

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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Don't Go Too Far!

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"And the LORD said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. **But I will harden his heart,** so that he will not let the people go.'"

Exodus 4:21 (NKJV)

"4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But **in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath** in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," **Romans 2:4-5 (NKJV)**

What is a hard heart?

In the historical account of Moses leading God's people out of Egypt, we find these words...

- I will harden Pharaoh's heart
- Pharaoh's heart was hardened

This phrase or idea is used over twenty-four times in this account, **Exodus 3-14**. The Hebrew word "chazaq" which is the word

hardened is used fourteen times. It means "to strengthen" or "strong". The Hebrew word "kabed" which is the word hardened is used six times. It means "heavy" or "to be heavy". The Hebrew word "qahah" which is the word harden, or stubborn is used twice. It means "to be hard". All three of these words are used and the idea is the same. The word is used in a bad sense!

Someone who has a hard heart continues to strengthen, to become strong in their hardness. That type of person tries their best to continue to harden their heart. This is exactly what Pharaoh King of Egypt did in the days of Moses.

What does a hard heart look like?

Pharaoh King of Egypt was the poster boy of what a hard heart looks like. The Lord wanted His people to be set free from their slavery in Egypt. **Exodus 5:1-2** says, "And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to me in the wilderness.' (2) But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go.'"

Before the plagues, Moses showed Pharaoh a sign—Aaron's staff became a snake. Pharaoh's wise men did the same thing with their power. The only difference is that Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. The outcome was... "Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said", **Exodus 7:13**. So started the Ten Plagues on Egypt!

Plague One...The Nile River was turned into blood, **Exodus 7**.

Outcome...Pharaoh hardened his heart, **Exodus 7:13, 14, 22**.

Plague Two...The Frogs were everywhere and in everything, **Exodus 8:1-15**.

Outcome...Pharaoh hardened his heart, **Exodus 8:15**.

Plagues Three and Four...Gnats and insects were everywhere in Egypt, **Exodus 8:16-32**.

Outcome...Pharaoh hardened his heart, **Exodus 8:19, 32**.

Plagues Five, Six, and Seven...Cattle dying, boils, and hail, **Exodus 9:1-7, 8-17, 18-35**.

Outcome...Pharaoh hardened his heart, **Exodus 9:7**. Then the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, **Exodus 9:12**. After that Pharaoh's heart was

hardened, **Exodus 9:12, 17, 30, 34, 35**.

Plagues Eight and Nine...Locusts ate everything green and everything went dark, **Exodus 10:1-20, 21-29**.

Outcome...The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart each time, **Exodus 10:1, 20, 27**.

Plague Ten...The death of the first born, **Exodus 11**.

Outcome...The Lord continued to harden Pharaoh's heart (**Exodus 11:10**) until the first born die then Pharaoh allowed the people to go free.

The Red Sea...**Exodus 14**

Outcome...Even after all of this, Pharaoh tried to go and stop the Israelites from leaving Egypt. The Lord continued to harden Pharaoh's heart, **Exodus 14:4, 8, 17**. Pharaoh and his army died in the Red Sea with the water coming on top of them.

What is the danger of a hard heart?

There are many dangers of a hard heart!!! You cannot see what God is doing right in front of you. Look at how the Ten Plagues of Egypt destroyed every area of life for the Egyptians. It destroyed their government, their economy, their religion, food/water, their farms, livestock, their armies, etc. Pharaoh would not see what God was doing right in front of him and all around him.

Also, with a hard heart you cannot *hear* what God is trying to say. Pharaoh would not *listen* to God, to Moses, or Aaron, **Exodus 5:1-2; 7:3, 13**. Shockingly, Pharaoh would not *listen* to his own wise men. **Exodus 8:19** says, "Then the wise men said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God.' But Pharaoh's heart

was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said." This was said on plague number four!!! Also, Pharaoh would not *listen* to his own servants. **Exodus 10:7** says, "And Pharaoh's servants said to him, 'How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?'"

Also, with a hard heart you may have reached a point that you are not able to return to God. Yes, you can harden your heart, mind, and soul to the point that you WILL NOT see, WILL NOT listen, WILL NOT repent, and WILL NOT return to the Lord. *Spiritually, there is a point of no return.*

There is a danger of hardening your own heart. Fifteen times, we find that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Nine times, we find that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. God already knew Pharaoh's heart. God already knew that Pharaoh's mind was already 100% made up. The Lord knew he would not see, would not listen, and was past the point of no return. **Exodus 3:19** says, "But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion." **Exodus 6:1** says, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he shall let them go, and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land.'"

So, God turned Pharaoh over to himself. The Lord knew what He was going to do from the start. **Exodus 4:21** says, "And the Lord said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.'" The Lord made an example out of Pharaoh so

that the rest of the world could see and believe. **Exodus 9:16** says, "But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth." For this reason, a mixed multitude (Egyptians) went with the Israelites as they left Egypt.

This idea that you can reach a point of no return is also found in the New Testament. **Romans 1** shows us this very clearly. **Romans 1** teaches that the Gentiles are sinners. **Romans 2** teaches that the Jews are sinners. **Romans 3** teaches that all people are sinners and lost without Jesus as Lord of their life. **Romans 3:23** teaches that sin separates us from the Father. Without becoming a Christian through Jesus Christ, we would all be lost.

God has shown us the evidence that we need to both believe and obey Him. He has shown us this in creation (**Romans 1:18-20**), His word, and in the lives of His people. Often, people choose to reject the Lord. **Romans 1:21** says, "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

- We see this both in our culture and sadly within Christianity today.
- The world thinks they are smarter than God, **Romans 1:22**.
- The world serves the creation and not the creator, **Romans 1:23**.
- The world would rather have lies than the truth of God, **Romans 1:25**.
- The world throws out the morals and standards of God like marriage, and they

seek homosexuality,
Romans 1:27.

- The world rejects the Spirit of God for the spirit that is in this world, **Romans 1:29-31.**

This is a great New Testament example of people willingly hardening their own hearts to the point of no return. In the end, God will, in turn, harden their hearts because He already knows they have fully rejected Him as Lord. They will not see. They will not listen. They will not return. It was their choice to make, and they made it. So, what will God do according to **Romans 1?**

Romans 1:24 says, "Therefore God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them."

Romans 1:26 says, "For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,"

Romans 1:28 says, "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,"

Without Christ, their outcome is DEATH, **Romans 1:32.**

What caused Pharaoh to keep hardening his own heart? Why did the Lord already know that Pharaoh had reached the point of no return? Why did the Lord start to harden Pharaoh's heart? There were three things that hardened Pharaoh's heart to the point of no return.

First, Pharaoh was stubborn, **Exodus 7:14; 13:15.** His heart, mind, and soul were hard.

Second, Pharaoh exalted himself above God, **Exodus 9:17.** He lifted

his heart, mind, and soul above the Lord. He thought he was more important than God.

Third, Pharaoh did not fear the Lord, **Exodus 9:30.** How can this be true? In the mist of all of these plagues, did he and his servants fear the Lord? No, they did not. The same is true today. People that reject the Lord do not fear God, do not fear death, do not fear the Second Coming, and do not fear hell.

Don't go too far, you may not return, friend!!! Does this sound like you? Do you believe in the Word of God? Are you willing to obey the Lord? Do you keep putting it off for whenever?

Don't go too far, you may not return, friend!!! Does this sound like you? Are you a baptized believer/Christian? Are you in church faithfully? Do you read and study God's Word daily? Do you have a set prayer time daily? Do you live out your Christian walk? Let's go deeper!

This may be an article that you just read and forget about. Truth is, it may be too late for you anyway! Truth is, you may have hardened your heart to the point of no return. Truth is, God may be hardening your heart at this point.

I hope not friend. I hope this article pierces your heart like it did the people on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:37 says, "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'"

If you are not a Christian, and you care about the state of your heart, then I have good news for you.

Acts 2:38 says, "And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your

sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

If you were a Christian but have fallen away, and you care about the state of your heart, then I have good news for you.

Acts 3:19 says, "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;"

What is the cure for a hard heart?

Let me give you the warning first and then the cure.

Romans 2:5 says, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"

Remember, why would Pharaoh refuse to change his hardened heart? He was stubborn. Because he was stubborn, he put himself first before God. Because he was stubborn, he did not fear the Lord. Because he was stubborn, he would not repent and turn to the Lord.

The same can be said for people that want to remain stubborn and stay in their old ways. By doing this, they continue to harden their hearts to the point of no return.

What happens when you have gone too far to the point of no return?

- As we have seen, the Lord turns you over to yourself, **Romans 1.**
- They are storing up for themselves the wrath of God which will come about during the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, **Romans 2:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:8.**
- They are unrighteous; therefore, the righteous Lord will give them what

they have chosen, which is judgment.

That is what God did for Pharaoh, for the wise men, and the people of Egypt. That is what the Lord still does to those who will not believe or obey Him as Lord. If you are stubborn, you have a hard heart. If you are unrepentant, you have a hard heart. The question is, have you gone too far to the point that there is no returning to the Lord?

What is the cure for a hard heart?

Romans 2:4 says, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

Think about how good God has been to everyone! He gives everyone a place to live. He gives everyone food and water. He gives everyone clothes on their backs. He gives everyone what they need to be able to live this life. He gives everyone sunshine, rain, and good days. It is more than that! It is deeper than that! Yes friend, it is! He has given us His Son, **John 3:16**. He allowed Jesus to die on a cross, to be buried in a tomb, and to be raised up on the third day. Jesus died for everyone!!! **Romans 5:6, 8**. Salvation is for everyone who is willing to soften their heart and turn to the Lord.

- God has given to everyone out of the riches of His kindness.
- God has shown forbearance to everyone, meaning He puts up with us, giving us time to turn to Him for salvation.
- God has shown us patience hoping that we will make Him the Lord of our life.

- God has been kind to everyone, even the worst of sinners, **1 Timothy 1:15**.

What should this do for you and I? What should understanding the kindness that the Lord has shown us do for us personally? By coming to the knowledge of knowing how good God is, it should lead us to...

- The Lord
- Repentance
- Salvation
- Hope
- Everlasting life
- A Softened Heart

Your hard heart should melt away, and you should want to turn fully to the Lord. So, what do you say? What has this article done for you?

- Do you have a soft heart that is willing now to turn fully to the Lord, **Romans 2:4**.
- Are you going to just keep doing what you are doing, which is hardening your own heart until you have gone too far!!! **Romans 2:5**.

Friend, learn from Pharaoh! In the end, he destroyed himself and everyone around him. It was his choice. It was his heart to give. It was his heart to harden. The same is true for you and me.

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