

HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART

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| Mode | Text | Wording | sign | Pharaoh's offer |
|------|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| c | Ex 4:21 | I will harden Pharaoh's heart | | |
| c | 7:3 | " " " " " | | |
| a | 7:13 | heart was hardened | (staff to snake) | |
| a | 7:22 | " " " | water to blood | |
| b | 8:15 | Pharaoh hardened his heart | frogs | |
| a | 8:19 | heart was hardened | lice | go inside the country |
| b | 8:32 | Pharaoh hardened his heart | flies | |
| a | 9:7 | heart was stubborn | livestock plague | |
| c | 9:12 | The LORD hardened P's heart | hail | |
| b | 9:34 | Pharaoh hardened his heart | boils | |
| c | 10:1 | I have hardened Pharaoh's heart | | men go inside Egypt |
| c | 10:20 | The LORD hardened P's heart | locusts | leave flocks here |
| c | 10:27 | " " " " " | darkness | |
| | 11:4-5 | " " " " " | firstborn | |
| c | 11:10 | " " " " " | | take flocks and herds |
| c | 14:4 | I will harden Pharaoh's heart | | |
| c | 14:8 | The LORD hardened P's heart | | (Israel turned around) |
| c | 14:17 | I will harden the Egyptians' hearts | Red Sea destruction | |

also

- c Deut 2:30 God hardened Sihon's spirit [king of Heshbon].
- c Josh 11:20 The LORD hardened the Canaanites' heart to attack Israel.
- b 1 Sam 6:6 Why do you harden your hearts like Pharaoh and the Egyptians did?
- a Mark 6:52 The disciples did not understand about the loaves at the feeding of the 5,000; their hearts were hardened.
- c John 12:40 < Contemporary Jews did not believe Jesus despite his many signs. They Isaiah 6:10 could not believe because God hardened their heart.
- c Romans 9:18 The LORD hardens or has mercy on the ones he wants to.
- a 11:7 The non-elect were hardened.
- a 11:25 Hardening has befallen part of Israel.
- a 2 Cor 3:14 Their minds were hardened [the veil on Moses' face]; their minds still are.
- a Heb 3:8, 15, 47 Do not harden your hearts like they did in the provocation at Meribah.
< Psalm 95:8

How the Heart Is Hardened

James 1:13-14: God does not tempt us. Our temptations come from being drawn away by our own desires as a residual effect of previous sin. What we are like causes us to react like we do.

Hebrews 3:13: hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

"Hardening" means "*insensitivity, unwillingness to listen.*"

Pharaoh's heart was hardened by the plagues that should have changed it.

Pharaoh hardened his heart in response to the plagues that should have changed it.

God hardened Pharaoh's heart with plagues that should have changed it.

God did not just come in and take the Israelites out. The plagues provided him an opportunity to demonstrate his power over Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods and to do so in front of the Israelites, who did not suffer those plagues. That pattern of the plagues showed Yahweh's existence, his supremacy, and his preference for Israel. They did so; he blessed them before he commanded them to serve him at Sinai.

The LORD did not just come in and destroy Egypt to accomplish his purpose. He gave Pharaoh a chance to choose to let the Israelites go. He explained the point of the miracles; he did not just plague Egypt to be mean. Letting Israel go could have happened without destroying the land, its people, its resources, and its military defenses.

God not only showed his power in initiating the plagues, but even his good faith toward Pharaoh by stopping plagues when Pharaoh entreated him to do so with the frogs (Exodus 8:8-13), the flies (8:28-31), the hail (9:28-33), the locusts (10:17-19). God withdrew the plagues after repeated acts of bad faith on Pharaoh's part (8:15, 32; 9:34; 10:20; note 14:5-9 as well).

Yahveh did not give just one but many signs and with growing power as they went on—cumulative and increasingly obvious and powerful, culminating in the plague of darkness and the death of the first-born, not to mention the destruction of Egypt's army in the Red Sea. These plagues were miracles, wonders, and signs—miracles in that they were supernatural in cause, wonders in their impact on observers, and signs in carrying meaning.

How God Hardened Pharaoh's Heart

Exodus 14:1-9 Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

Who hardened it?

God hardened it.

How did God harden it?

Indirectly (**14:14**) by turning the Israelites around into what Pharaoh would think would box them in. What should not have been a temptation was a temptation for him. What Pharaoh was like, caused how he responded—hardening his own heart like he did.

Two Relevant Concepts

About God: purpose and result collapse together under divine omniscience (Exodus **11:9**; cp. John **9:3**).

God does not do something and then get surprised by its consequences. He knew ahead of the whole process how Pharaoh would react (Exodus **4:21**) all the way to the death of his first-born (**4:22-23**).

About Hebrew idiom: direct and indirect, initiated and allowed, are acts worded the same way (Job **1-2, 42**; cp. Genesis **43:23; 45:5, 8**; Exodus **14:3-4; 21:12-14**; Judges **21:15**; John **19:11**). (“streamlining causal distinctions”)