



Hardness of Heart

For the unbeliever, hardness of heart is continual negative volition toward the Gospel. For the believer, hardness of heart is continual negative volition toward Bible doctrine. For the believer, this is the same condition as reversionism. See category on [Reversionism](#).

A vacuum in the soul causes hardness of heart and an insensitivity to spiritual things. In Ephesians 4:19, “they” refers to the unbeliever or a believer negative to Bible doctrine. “Callous” is the perfect active participle of ἀπαλγέω (apalgeō) and means to cease to feel pain or grief, to become apathetic. “Have given themselves over” means to become obvious, to betray yourself. “Sensuality” refers to promiscuity, fornication, and adultery.

“and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.” (Ephesians 4:19, NASB)

Pharaoh of the Exodus

The Pharaoh of the Exodus hardened his own heart or his soul’s right lobe. He stayed on negative volition regardless of what God did. Jesus Christ would die for Pharaoh’s sins, but Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Exodus 7:22-23; Exodus 8:15; Exodus 8:32; Exodus 9:34.

“But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said. Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this.” (Exodus 7:22-23, NASB)

“But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.” (Exodus 8:15, NASB)

“But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.” (Exodus 8:32, NASB)

“But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants.” (Exodus 9:34, NASB)

After he had hardened his heart over a period of time, he was locked in negative and therefore, God used his hardened heart. This means that God used him in his hardened condition. Pharaoh continually rejected the Gospel as he heard it, then we have the phrase “God hardened Pharaoh’s heart” which means that God used Pharaoh’s negative volition after he had hardened it. Why? For the purpose of judgment and to make it evident to all who God was and that He was above all of the Egyptian gods. After all, God had given him more information than nearly any other person. Exodus 9:12; Exodus 9:16; Exodus 10:1; Exodus 10:20; Exodus 10:27.

“And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.” (Exodus 9:12, NASB)

““But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.” (Exodus 9:16, NASB)

“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them,” (Exodus 10:1, NASB)

“But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.” (Exodus 10:20, NASB)



“But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go.” (Exodus 10:27, NASB)

God allowed the negative volition of Pharaoh's heart or right lobe to go beyond the normal limits of restraint, so he had maximum scar tissue and maximum emotional revolt, which brought out God's maximum power. This became the basis of evangelizing the world in that day.

The more Gospel information Pharaoh received, the stronger his negative volition became. God did not tamper with Pharaoh's volition. God used the negative volition of Pharaoh to emphasize and reveal His own Person and plan. This is why Exodus 9:16 is quoted in Romans 9:17.

“But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.” (Exodus 9:16, NASB)

“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.'” (Romans 9:17, NASB)

God, in His sovereignty and perfect love, always saves anyone who will believe in the work of Jesus Christ and always deals with every believer on the principle of grace. God, in His justice always judges every person who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore God's sovereignty is always consistent, absolutely perfect and without deviation. Consequently, God's decisions are always consistent with His perfect essence.

God always treats the believer in grace and the unbeliever in judgment. Such treatment is always fair and is never incompatible with His love or any of God's other attributes.

When God treats someone in absolute righteousness (+R) and justice, it is not incompatible with His love, or when God treats someone in love, it is not incompatible with His absolute righteousness (+R) and justice.

God kept on giving Pharaoh the Gospel. Pharaoh kept on saying no. He becomes more hard or set in his Gospel rejection. This is analogous to a child that keeps on asking their mother to go swimming. She says no. The child persists. The mother becomes more hard (set) in her original decision.

Sihon King of Heshbon

Another illustration of a hardened heart was Sihon, the king of Heshbon. Here, Sihon's hardened heart was used by the plan of God in a similar manner to that of Pharaoh of the Exodus. Deut. 2:26-27; Deut. 2:30, Deut. 2:32-34.

“So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, 'Let me pass through your land, I will travel only on the highway; I will not turn aside to the right or to the left.’” (Deuteronomy 2:26-27, NASB)

“But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today.” (Deuteronomy 2:30, NASB)

“Then Sihon with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz. The LORD our God delivered him over to us, and we defeated him with his sons and all his people. So we captured all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed the men, women and children of every city. We left no survivor.” (Deuteronomy 2:32-34, NASB)



The Negative Believer

Any believer negative to Bible doctrine has hardened their hearts toward the Word of God. This always brings divine discipline to get them to change their minds and return to fellowship with God. Deut. 15:7; Prov. 28:14.

"If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother;" (Deuteronomy 15:7, NASB)

"How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity." (Proverbs 28:14, NASB)

The Nation of Israel

The nation of Israel hardened their hearts or stiffened their necks by persistent negative volition to God's commandments. Psalms 95:8; Heb. 3:8-9; 2 Kings 17:14; Neh. 9:16; Jer. 7:26; Jer. 19:15.

"Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness," (Psalms 95:8, NASB)

"DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS." (Hebrews 3:8-9, NASB)

"However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God." (2 Kings 17:14, NASB)

"But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments." (Nehemiah 9:16, NASB)

"Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers." (Jeremiah 7:26, NASB)

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to bring on this city and all its towns the entire calamity that I have declared against it, because they have stiffened their necks so as not to heed My words.'" (Jeremiah 19:15, NASB)