

Who hardened Pharaoh's heart?

Question: Exodus 10:1 says that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, but Exodus 8:15 says that Pharaoh hardened his heart. Isn't this a contradiction?

Answer: Both statements are true. Hebrews 4:7 says, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." When God speaks to us and we refuse to obey, our hearts become harder. When God repeatedly told Pharaoh to let His people go and he refused to do it, his heart became harder each time.

Suppose you tell someone, "Jesus loves you." The person doesn't want to hear it and responds, "You make me so mad!" Who made him angry? On one hand, you did—by speaking words he didn't want to hear. On the other hand, he made himself mad—by resisting the message.

The same sun that hardens the clay also melts the wax. The clay responds to the sun by hardening, while the wax responds by softening. It's the condition of the heart that determines whether or not it hardens or softens.

The Lord is like the sun shining on Pharaoh's heart, which was like hardened clay. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart by speaking words he didn't want to hear, and Pharaoh hardened his own heart by resisting the message.