

MONDAY

Who Hardened Pharaoh's Heart?

1. Puzzling, thought-provoking Question = centers on tension between human free will = and God's sovereignty

- **Who hardened Pharaoh's heart—God or Pharaoh himself?**
- First glance = seems like Scripture = gives two conflicting answers
- Let's look closely = walk thru what Bible actually says

2. Two Sources of Hardening

(a) God Hardened Pharaoh's Heart

- **Nine verses** say God hardened Pharaoh's heart:
 - **Exodus 4:21** "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart..."
 - See also: Exod. 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8
 - Paul reflects on this in **Romans 9:18**
"Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden."

(b) Pharaoh Initiated Hardening of His Own Heart

- **Another nine verses** say Pharaoh hardened his own heart:
 - **Exodus 7:13** "Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them..."
 - See also: Exod. 7:14, 22 – 8:15, 19, 32 – 9:7, 34, 35

3. Pattern of Hardening in = Plague Narrative

- Closer look reveals = **clear progression**:
 - In **first five plagues** = it is **Pharaoh** who hardened his heart
 - Beginning w/ **sixth plague** = text says **God** hardened his heart (Exodus 9:12).
- Progression suggests God didn't override Pharaoh's will –rather—
 - He **confirmed/ deepened** Pharaoh's own repeated choices
 - Pharaoh's own willful actions,
 - Just as God had told Moses He would

4. Understanding God's Role

- God's actions = did not implant new evil = in Pharaoh's heart
 - Sent plagues to help Pharaoh repent = set him free from
 - Darkness / error of His own impulses
 - Pharaoh had free will – choose for/against God
 - Pharaoh decided against God
- Then finally = God **removed His restraining grace**
 - leaving Pharaoh to fully embrace his chosen rebellion
- This is similar = to what Paul describes in **Romans 1:24**

“God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...”
- God strengthened direction = Pharaoh had already chosen
Like **Romans 1:28** says:

“Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind.”

5. An Analogy: Butter and Clay

- Imagine / sun beating down on two materials: **butter / clay**
 - Same sun **melts** the butter = but **hardens** the clay
 - Difference isn't in / sun—but in = **nature of / material**
- Light of God's presence/ truth will have **different effects**
 - depending on = **attitude of the heart**
 - Pharaoh's heart was like clay
 - it hardened when exposed to God's truth
 - A humble heart = like butter = softens / yields

6. Role of Free Will

- God has self-imposed boundaries around our free will
- Always honors human freedom
 - even when people choose wrongly
- Pharaoh **had opportunity to respond** to God's warnings
 - But he consistently chose **resistance over repentance**
- **Deuteronomy 30:19** God says:

“I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.”

7. Larger Lesson for Us Today

- Story of Pharaoh is not just ancient history—it's— **mirror for us**
- We're given ability to choose = between right/wrong, good/evil,
 - Obedience/disobedience = just like Adam/Eve = Pharaoh
- Every day / we too make choices that **either soften / harden**
 - our hearts toward God

Key takeaways:

- God doesn't force rejection
 - He affirms = path we insist on walking
- Every choice either **opens** us more to God = or **closes** us off
- Even small decisions = shape = condition of our hearts

8. Let's reflect = how we can apply personally

- What kind of heart do you have toward God today?
- What difficult choice are you facing in = next day or two?
- If you already know = what right choice is
 - how can you **prepare your heart** to say "yes" to God?
- Are there areas where you've been resisting God's guidance—
 - repeating Pharaoh's pattern?

Hebrews 3:15 reminds us:

"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..."

9. Closing Thought

- Story of Pharaoh shows us that **God is patient**, but also that He will eventually **confirm our direction** = if we keep resisting Him
- Let's respond to His grace / while our hearts are still soft
- Because /same light that saves one person /may harden another