

# Fact Sheet for **"The Gospel According to Us"** **Acts 28:11-31 II**

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08/17/2014

This is both my last sermon on Acts and my first on Isaiah.

I want to focus on Acts 28:26-27, but will begin by reading verses 23-29 for a little context.

Recently the actor and comedian Robin Williams died from an apparent suicide.

Bryan Fischer (the host of the daily 'Focal Point' radio talk program on AFR Talk, a division of the American Family Association) wrote "Robin Williams' desperately sad ending arouses our sympathy, as it should. But we must not confuse our sympathy with God's salvation. There's only one path to eternal life." And again he wrote, "In the wake of his suicide, billboards and media pundits alike have been assuming that Robin Williams is now in heaven, making God laugh along with other funny men who left this earth before their time."

In this vein Ray Flynn (who served as [Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts](#) from 1984 until 1993 and was later appointed [United States Ambassador to the Vatican](#) (1993–1997) by [President Bill Clinton](#)) wrote, "I'm no medical doctor or expert and I don't know if Robin Williams was religious or not, but I do believe, that there has to be a special place in heaven for him."

What do you think?

If it was up to many non-Christians, and even Christians, to design the gospel it would go right along with this. But take a closer look at this quote from Isaiah in Acts 28.

ESV 26 **"Go to this people, and say,**

**"You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive."**

<sup>27</sup> **For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed;  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.'**

This passage from Isaiah is quoted in six books, but only on four occasions, in the NT...

Acts 28:26-27

Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10

John 12:40

Romans 11:8

Two of these quotes are by Paul... Acts and Romans

One of these quotes was by Jesus... the synoptic Gospels

One of these quote was by John.

The quote in Acts is not an exact quote, but one mixed with Paul's application to his

Jewish audience. Look carefully at it. Paul is phrasing this non-exact quote to apply to those who will not believe. They themselves are choosing not to hear, see, and believe.

Now consider how it is phrased in Isaiah 6:9-10.

ESV 9 **And he said, "Go, and say to this people:**

**"Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'**

**<sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull,  
and their ears heavy,  
and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed."**

God is the one who made their ears heavy, their eyes blind, so that they would not turn to Him. This context is that of healing from their spiritual unbelief, not healing from physical infirmity. Notice, at times God chooses to harden people so that they won't believe. People are *not* given the same opportunities to believe. Many will not be saved. Paul phrased this quote to apply to his present hearers. However in Romans 11:8 Paul did not so adjust Isaiah's words.

ESV <sup>7</sup> **What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,<sup>8</sup> as it is written,**

**"God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that would not see  
and ears that would not hear,**

**down to this very day."**

Jesus, after giving the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soils was asked a question by His disciples. I quote from Matthew 13.

ESV <sup>10</sup> ¶ **Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.<sup>12</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."<sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.<sup>17</sup> For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.**

Jesus would go on to explain the parable of the soils.

Just before the last supper we have the fourth quote of Isaiah in the NT, written by John in John 12:37-38. Literally the Greek of verse 39 reads, "they were not able to believe."

It is clear that salvation is only to be found in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 14:6). It is clear from these passages that some cannot believe and many will never be saved (healed). It is absolutely clear from passages like Luke 16:19-31 (the rich man and Lazarus) and Revelation 20:11-15 (the Great White Throne judgment) that those who are not saved will suffer eternally.

The idea of judgment for sin does not play well in our society. But what do we base our beliefs on... the Bible (proven time and time again) or our imaginations (The Gospel According to Us)?

Trust the Scriptures! Don't compromise! Look for opportunities! Be considerate and respectful (1 Peter 3:15)!