

Romans: A Study on Reformation

Lesson 24 “Why Did God Harden Pharaoh’s Heart”

I. Introduction - We are continuing our series on the book of Romans today. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth to the church in Rome to bring reformation to this church in 57 A.D. We are studying verse by verse through the book with our focus being on “Reformation.”

A. The main problem Paul wanted to reform with the church in Rome was the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles. In this letter, Paul will teach how God can reconcile the apparently irreconcilable and how we can all come into unity.

B. Over the last couple of weeks we have studying the doctrine of election that **Romans 9&11** talk about. This is something we want to understand because it has direct implications on the sovereignty of God, free will, and how we do life.

1. Many teach this means God elects to save some and not others. Not true. **We all have a free will.**
2. The point Paul was making is God elected to choose the Jewish nation to be a light to the gentiles. In **Romans 11** we will see that God will eventually use the gentiles to reach unbelieving Jews.
3. Election is about how God uses people to reach the world, not who gets to go to heaven. God’s not willing that any should perish. **2 Peter 3:9.**
4. Faith is the key to understanding this concept. Faith was the key to why God elected certain individuals like Isaac and Jacob in the Old Testament. Faith is also why God used women like Rahab and Ruth. Faith attracts the favor of God.

C. Today we are going to answer the question, “Why Did God Harden Pharaoh’s Heart?” God did harden Pharaoh’s heart. This begs the question, did Pharaoh have free will?

II. Why Did God Harden Pharaoh’s Heart?

A. **Romans 9:16-18**

1. Last week we saw that God shows compassion and mercy to anyone who will believe and those who make a personal choice not to forsake their own mercy.

This segways into **verse 17**.

- a. God told Pharaoh He wanted to show His power in Him. This is a quotation out of **Exodus 9:16-17**. **Exodus 9:17** implies things could have been different for Pharaoh if He would have submitted to God. God could have exalted and blessed him instead of bringing destruction on Egypt.
- b. While God knew what Pharaoh would choose through foreknowledge (**Genesis 15**), He didn’t make Pharaoh oppress His people and disobey.

c. Pharaoh hardened his own heart. **Exodus 8:15, 8:32, and 9:34.** When **Exodus 9:16** says God hardened Pharaoh's heart all it means is God took Pharaoh's choice and solidified it, which allowed him to accelerate the circumstances Pharaoh would experience. **This is similar to what a karate champion does when they use an attacker's momentum against them. They act in a way that accelerates their momentum and expedites them to getting to their chosen destination.**

2. This is an important concept to get because there are times in scripture where God's people insist on their own way and God granted it even if it led to problems. Ex: Israel crying out for a king in opposition to God's will.

3. **Verse 18** God has mercy on those who believe and those who choose not to believe He hardens.

B. Practical Application

1. **2 Kings 20:1-6** Isaiah gave a prophetic word to Hezekiah that he would die, yet Hezekiah cried out for mercy and God extended his life 15 years.

2. **2 Kings 20:12-19** After Hezekiah messed up by showing all that was in his house to the Babylonian emissaries, Isaiah gave another prophetic word to Hezekiah. The word was after he died, the Babylonians would carry off all that was in his house as well as his sons. This all happened.

a. This time Hezekiah didn't cry out for mercy. Why? Pride. **2 Chronicles 20:32.** Pride lifted or hardened his heart.

b. Interestingly, Hezekiah's son, Manessah ended up being the most ungodly king Israel ever had (worshipped other gods, built alters for other gods, and participated in child sacrifice.) **Manessah's heart was hardened most probably because of the neglect of his father.** His father sacrificed his life, so Manessah sacrificed his kids.

c. **2 Chronicles 33:10-13** Manessah didn't heed prophetic warnings so destruction came. The amazing thing is when he repented and cried out for mercy, God returned him to Jerusalem. **His Dad could have done this. Destruction wasn't set in stone because God's nature is so kind!**

C. How Do I Get A Sensitive Heart

1. Stay in the word of God.

2. The presence of God.

3. Repentance when we're aware we've disobeyed. This includes repentance from destructive thought patterns that are contrary to God's word or in opposition to what the Holy Spirit is wanting to do in our lives.

4. We need to ask the Holy Spirit for help. **Romans 8:2**

III. Conclusion - To answer our initial question, God did harden Pharaoh's heart, but Pharaoh had free will in the process. This is true about all of us, which is why we need to cry out for mercy when we see our need for mercy. Once our heart is hardened it is too late.

A. Pray Closing Prayer

B. Call Up Prayer Team