

Pharaoh's Heart - cont.

... Heshbon and others (Deut. 2:30; see also Josh. 11:20).

The truth of the matter is that God provides the circumstances for hardening to those who do not want to obey God. We find this to be the case all throughout the Bible (Ezekiel 20:25-26; Romans 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

In the same way, God provided the occasion for Pharaoh's heart to be hardened, but Pharaoh himself was the direct cause of his hardened heart.

You can examine these other verses to see how God hardens hearts (2 King 17:14; 2 Chronicles 36:13; Nehemiah 9:16, 17, 29; Isaiah 6:9-10; Daniel 5:20; Matthew 13:14-16; Mark 6:52; 8:17; John 12:37-40; Acts 19:9; Romans 11:7-8; 2 Corinthians 3:13).

Not only can God harden a person's heart, but God can also open a heart! But how? Directly? No. Through the preaching of his word like he did the heart of Lydia (Acts 16:14).

What Is Your Heart Condition?

Friend, what is your heart condition today? How do you respond to

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the gospel message? There are two possible responses to the revealed will of God and the sovereignty of God: either you (1) respond with obedience (an open heart), or (2) you respond with disobedience (a hardened heart). I would encourage you to respond with an open heart and receive the great spiritual blessings that God has in store for you. - *Chris Reeves*

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart - Part 2

In the book of Exodus, the Lord raised up Moses to lead God's people out of Egypt, but Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let Israel go. So, what does it mean that Pharaoh's heart was hardened? What does the Bible say?

What is the issue? The Bible says: (1) Pharaoh's heart was hardened; (2) Pharaoh hardened his own heart; and, (3) God hardened Pharaoh's heart. What is the explanation of these statements? Does the Bible contradict itself?

The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart

Yes, the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. Is this Calvinism? No. Paul's point in Romans 9:17-18 is that Pharaoh was chosen to serve the purpose of God and show God's power, not that he lacked free will.

The verses in Exodus say that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, but one must read the whole context to see how the Lord did it. (See last week's bulletin for all the verses relating the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.)

The issue is not: Did the Lord harden Pharaoh's heart? Of course he

did. The issue is: How did the Lord harden Pharaoh's heart?

Did the Lord do it directly and apart from Pharaoh's free will (choice)? No. Did the Lord do it indirectly and in conjunction with Pharaoh's free will (choice)? Yes. Consider two important facts in this account:

Fact #1: Pharaoh "hardened his heart" shows that he exercised his own free will choice.

Fact #2: The Lord said he would harden Pharaoh's heart showing that the Lord did something as well.

So, how do these two facts fit together? God hardened Pharaoh's heart by giving him the circumstances to be hardened: God's words, God's demands, and God's miracles given through Moses (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; note the servants and other Egyptians are hardened also; the time between one miracle and another, Exodus 8:15; 9:34; the comments of the magicians, etc.)

God placed Pharaoh and others in circumstances where they chose to be hardened. God provided the circumstances and thereby (indirectly) hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Pharaoh hardened his own heart when he chose not to obey God's word (Exodus 8:15; 9:34). Pharaoh was not a victim of an arbitrary, capricious God!

Remember, the same word of God that hardened Pharaoh's heart, softened the hearts of others including some of the Egyptians who went with Israel (Exodus 12:38). Think about it. If the Egyptians witnessed the same miracles that Pharaoh did, why did the Egyptians not harden their hearts also like Pharaoh? They obviously chose to have a different heart and reaction.

Here is something to consider by way of illustration. The same sun that hardens clay, softens butter. In like manner today, the same gospel that saves some, damns others because people react differently to the preaching of it (2 Corinthians 2:16).

Something else to consider is that Pharaoh was stubborn before it is said that God hardened his heart (Exodus 2:23; 3:9, 10; 5:2).

Note the comment on this incident by the Philistines in 1 Sam. 6:6. Pharaoh was hardened just like Sihon King of...

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