

WHY DID PHARAOH HARDEN HIS HEART?

TEXT: *Exodus 5:9: Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.*

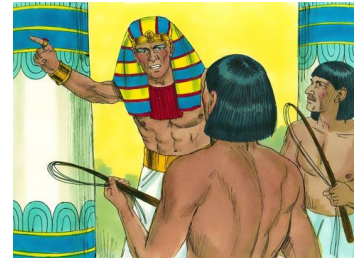
1. The Sin of Unbelief

“Vain words” is what Pharaoh called God’s message through Moses lips. This is *THE SIN OF UNBELIEF*. It has kept many out of Heaven and others from enjoying deliverance from the burden, bondage, and condemnation which sin brings.

God’s Word says in:

Mark 16:16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

UNBELIEF is very costly, for time and also eternity. It was in the heart of Pharaoh, so he sneers at God’s Word and reverses God’s commandment about allowing the Hebrews to go into the wilderness for a 3 days journey to worship the Lord. Instead, Pharaoh ordered the taskmasters to impose more burdens on them, and commanded Moses and Aaron to return to their tasks.



He calls God’s message ‘*VAIN WORDS*’. This is the way sinners feel about The Judgment Day, Hell, and the Coming of Christ to save us from our sins.

2. *PRIDE* hardens the sinner’s heart.

Exodus 5:2: And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey His Voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Daniel 5:20-21:

20 But when his [Nebuchadnezzar] heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever

He will.

3. SIN hardens the heart, even of Christians.

Hebrews 3:13: But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Ezekiel 3:7: But the House of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto Me: for all the House of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

4. WHAT is the meaning of HARD HEARTED Or HARDEN THE HEART?

Strong's Concordance:

**be cruel
difficult to get along with
fierce
obstinate
stiff-necked
stubborn
tough
withstand**

Webster's Dictionary:

**calloused
insensible
unfeeling
pitiless
cruel
inhuman**

5. GOD commands us and warns us not to HARDEN our HEARTS.

Deuteronomy 15:7: If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:

1 Samuel 6:6: Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when He had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people

go, and they departed?

Job 6:10: Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let Him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

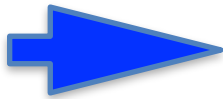
Psalms 95:8: Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Hebrews 3:15: While it is said, Today if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

Hebrews 4:7: Again, He determines a certain day, saying, Today, by David so long a time afterward; as it is said, Today if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts.

THE LORD JESUS REPROVES HIS DISCIPLES FOR THEIR HARDNESS OF HEART.

Mark 16:14: Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.



It is very important to us to learn that hardness of heart is not produced by God but by us. God would never tell us not to harden our hearts and then turn right around and do it Himself.

When we persistently and stubbornly refuse to submit ourselves to God when He is dealing with our hearts from sin, then our hearts are hardened more and more. When God's repeated warnings are rejected, we become so hardened until we become willful sinners. At this point, such a person will cross God's deadline. No more will God deal with the heart to get it to turn away from wickedness, and such a person has sealed their doom. **Those who have refused the pleadings of the Holy Spirit will find at the end that their own decision has become their destiny.**

6. GOD WILL PUNISH HARDENED HEARTS.

Proverbs 28:14: Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Proverbs 29:1: He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Romans 2:5: But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God;

7. Why do People Harden their Hearts?

To keep from obeying God's Word

Jeremiah 19:15: Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear My words.

8. We can harden our HEARTS.

2 Kings 17:14: Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

2 Chronicles 36:13: And he [Zedekiah] also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

Nehemiah 9:16-17:

¹⁶ But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to Thy Commandments,

¹⁷ And refused to obey, neither were mindful of Thy wonders that Thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

Job 9:4: He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?

Proverbs 21:29: A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

Proverbs 28:14: Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Isaiah 63:17: O LORD, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways, and hardened our heart from Thy fear? Return for Thy servants' sake, the tribes of Thine inheritance.

Jeremiah 5:3: O LORD, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

Jeremiah 7:26: Yet they hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.

Jeremiah 19:15: Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear My words.

Ezekiel 3:7: But the House of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto Me: for all the House of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

Ezekiel 3:9: As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Matthew 19:8: He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Mark 6:52: For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Mark 8:17: And when Jesus knew it, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

Mark 10:5: And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Acts 19:19: Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

9. HARDNESS OF HEART GRIEVES OUR LORD.

Mark 3:5: *And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

10. Hardness of Heart causes harsh words.

Jude 15: *To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him [Jesus].*

11. Hardness of the heart by God is only done in His permissive Will.

Deuteronomy 2:30: *But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.*

Joshua 11:20: *For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he [Joshua] might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.*

12. God's foreknowledge of Pharaoh's HARDENING of his own HEART

Exodus 3:19: *And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.*

Exodus 7:22: *And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.*

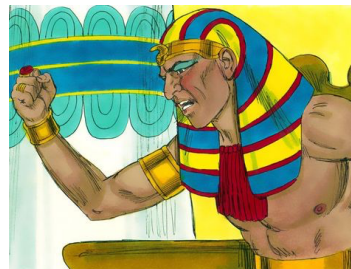
13. Pharaoh hardens his own Heart. HOW? By his lies and deceitfulness.

Exodus 8:15: *But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exodus 8:19: *Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he*

hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Exodus 8:32: And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.



Exodus 9:7: And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

1 Samuel 6:6: Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed.

14. GOD HARDENS PHARAOH'S HEART.

One need only go to the Hebrew to get a better understanding of what is meant when it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. The word in Hebrew which is translated into English as *hardened* is *hazak* (חָזַק). This word actually means **strengthened**. So God *strengthened* what was already there in Pharaoh's heart.

Exodus 4:21: And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

Exodus 7:3: And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 7:13-14:

¹³ And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

Exodus 9:12: And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

Exodus 10:1: And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto

Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these My signs before him:

Exodus 10:20: But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the Children of Israel go.

Exodus 10:27: But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

Exodus 11:10: And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the Children of Israel go out of his land.

Exodus 14:4: And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

Romans 9:18: Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

15. GOD hardened the Egyptians' Hearts.

Exodus 14:17: And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get Me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

Because they hardened their own hearts

1 Samuel 6:6: Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when He had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

16. GOD hardens willful sinners' hearts.

John 12:40: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

CONCLUSION

It is necessary to draw a distinction between Pharaoh hardening his own heart

and God hardening it. These verses of the Bible have added much fuel to the devil's and atheist's fires of opposition to the Bible. It is like a delightful morsel, as fodder to feed their hatred.

In the first three points, we gave you the three causes behind people's hearts being hardened. Also, that *Christ is grieved over the hardness of people's hearts.* Also, that He reproved the disciples for their hardness of heart. Also, *He commands us not to harden our hearts against Him, or, against one another.*

God will never violate the very principles which He has set down for us to follow. God shows great patience toward Pharaoh during these TEN PLAGUES to show this proud king that He alone is God, and that Pharaoh is not god. Pharaoh persistently lies and makes promise after promise to let the Children of Israel go, then reverses his decision repeatedly.

When a person *persists in rebelling against the Lord, then The Lord will turn on that individual* and become their enemy, and work with them in hardening their heart. Just as if we were to say:

'Since you want to lie, I'll help you to be what you want to be.' This principle is discovered in:

Psalms 125:5: As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

God influences those who have turned from righteousness to sinning to go amongst those who sin so they will have plenty of company; but more so that they will get away from the righteous and not contaminate them or pollute them with sin.

17. EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO HARDENED THEIR HEARTS

The Generation of Noah

Genesis 6:1-7:

¹And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

² That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

³ And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man,

for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

⁴ There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

⁵ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶ And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.

⁷ And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them.

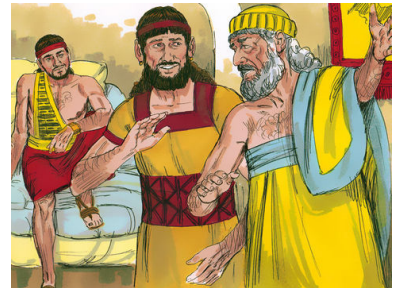
Lot's sons-in-law

Genesis 19:12-14:

¹² And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

¹³ For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the Face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

¹⁴ And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.



King Sihon

Deuteronomy 2:30: But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.

The King of Canaan

Joshua 11:20: For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The sons of Eli

1 Samuel 2:12-17:

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

13 And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the Priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;



14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the Priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the Priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the Priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.



17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the Offering of the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:34: And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

1 Samuel 4:17: And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the Ark of God is taken.

The Pharisees

Mark 3:5: And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Mark 6:52: For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Mark 8:17: And when Jesus knew it, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

The King Zedekiah

2 Chronicles 36:13: And he [Zedekiah] also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

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