee truth.

A person may oppose the gospel zealously while believing he is protecting God.

This is why some opponents should be answered patiently rather than immediately treated as knowingly wicked.

11. Ignorance and spiritual blindness

Peter told those involved in Christ’s death:

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

— Acts 3:17 KJV

Paul wrote:

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.”

— 2 Corinthians 4:3–4 KJV

Here the human and spiritual dimensions meet. People may be ignorant, while Satan reinforces that ignorance through deception.

Yet the apostolic answer was still to preach the light of the gospel.

12. The desire for personal autonomy

At its deepest level, humanity resists God's right to govern:

"We will not have this man to reign over us."

— Luke 19:14 KJV

People may want forgiveness without surrender, blessing without obedience, and salvation without lordship.

The gospel confronts the belief that we belong entirely to ourselves.

The central conflict is often not over God's existence but over God's authority.

We have spent this lesson looking at **12 reasons why people resist biblical truth.**

But perhaps the most important question tonight is not:

"Why do other people resist the truth?"

The most important question is:

"How do I respond when the Word of God challenges me?"

It is easy to recognize pride in someone else.

It is easy to recognize tradition in someone else.

It is easy to recognize fear, self-interest, stubbornness, or the desire for approval in someone else.

But what happens when the Word confronts **my beliefs, my traditions, my behavior, my preferences, or something I have believed for many years?**

Do I immediately defend what I already believe?

Do I look for reasons why the Scripture cannot mean what it appears to say?

Do I reject truth because accepting it would require me to change?

Or am I willing to say:

"If the Word of God shows me that I am wrong, then I am willing to change."

The greatest danger is not simply being wrong.

The greatest danger is becoming unwilling to be corrected.

The people of Berea were called noble because:

“They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

— Acts 17:11 KJV

That should be our attitude toward biblical truth.

Not:

“Does this agree with what I have always believed?”

Not:

“Does this agree with my tradition?”

Not:

“Does this make me comfortable?”

But:

“Is it true according to the Word of God?”

And if it is true, am I willing to obey it **even when the truth requires me to change?**

Because ultimately, the test of our love for truth is not how strongly we defend the truth we already know.

It is how we respond when God’s Word shows us something we need to change.