

Exod 7:3-4, 13-14

The Strong Will of Shar'āh



A Hardēnēd Heart

- The Bible uses three words, *qāšâ* (“to be hard”), *ḥāzaq* (“to be strong”), and *kābēd* (“to be heavy”), to describe the hardened heart of Pharaoh (Exod 7:3–4; 13–14).
 - God hardened (*qāšâ*) the heart of Pharaoh because Pharaoh had enslaved the sons of Israel and subjected them to hard (*qāšâ*) labor (v. 3; cf. 13:15 | 1:14; 6:9 | 32:9; 33:3, 5, 9).
 - “harden(ed)”
 - “hard”
 - “stiff-necked”

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 - God strengthened (*ḥāzaq*) the heart of Pharaoh so that Pharaoh might send Israel out with a strong (*ḥāzāq*) hand (Exod 4:21; 7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; cf. 3:19; 6:1; 13:3, 9, 14, 16 | 9:2 | 10:19–20; 12:33).
 - “strong [hand]” “hold” “strong(ly)”

A Hardened Heart

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 - God made the heart of Pharaoh heavy (*kābēd*) because Pharaoh brought heavy (*kābēd*) service on Israel, so God brought heavy (*kābēd*) punishments on Egypt (Exod 7:14; 8:15, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1; 14:4, 17; cf. 8:24; 9:3, 18, 24; 10:14 | 14:18).
 - “hard(ened)”
 - “heavy”
 - “glorified”
- God and Pharaoh hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Rom 9:17–18).

- Pharaoh forces Israel into hard (*qāšâ*) service (1:14).
- God promises to harden (*ḥāzaq*) Pharaoh's heart (4:21).
- Pharaoh's heart is hard (*ḥāzaq* and *kābēd*) even after Moses and Aaron perform the initial signs (7:13, 14).
- Pharaoh hardens (*kābēd*) his heart to the initial signs and refuses to obey the Lord (8:15).
- God has hardened (*kābēd*) the hearts of Pharaoh AND the servants of Pharaoh (10:1).
- The hardening (*ḥāzaq*) of the hearts of the Egyptians results in the glory (*kābēd*) of God (14:17).

Why does God allow his people to suffer?

Why does God allow and enable bad people to disobey him and hurt others?

God hardens already-hard hearts because hardship is brief, salvation is sure, and his and our shared glory will be eternal.

Then and Now

- God knew the prideful heart of Pharaoh and hardened it by giving Pharaoh opportunities to act according to the evil desires of his heart and so accomplish the purpose of God.
- Those who hate truth delude themselves and invite God to do the same to them (2 Thess 2:8–12; Rom 1:18–32).
- We must learn from the failure of Pharaoh and humble our hearts before God by acknowledging the Lord as God and doing whatever he demands (1 John 5:2–3; cf. Exod 5:2).

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