

The Book of Romans

The Gospel of God

Romans 9:17-18

God's Unconditional Hardening

¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHO I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

¹⁶ So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

¹⁷ 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."

¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

(Romans 9:14-18)

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Unconditional Hardening

➤ Exodus 9:16

- Paul accents God's initiative in the process of Pharaoh's resistance ("I raised you up")
- Paul chooses this text to make clear that even God's negative actions serve His good purpose

² You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land.

³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

⁴ When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments.

⁵ The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst."

(Exodus 7:2-5)

Unconditional Hardening

- Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart (Exodus 7-14)
 1. It was God's intention from the start
 - it was not merely God's response to Pharaoh but His purpose for Pharaoh
 - God is the primary and ultimate actor in every case of Pharaoh's heart being hardened

Unconditional Hardening

- Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart (Exodus 7-14)
 2. It was in accord with Pharaoh's desires
 - God did not coerce or create evil in Pharaoh but directed it for His purpose ("concurrence")
 - Pharaoh was guilty for his stubborn refusal to obey God (Ex. 9:34-10:4)

Unconditional Hardening

- Implications ("*He hardens whom He desires*")
 1. God's hardening is an action that makes a person insensitive to God and His word, which results in eternal judgment

Unconditional Hardening

- Implications ("*He hardens whom He desires*")
 2. God's hardening is a sovereign act of His will ("desire") that is not caused by anything in the person – "unconditional"

Unconditional Hardening

- Implications ("*He hardens whom He desires*")
 3. God's hardening is an act directed against those who are already in rebellion against God – it is deserved and just

Unconditional Hardening

- Implications ("*He hardens whom He desires*")
 4. God's hardening serves His saving purposes in which God is recognized as God