

Let Us Not Harden Our Heart

In Exodus 7, the story is told of how Pharaoh hardened his heart. He became stubborn and rebellious. He refused to yield to the demands of God. Romans 15:4 indicates that such Old Testament history is preserved for our learning and admonition. Let us not be like Pharaoh.

There were at least three factors involved in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. First, there was the action of God (Exo. 7:2). God made demands of Pharaoh with regard to allowing the children of Israel to leave Egypt that were against the political and financial interests of Egypt, and certainly against the pride of Pharaoh.

A second factor involved in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the Magicians. In imitating some of the plagues, they tried to destroy the force of God's efforts to get Pharaoh to let the people go.

A third factor was Pharaoh himself. Rather than having an interest in justice, duty and obedience to God, he was only interested in himself and his wishes. He yielded to the prompting of his own pride.

Since human nature has not changed through the years, if we are not extremely careful we will make no effort to know God's will, and will treat the commands of God lightly, as did Pharaoh.

Consider some of the commands of the gospel against which many people have hardened their hearts:

1. **Hearing the Word of God.** When such is contrary toward our fleshly desires, we have a tendency to harden our hearts. If we pursue our own interests – money, pleasure, power, popularity, etc. – the result will be the same as in the case of Pharaoh.

2. **Baptism for forgiveness.** The scriptures teach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16) When we listen to the preacher, or parents, or peers, rather than to the Word of God, it is easy to become hardened. The result is that we just as surely do not obey God.

3. **Study the scriptures.** Under the guise of being too busy, or making a living, or whatever, we sometimes do not study. However, we cannot stand still. We either grow (II Peter 3:18), or we become set (hardened) in our own ways.

4. Preaching the gospel to the lost. So many in our day and time have excused themselves over and over for not carrying the gospel to the lost that they have become deluded into thinking we do not need to, or do not have do such preaching.

If Pharaoh had considered all the facts and reached the proper conclusion, the results in his case would have been the exact opposite. Will we follow in the steps of Pharaoh or will we learn from his example? (cf. Romans 15:4)