

## Lessons from Torah 59 - Exodus 4:18-12:43

### Heart Disease

1. Egypt suffered because Pharaoh 'hardened his heart' and wouldn't let Israel go, but God states that He – God – hardened Pharaoh's heart
2. This raises many questions:
  - a. What IS a hard heart?
  - b. Where do hard hearts come from?
  - c. Can 'believers' have hard hearts?
  - d. What can be done about hard hearts?
  - e. Can a heart be hard toward God yet soft too?
3. What IS a hard heart?
  - a. Hard toward God
    - i. Impulsive - Proverbs 28:14
    - ii. Unresponsive - Isaiah 6:9-10
    - iii. Unwilling to listen - Ezekiel 3:7
    - iv. Disobedient - Zechariah 7:12
    - v. Dense - Mark 6:52, 8:17, 16:14
  - b. Hard toward neighbor:
    - i. Insensitive - Deuteronomy 15:7
    - ii. False piety - Mark 3:1-6
4. Where do hard hearts come from?
  - a. It is our natural condition, inherited from Adam
  - b. Once hardened, hearts remain hard; compare 8:15, 32 ("Pharaoh hardened his heart") and 8:19, 9:12 ("his heart remained hard")
  - c. Ourselves - Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34
  - d. God - Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; Romans 9:18
  - e. Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers, preventing the Word of God from softening their hearts - 2 Corinthians 4:4
  - f. Sin's deception – Hebrews 3:13
  - g. God will sometimes allow a heart to remain hard, or prevent it from softening, in order to accomplish His purpose through them
    - i. Exodus 9:16, 10:1, 14:17-18
    - ii. Acts 2:23, 4:27-28; Romans 11:25
5. Hard yet soft –
  - a. Hard toward God, 'soft' toward neighbor: tax collectors
  - b. Hard toward neighbor, 'soft' toward God: Pharisees
  - c. To be properly soft-hearted both toward God AND neighbor takes the hand of God – our example is Jesus
6. Who is responsible when our hearts are hard toward God?
  - a. We must answer for what we do and are, regardless of the reasons for our thoughts and actions - Romans 1:20, 2:1-2, 3:19; 1 Corinthians 1:29
  - b. Only by placing everyone's thoughts and actions – our 'works' - under condemnation can God save any through faith – Galatians 3:10, 22-23; 1 John 5:11-13
  - c. But if God can heal our hardness and chooses not to, why are we held to blame for having hard hearts? Paul deals with this question in Romans 9:14-24
7. What can be done about hard hearts?
  - a. God alone can cure our hard hearts, by removing our hard heart and replacing it with a heart responsive to Him – Ezekiel 36:26, 1 John 5:11-15; He uses:
    - i. The Word
    - ii. The testimony of believers
    - iii. The deeds of believers
    - iv. The result of evil
  - b. Humble repentance and seeking God's grace show God is already at work softening our hearts
8. Can even a 'believer' have a hard heart?
  - a. The testimony of the disciples - Mark 6:52, 8:17, 16:14
  - b. Simon the Magician – Acts 8:9-24
    - i. He 'believed', yet his later actions betrayed a heart beginning to harden toward God again
    - ii. Repentance was the cure he needed
9. Humility is evidence of a soft, responsive heart – Matt 11:29
  - a. When other things become more valuable to us than Jesus Christ, our hearts begin again to harden toward God – Hebrews 3:12-19
  - b. This is why He gives us His Word – John 8:31-32
  - c. We need the encouragement and accountability offered by God through other believers – Hebrews 3:13
10. Humility and repentance - not one-time events but part of our daily walk with God – John 13:8-10