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DID GOD HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART?

We are all familiar with the account of God pouring out ten plagues upon Egypt before leading Israel out of Egypt in the days of Moses. In that context we are also familiar with the repeated statements that **God would harden Pharaoh's heart**, before Pharaoh would finally let Israel go, after the tenth plague.

Now it is without doubt a sin for us to "harden our hearts". And that is why the Apostle Paul repeatedly instructed God's people with the admonition **"harden not your hearts**" (Hebrews 3:8, etc.). It is without question a serious sin for us human beings to harden our hearts.

So the question that arises is:

Did God actually force Pharaoh to sin, forcing Pharaoh against his own will to harden his heart? What did God actually do to Pharaoh in that situation?

If God had not done anything at all to Pharaoh himself, or to Pharaoh's mind, would Pharaoh of his own accord have readily agreed to let the Israelites go? Or would Pharaoh, without any intervention from God, also have refused to let the Israelites go? **Was some intervention by God in fact needed to ensure that Pharaoh would repeatedly refuse to let Israel go?**

Assuming that the Pharaoh in question comes up in the second resurrection, could he then say to Jesus Christ: "Lord, if You had not hardened my heart, I really would have let the Israelites go right away, when Moses first came to me. But You actually 'made me do it', when I refused to let them go, and then I only let them go after the tenth plague. **Why did You harden my heart, Lord?**"

In the spirit of full disclosure let me state up front my own premise on this question:

I believe that it is completely incompatible with the character of God and the nature of God, for God Himself to ever actively harden any human being's mind against Himself, against God. I don't believe that God would ever do that!

I am open to the facts here, and if it turns out that my premise is wrong, then I am assuredly willing to change that premise. And so in this article I will examine all the relevant statements in the Bible regarding Pharaoh, which, as those statements stand right now in our Bible translations, clearly contradict my personal premise. And after that examination the facts can then speak for themselves. And you can be the judge.

But let's understand that **there is something that is just not right**, when some statements assert that God did something that in effect forced some human beings to sin. If we are never to harden our hearts, then it doesn't make sense for God to supposedly actively harden some people's hearts.

Let's also keep in mind the most basic and most fundamental fact about the natural human mind, and that most basic fact of all is this:

Because **the carnal mind *is* enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:7-8)

This statement also applied to Pharaoh's natural mind. His natural mind was **spontaneously hostile** towards anything that represented the true God, just like that statement also applies to all unrepentant people in our world today. Since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit **all** natural human minds in every age are and always have been spontaneously opposed to God.

So with that unconverted human mindset as a given, how much intervention by God would it really have required for Pharaoh to repeatedly oppose God's instructions? Not very much, even in the most "favorable" circumstances, right?

Let's take a closer look at what happened when God brought Israel out of Egypt.

BACK IN EGYPT

When we examine the accounts in the Book of Exodus, we find that there are 19 statements about Pharaoh's hardened heart. These 19 statements can be divided into three groups.

Group #1 consists of 11 statements that say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. The first of those 11 statements is Exodus 4:21.

And the LORD said unto Moses, When you go to return into Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your hand: but **I will harden his heart**, that he shall not let the people go. (Exodus 4:21)

Group #2 consists of 3 statements that say that Pharaoh himself hardened his heart. The first of those 3 statements is Exodus 8:15.

But when **Pharaoh** saw that there was respite, he **hardened his heart**, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. (Exodus 8:15)

Group #3 consists of 5 statements which are all presented in the passive voice. They all state that Pharaoh's heart "is" or "was" hardened, but without indicating in any way whether this hardening was done by God or by Pharaoh himself. These 5 statements can theoretically apply to either of the first two groups. The first of these 5 statements is Exodus 7:14.

And the LORD said unto Moses, **Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened**, he refuses to let the people go. (Exodus 7:14)

So now we have all 19 statements about Pharaoh's hardened heart divided into three distinct groups. But it get's a bit more complicated than this, because in our context the translators repeatedly translated **three different Hebrew words** as "**hardened**". And furthermore, there are some very significant mistranslations involved here. Those 3 Hebrew words are not synonymous. We will look at the actual meanings of all 3 words.

The overall situation now looks as follows:

1) The 11 statements about "harden" in Group #1 (i.e. about God hardening Pharaoh's heart) represent 3 different Hebrew words. Thus: **3 different Hebrew words** are used for God "hardening" Pharaoh's heart.

2) The 3 statements about "harden" in Group #2 (i.e. about Pharaoh hardening his own heart) all

represent the one same Hebrew word. Thus: **1 Hebrew word** is used for Pharaoh hardening his own heart. For this group we have some consistency.

3) The 5 statements about "harden" in the passive voice in Group #3 represent 2 different Hebrew words. Thus: **2 different Hebrew words** are used in these passive voice statements.

Now we have the overall picture!

Before proceeding further we need to establish the exact meanings of the 3 Hebrew words that are involved in this matter. Once we have established the correct meanings for these Hebrew words, then we can examine all the Scriptures in each of the 3 groups of statements.

THE 3 HEBREW WORDS

In the 19 verses about Pharaoh's hardened heart, the 3 relevant Hebrew words are: **chazaq** = used 12 times; **kabad** = used 6 times; **qashah** = used 1 time. Here is some information for each of these three Hebrew verbs.

THE VERB "chazaq"

This verb is used **290** times overall in the Old Testament (TWOT says 291 times). In the KJV it is translated as follows: **48**x as "strong", **47**x as "repair", **37**x as "hold", **28**x as "strengthened", **14**x as "strengthen", **13**x as "**harden**", **10**x as "prevail", **9**x as "**encourage**", **9**x as "take", **8**x as "courage", **5**x as "caught", **5**x as "stronger", and by various miscellaneous words in the remaining places where it is used.

This word "chazaq" is used 15 times in Exodus. Of those 15 times, it is 12 times translated as "harden", always in reference to Pharaoh. In the other 3 places in Exodus this word "chazaq" is translated as: Moses "**caught**" the snake that became a rod in his hand (Exodus 4:4); God admonishing Pharaoh that if he refused to let the Israelites go, and "**will hold them still**" (Exodus 9:2); and the Egyptians "**were urgent**" upon the people (Exodus 12:33).

When the word "chazaq" is used in reference to Pharaoh then the translators decided to **always** translate it as "harden". Now let's come to the meaning of this verb, which is used 290 times throughout the Old Testament.

"Chazaq" means "**be strong**". With the piel stem it means "**become strong**".

So this verb is correctly translated as: strong, strengthen, strengthened, and stronger. "Prevail" implies that the person who prevails has strength. Likewise, the translations "encourage" and "courage" and "hold" all imply strength to deal with certain circumstances. "Repair" likewise implies the possession of strength to get something done.

All of the ways that "chazaq" is translated in the KJV, except for the translation "harden", imply **having or receiving some strength to get something done**. Can you see that? This is in agreement with the meaning "to be strong" and "to become strong". All of the words (except one) with which "chazaq" is translated imply strength or power to do something; all of them refer to **an ability to use strength or power**.

But "harden" is a total mistranslation for "chazaq"!

"Harden" does not refer to any ability! "Harden" does not imply either strength or power! In fact, "harden" has nothing at all to do with a word that means "to be strong". **"Harden" is a gross mistranslation!**

"Harden" refers to an attitude of mind!

But the terms "be strong" and "become strong" refer to having and receiving power! Power represents an ability to deal with specific situations.

So here is what happened with our English language translations.

Whenever the word "chazaq" is used in the Hebrew text in a general context, the English language translators provided words that in some way or other mean receiving or using strength and power. This shows that they clearly understand the correct meaning of "chazaq".

But every time this word is used in reference to Pharaoh, the translators rejected the meaning of "receiving strength", and instead **they in every case implied an attitude for Pharaoh**. That implied attitude has nothing to do with being strong or becoming strong. The attitude they implied contains an inherent condemnation, because **it is a sinful attitude**, one that will ultimately lead to the lake of fire.

Whenever "chazaq" refers to Pharaoh, the translators deliberately opted to translate this word incorrectly!

Why did they do that?

For 277 times out of 290 the English translators chose words that either directly refer to strength, or words that imply strength and power. But the remaining 13 times (12 of which refer to Pharaoh) they chose a word that refers to a sinful attitude, a word that has nothing at all to do with strength or power.

Did they just come up with this totally inappropriate translation themselves? Or were they following some precedent? Let’s find out.

THE TRAIL FOR THE MISTRANSLATION

I have examined all 13 verses where the translators rendered the Hebrew "chazaq" into English as "harden", with 12 places referring to Pharaoh and 1 place referring to something at the time of Joshua.

Here are the facts:

In the Greek language **LXX** Old Testament in our 13 verses "chazaq" is 11 times translated by forms of the Greek verb "**skleruno**", and 2 times by forms of the verb "**katischuo**" (i.e. Exodus 7:13 and Joshua 11:20).

Remember that the Hebrew "chazaq" means "be strong, become strong".

The ancient Greek verb "**skleruno**" means "**to harden**". It is formed from the Greek adjective "skleros", which means "hard".

The ancient Greek verb "**katischuo**" means "**to prevail, be strong**". It is derived from the word "ischus"

which means "strength".

I should mention that when we look at all 290 places in the Old Testament where the Hebrew verb "chazaq" is used, then we see that the Greek language LXX has translated this one Hebrew word by **more than 20 different Greek words**, with a vast range of meanings amongst those 20+ different words. This illustrates **how sloppy the LXX translation actually is**. It is an extremely poor translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

But the point here for us is this:

In reference to the 13 places of interest in our context, where "chazaq" is used: the LXX translated this **correctly** into Greek as "katischuo" **in only 2 places**. And the LXX translated this **incorrectly** as "skleruno" **in 11 places**. The Hebrew word "chazaq" simply has nothing at all to do with "hard, hardness, harden"! The LXX introduced a gross mistranslation in those 11 verses.

The LXX is the origin for our English language mistranslations!

Now let's move on to Jerome's Latin language translation, the Latin Vulgate. When Jerome translated the 13 places of interest to us, **Jerome did not translate the Hebrew word "chazaq" into Latin**! No, instead Jerome simply translated the Greek LXX rendering into Latin. So for our 13 verses **he translated from Greek into Latin**; not from Hebrew into Latin.

But the Greek verses contain 11 incorrect translations. Jerome copied all of those mistranslations into his Latin text. And then he also mistranslated the 2 places that are translated correctly in the LXX. This now looks as follows.

Hebrew = 13 times "chazaq".

Greek = 11 times "skleruno" and 2 times "katischuo".

Latin = 13 times "induro, indurare".

All 13 verses in the Latin Vulgate have forms of the verb "**induro, indurare**", which Latin verb means "**to harden**".

So the mistranslation that was first introduced by the Greek LXX was then "strengthened" (pun intended) by the Latin Vulgate mistranslation for "chazaq".

So then there were two different ancient languages (Greek and Latin) which both falsely **asserted** that the Hebrew word "chazaq" also means "to harden". So this agreement between the Greek LXX and the Latin Vulgate made the meaning of "chazaq" a closed case for all the language scholars that translated the Bible into English. All the early English translations relied very heavily on the Latin Vulgate, even when they are supposedly not based on the Latin text.

So all our English language translators accepted that the Hebrew verb "chazaq", when it refers to Pharaoh in Egypt, means "to harden", because that is what they had learned from the Greek LXX and from the Latin Vulgate. And today you are considered ignorant if you don't accept that Hebrew "chazaq" also means "to harden". But "chazaq" doesn't mean "to harden" at all!

Any ideas as to who might be behind foisting this deception on a misguided humanity? Hmmm ... wasn't there something about some perverse character deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9)?

We've now looked at the first of our 3 Hebrew words. Let's now look at the next Hebrew word.

THE VERB "kabad"

This verb is used **116** times overall in the Old Testament. In the KJV it is translated as follows: **34**x as "honor", **14**x as "glorify", **14**x as "honorable", **13**x as "heavy", **7**x as "**harden**", **5**x as "glorious", **3**x as "sore", **3**x as "made", and by various miscellaneous words in the remaining places where it is used. Notice that throughout the entire Old Testament it is translated as "harden" **only 7 times** out of 116 instances.

And guess what?

All 7 places where "kabad" is translated as "harden" in the Old Testament happen to be in the Book of Exodus, and they all just happen to be references to Pharaoh (6 times) or to Pharaoh plus all the Egyptians (1 time). **In no other place is the word "kabad" ever translated as "harden".** Outside of Pharaoh and the Egyptians there is nothing at all to support the idea that "kabad" means "harden". Isn't that interesting?!

To any serious researcher this should raise a potential credibility question for ascribing the meaning "harden" to the Hebrew word "kabad". Why does "kabad" supposedly only mean "harden" when it is used for Pharaoh, but it never means "harden" in any of the other 109 places where it is used?

Is this word "kabad" used with **a completely different meaning** when it is used for Pharaoh, when compared to the meanings it has in the other 109 places? Look again at all the ways in which this word has been translated. Can you see that "to harden" is the only one amongst all those translations that implies a sinful attitude? **None of the other ways of translating "kabad" imply a sinful attitude.** "To harden" is without doubt a judgmental translation ... a person's frame of mind and attitude is being judged by the words "to harden".

Hebrew dictionaries tell us that "kabad" means all the following: to be heavy, be weighty, to be hard, grievous, be rich, be honorable, be glorious, be burdensome, be honored.

We might take note of some other places where the word "kabad" is used.

And I, behold, **I will harden** (Hebrew "**chazaq**") the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and **I will get me honor** (Hebrew "**kabad**") upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. (Exodus 14:17)

Exodus 14:17 is interesting in that it uses both Hebrew verbs, "chazaq" and "kabad". We've already discussed "chazaq", that this word does not mean harden. But the point here in this verse is that "kabad" is used by God as a contrast to "chazaq". It is a case of "to strengthen" vs. "to honor".

"Get honor" is a very appropriate translation for "kabad". **Here "kabad" is something that God desires to receive.** Can you see that? Notice also the next verse.

And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, **when I have gotten me honor** (Hebrew "**kabad**") upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. (Exodus 14:18)

Consider the fifth commandment,

Honor (Hebrew "kabad") your father and your mother: that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you. (Exodus 20:12)

So here is what the translators have done very perversely:

1) When "kabad" refers to God, then they translate this word as "honor", correctly so.

2) When God uses the word "kabad" in the fifth commandment, then they also translate this word correctly as "honor".

3) But when God uses the word "kabad" to refer to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians, then the word "kabad" supposedly has an almost opposite meaning, a meaning that implies a sinful attitude (i.e. "a hardening of the heart"). This is a perverse translation!

Shortly we will see that "kabad" is the word that is used 3 times to describe what Pharaoh did to himself. And when Pharaoh did "kabad" his own heart, it simply means that Pharaoh was trying to "glorify himself", without mentioning anything about "hardening his heart" one way or the other. Pharaoh's attitude was somewhat like Satan saying "**I will exalt my throne** above the stars of God" (see Isaiah 14:13).

That's what Pharaoh was trying to do in those three Scriptures, exalt his own throne. Pharaoh's attitude was a clear parallel to Satan's earlier attitude ... **and God had not been involved in any way with either Satan or Pharaoh developing that perverse attitude**.

An examination of all the verses with "kabad" in the Book of Exodus in both the Greek language LXX Translation and in the Latin Vulgate Translation reveals the following:

1) In the two places where "kabad" refers to God (Exodus 14:17-18) the Greek LXX translates "kabad" **appropriately** with a form of the verb "**endoxazo**", which means "**to be glorified**".

2) The Latin Vulgate likewise **appropriately** translates these two places with a form of the verb "**glorifico, glorificare**", and with the verbal participle "glorificatus". In Latin these words mean "**to be glorified**".

3) In the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) the LXX **appropriately** translates "kabad" with "tima", a form of the verb "**timao**". This Greek verb means "**to honor**".

4) The Latin Vulgate likewise **appropriately** translates "kabad" here with "**honora**", which also means "**to honor**".

5) In 4 Scriptures that refer to Pharaoh (Exodus 8:15; Exodus 8:32; Exodus 9:7; Exodus 9:34) the LXX translates "kabad" with forms of the Greek verb "**baruno**", which means "**to be heavy, to burden, to weigh down**". This meaning could **perhaps** still be a possibility here, **though** it is **unlikely**.

6) The Latin Vulgate then translated "kabad" in these 4 Scriptures with forms of the verb "**ingravo, ingravare**", which means "**to aggravate, weigh down**". Clearly these four verses in the Vulgate are based on the Greek LXX text. But they could **perhaps** still be slightly suitable translations, even if unlikely.

7) But for the remaining 2 verses that refer to Pharaoh (Exodus 10:1; Exodus 14:4) the LXX **incorrectly** translates "kabad" with forms of the verb "**skleruno**", which verb we saw earlier means "**to harden**".

8) For these 2 verses the Vulgate likewise **inappropriately** translates "kabad" with forms of the verb "**induro, indurare**", a verb that also means "**to harden**".

So to summarize the Hebrew verb "kabad" and its use in Exodus:

1) When it refers to God, then the LXX has translated it correctly as "honor". 2) When it is used in the fifth commandment, then the LXX has also translated it correctly as "honor".

3) But when "kabad" is used 6 times for Pharaoh, then the LXX has translated it 4 times as "heavy" or "a burden", and **2 times as "to harden"**.

Those two instances clearly represent mistranslations. There was no justification for switching the meaning from "heavy" or "burdensome", which words describe a condition, to a wrong attitude represented by the word for "to harden".

In all of these mistranslations the Latin Vulgate has followed the Greek LXX every step of the way. In all of these verses the Greek LXX and the Latin Vulgate present a united front. This is the picture that confronts all our English language translators.

Let's now move on to the third Hebrew word.

THE VERB "qashah"

This verb is used **28** times overall in the Old Testament. In the KJV it is translated as follows: **12**x as "harden", **4**x as "hard", **2**x as "stiff-necked", **2**x as "grievous", and **8**x by various miscellaneous words.

At last we have a Hebrew verb that actually does mean "to harden". So let's take a closer look at this word.

TWOT gives the meaning of this verb as follows:

"The root qashah **apparently** arose from an agricultural milieu. It emphasizes, first, the subjective effect exerted by **an overly heavy yoke**, which is hard to bear, and secondarily, the **rebellious resistance** of oxen to the yoke." (TWOT, entry for "qashah")

Notice the word "apparently" at the start. This tells us that the authors of this definition are guessing to some degree. They are trying to reason out the meaning. I believe the reference to "an overly heavy yoke" may be correct. But inferring "rebellious resistance" to the oxen is **stretching the meaning, with the intention of finding a justification for "harden"**. Oxen under the yoke aren't really "rebellious" all that frequently. Oxen have a more docile nature than bulls. But the natural human mind, by contrast, does indeed have a "rebellious resistance" towards everything that represents the true God.

These comments are not meant to challenge the meaning "to harden". We can accept that one possible meaning of "qashah" is "to harden". This word "qashah" is also used in Psalm 95:8, which is quoted by Paul in Hebrews chapters 3 and 4. And Paul's quotation of this verse endorses the meaning "to harden", even without inferring "rebellious resistance" to oxen.

The first use of "qashah" is when Rachel was "in hard labor" with the birth of Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-17). This verb is also translated as "cruel" in reference to Simeon and Levi having killed Hamor and Shechem and all the males in that city (see Genesis 49:7). Moses used this word "qashah" in Deuteronomy 1:17, telling the judges that had been appointed: "the cause that is **too hard** for you, bring to me".

This is the word God used in Exodus 7:3 ("I will harden Pharaoh's heart"). So **Exodus 7:3 is the most significant verse in our entire discussion here** about God supposedly hardening Pharaoh's heart.

At this point we should consider a technicality about Hebrew verbs that is different from the way we use verbs in the English language.

HEBREW VERBS

Hebrew verbs have a root and a stem. The root remains constant, but there is a range of different stems available. These stems convey different meanings. This is discussed in more detail in my 1995 article (11 pages) entitled "Some General Points About Hebrew Verbs". That article is available on my website.

Briefly, **different stems** are used to convey **different meanings**. In our context we need to understand two of those stems. They are known as **qal** and **hiphil**.

The **qal** stem expresses **a simple action**. When you see the meaning for a Hebrew verb in a Hebrew-English Lexicon, then the first meaning you see almost always represents the meaning with the qal stem.

The **hiphil** stem expresses **causative action**.

A simple example for the verb "to eat" applied to a certain individual is as follows (using the past tense):

With the qal stem this verb means "**he ate**", and with the hiphil stem this verb means "**he caused to eat**". This doesn't spell out how he caused someone to eat, but for this specific verb the most common application would be the meaning "he fed". By feeding someone, you are causing that person to eat. Note that when the qal stem is used, then the action applies to the person himself. But when the hiphil stem is used, then the action frequently involves someone else, like causing someone else to eat.

Now for a verb that means "to harden", and applied to God, these two Hebrew verb stems have the following effect:

1) If God wants to say that He, God Himself, will harden Pharaoh's heart, then God will use **the verb with the qal stem**. With the qal stem this will mean "**He** (God) **hardened**".

2) If God wants to say that He will get someone else to do the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, then God will use **the verb with the hiphil stem**. With the hiphil stem this will mean "**He** (God) **caused to harden**". With this option God does not have to explain who God will use to get the job done. God simply states that "I'll cause it to be done". In this case God Himself didn't do anything directly to Pharaoh.

Can you understand the **significant implications** here? With the qal stem God Himself does something. But with the hiphil stem God causes someone else to get that something done.

And yes, in Exodus 7:3 God used the verb "qashah" with the hiphil stem.

HOW GOD COMMONLY GETS THINGS DONE

We know that in the past God commonly used angels as messengers to people in Old Testament times.

After all, the word "angel" means "messenger".

And when God wants to get something negative done, then God has frequently used Satan to do that job. Consider the time when God wanted Ahab to die in battle at Ramothgilead. God (in the person of Jesus Christ) had all the angels assembled before Him, and Satan was present as well. So God asked the assembled group for suggestions regarding how to have Ahab die in battle.

A spirit stepped forward (that was Satan) and said: I'll do it. I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And so God said to Satan: go and do it. This account is recorded in 1 Kings 22:19-22.

Now notice the conclusion that God's prophet presented to Ahab.

Now therefore, behold, **the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets**, and the LORD has spoken evil concerning you. (1 Kings 22:23)

But God didn't actually do that! **Satan had volunteered** for the job, like Satan always volunteers to destroy people, and to do bad things to people. Satan volunteers to destroy you and me, if only God would give him permission to do so, which God will not do as long as we are faithful.

God's part in this situation was giving the volunteer (i.e. Satan) permission to do what he had volunteered to do. But God didn't actively "put a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets". God only gave Satan permission to do so.

Let's note also that while God gave Satan permission to be a lying spirit in this situation, **there was no compunction or pressure of any kind on Ahab to believe his lying prophets**. Ahab was free to reject their lying advice, especially since God's servant Micaiah had given Ahab a very clear warning. Micaiah told Ahab not to listen to those lying prophets.

There was no pressure of any kind from God to force Ahab to accept the advice of his false prophets, any more than there was any pressure from God to force Eve to accept Satan's suggestion to eat the forbidden fruit. All Satan could do in either case was present thoughts to the minds of Ahab and of Eve. Both individuals were still free to reject those thoughts.

I mention this because when God allowed Satan to tempt Pharaoh to harden his heart, it wasn't inevitable that Pharaoh had to do so. **Pharaoh had ample warnings from God's servant Moses**, warnings of dire consequences. But Pharaoh chose not to heed any of those warnings, and instead he chose to accept Satan's pressure to harden his heart.

Anyway, let's keep in mind that God very commonly gets other individuals to do things for God.

And let's also understand the significant differences in meanings conveyed by the qal stem and the hiphil stem for Hebrew verbs.

Okay, with this background information we can now examine all 19 references to Pharaoh's "hardened heart". Let's start with the 11 verses that say that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart".

DID GOD HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART?

Of these 11 statements: in 9 verses the Hebrew word is "chazaq", once it is the verb "kabad", and once it is the verb "qashah".

Let’s start with the 9 verses that use "chazaq".

And the LORD said unto Moses, When you go to return into Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your hand: but **I will harden** (chazaq) his heart, that he shall not let the people go. (Exodus 4:21)

And **he hardened** (chazaq) Pharaoh’s heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. (Exodus 7:13)

And **the LORD hardened** (chazaq) the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses. (Exodus 9:12)

But **the LORD hardened** (chazaq) Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go. (Exodus 10:20)

But **the LORD hardened** (chazaq) Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go. (Exodus 10:27)

And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and **the LORD hardened** (chazaq) Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land. (Exodus 11:10)

And **I will harden** (chazaq) Pharaoh’s heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so. (Exodus 14:4)

And **the LORD hardened** (chazaq) the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. (Exodus 14:8)

And I, behold, **I will harden** (chazaq) the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and **I will get me honor** (kabad) upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. (Exodus 14:17)

All the above verses say that God will "chazaq" Pharaoh’s heart. The following comments apply to all 9 verses here.

"Chazaq" does not mean "to harden". That is a mistranslation, as explained earlier. In all of these verses God is simply saying that **God would make Pharaoh’s heart strong**, that God would strengthen Pharaoh’s heart. In other words, God would make Pharaoh confident and self-assured.

What happens when the heart of a proud man or a proud woman is strengthened? Why, they become more proud and more self-confident. When the heart of any carnal person is strengthened, they invariably become more self-willed. This is what Solomon pointed out.

Pride *goes* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor *is* humility. (Proverbs 18:12)

Consider carefully: in all these passages Pharaoh wasn’t bitter and resentful, which things might indicate a hardness of heart. No, in all of these passages **Pharaoh was over-confident**. He was also stubborn. In his own mind he could still win. That’s what motivated him to keep trying to win. Pharaoh’s behavior showed the signs of a "strengthened" heart, one that is **not yet willing to acknowledge defeat**. That’s like the boxer who has already been knocked down twice, but who keeps coming back for more, because he thinks that he can still win.

A hardened heart, by contrast, is almost always the sign of a loser, once the loser himself realized that he has lost, and that there is no way to reverse that outcome, that there is no way to get what he wanted to get. But that is not the picture we see regarding Pharaoh in these particular verses.

However, if Pharaoh's heart really was "hardened" during those events, then that was **his own doing**. There is no way that any of these 9 verses imply that God somehow coerced Pharaoh into hardening his heart.

Let's also understand something else:

One of the main ways in which God "strengthened" Pharaoh's heart during this entire episode was **by bringing each plague to a speedy end**. It is when each plague was over, that then Pharaoh once again became cocky and arrogant.

Had God really wanted Pharaoh to let the people go immediately, God could easily have let the early plagues continue for several weeks each. But instead of breaking Pharaoh's stubborn attitude by letting a plague continue for 4 weeks or 8 weeks, God "strengthened" Pharaoh's heart by bringing each plague to a speedy end.

Solomon understood this principle very clearly. And so Solomon wrote:

Because (the full) sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is **fully set** in them to do evil. (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

When we get away with doing something wrong without having to pay the full deserved penalty, or with just "a slap on the wrist", then our hearts are automatically "strengthened". That is what Solomon was referring to in this verse. And that is what happened with Pharaoh.

So for example, when God with the first plague turned water into blood, then Pharaoh's magicians also did so "with their enchantments" (Exodus 7:22). And one immediate consequence of his magicians replicating this miracle was that Pharaoh "hardened" (i.e. "chazaq" = **strengthened**) his heart. We'll look at this verse later in the next section. But the pattern is always the same ... a plague lasts only a short time, and when it is past, then Pharaoh is once again "strengthened".

Correctly translated, none of these 9 verses say that God actually "hardened" Pharaoh's heart. God in each case "strengthened" Pharaoh's resolve to resist, by God bringing each plague to a speedy end.

In a sense, Pharaoh was like someone who has sat through a few hurricanes in the past and survived, and who, upon hearing that there is a monster hurricane coming his way, says: I have sat out some big ones in the past. My house has a strong basement, and I can sit through this one as well. I can handle it.

An unconverted heart that is **strengthened after each defeat** very easily sets aside the reasons for the defeat, and says: okay, this time I can do it, this time I can win. An unconverted heart that is "strengthened" easily rejects logic and common sense, and goes ahead with some endeavor that results in problems. An unconverted heart never fears weak penalties.

Probably all of us have experienced this personally at one time or another.

We've had some success in something or other, and we then believe that we can do something else. But other people warn us that the "something else" will surely create big problems for us. Other people

can see the dangers inherent in us doing that "something else". But we ourselves can't see that, because our hearts have been "strengthened" in some way.

So we resist all advice to the contrary and do that "something else". And sure enough, then we have serious troubles, which troubles other people had been able to anticipate. But our "strengthened hearts" had not been able to reason logically in this matter. And it was our own self-will that caused us to reject all the sound advice that had been given to us.

That's what happened with Pharaoh in these specific 9 verses.

Now let's look at the one verse in this group that uses the word "kabad".

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for **I have hardened** (kabad) his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him: (Exodus 10:1)

So here God says "I have '**kabad**' Pharaoh's heart". We saw earlier that "kabad" means: to honor, to glorify, to make heavy. We saw that it is only translated as "harden" in the 7 places where it is used to apply to Pharaoh. It never means "harden" in any of the 109 other places where this word is used.

But there is an additional point to consider with this verse.

In this verse God has used the verb **"kabad" with the hiphil stem**, which we discussed earlier. So here God said to Moses: go in unto Pharaoh, for **I have caused his heart to honor and to glorify himself**.

This is what this verse tells us, when we combine the hiphil stem with the correct meaning of "kabad".

In other words, God had allowed Satan to convince Pharaoh and his servants that they would be victorious in resisting God's instructions presented by Moses.

That's like Satan convincing Ahab through Ahab's prophets that he would be victorious in battle (see 1 Kings 22:11-12), in spite of Micaiah's sober warning. And it is like Satan convincing people at the end of the millennium to fight against Jesus Christ, **a totally illogical endeavor**, doomed to failure from the very start (see Revelation 20:7-9). Satan will "strengthen the hearts" of that rebellious multitude, and they will not behave rationally. No, they will look for honor and glory for themselves.

What we need to recognize is that if a man or a woman **allows** Satan to influence his or her mind, then Satan will always inspire those people to engage in **self-destructive actions**. That is like the demons influencing 2000 pigs to run into the sea (see Mark 5:12-13). Satan always inspires self-destructive behavior.

So when we see people engaging in actions that are essentially self-destructive, then we need to understand that **in every case those people are responding to thoughts put into their minds by Satan**. As far as Pharaoh is concerned, his irrational responses to each of the plagues are evidence that he allowed Satan to influence his thinking.

In that process all that God did was stop each plague quickly, and give Satan access to Pharaoh's mind. But it was Pharaoh himself who had to decide whether to act on the impulses Satan sent to his mind, or whether to listen to Moses and to resist those impulses from Satan. Pharaoh did not resist; he gave in to those impulses time and time again. And God did not force or pressure Pharaoh to do anything.

Now let's examine the remaining one verse in group #1, the verse that uses the verb "qashah".

And **I will harden** (qashah) Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 7:3)

We looked at the meaning of "qashah" earlier, and saw that this is the only verb regarding Pharaoh that also means "to harden". And Exodus 7:3 is **the only place** where this verb is used to refer to Pharaoh. We also saw that here this verb is used **with the hiphil stem**.

So in this verse God said: **I will cause** Pharaoh's heart to be hardened". That is not the same as saying that God Himself would harden Pharaoh's heart. God Himself did not harden Pharaoh's heart. Rather, God gave Satan access to influence Pharaoh. And Pharaoh was free to resist that influence or to embrace it. He embraced it!

Well, now we have looked at all 11 Scriptures that in our translations say that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart". All of these 11 Scriptures are in fact translated incorrectly. And when translated correctly, none of them state that God Himself did something to harden Pharaoh's mind.

God gave Satan permission to tempt Adam and Eve, and God gave Satan permission to tempt Ahab to go into a foolish battle, and God gave Satan permission to tempt Pharaoh to harden his heart.

The incorrect translations in the 11 verses we have looked at have created a totally wrong picture.

Let's now look at the second group of statements, the ones that say that Pharaoh himself hardened his heart.

DID PHARAOH HARDEN HIS OWN HEART?

Here we have 3 verses, and they all use the same Hebrew word. So here we have some consistency. The Hebrew word used here is "kabad". Here are the 3 verses.

But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, **he hardened his heart** (kabad), and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. (Exodus 8:15)

And **Pharaoh hardened his heart** (kabad) at this time also, neither would he let the people go. (Exodus 8:32)

And when **Pharaoh** saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and **hardened his heart** (kabad), he and his servants. (Exodus 9:34)

The point to notice here is that in each case the statement expresses **Pharaoh's response** to a plague being removed. And none of those plagues had lasted very long, not long enough to really soften Pharaoh's pride and arrogance.

Keep in mind also that "kabad" primarily means "**to honor, to glorify, to make honorable**". And that is precisely what Pharaoh was doing here in each case. When the plague had been removed, then Pharaoh once again wanted to make himself look victorious. When things were going well, Pharaoh wasn't about to give in to a bunch of slaves. He very irrationally again believed that he could still win.

However, there is one thing with these references to **what Pharaoh himself did** that we should notice:

In the first group of verses the dominant Hebrew verb was "chazaq", which means "to be strong, to

strengthen, to encourage". But when it comes to what Pharaoh himself did, then **"chazaq" is never used**.

This tells us that **Pharaoh could not strengthen himself**, he could not encourage himself.

Only someone else could do that to him. Only someone else could perhaps "make him strong" in this confrontation with the God of Israel. And that is what God "did" for Pharaoh ... God allowed Satan to inspire a false strength and a false confidence in Pharaoh. Pharaoh's mind was receptive to Satan's suggestions, and therefore he felt strong and wanted to glorify himself again.

So in summary, **these three verses certainly don't say that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart"**. They only speak about something that Pharaoh did himself. But even then, "to harden" is a mistranslation for "kabad". These verses tells us that Pharaoh wanted to glorify himself, to make himself look great and majestic.

A better way to translate the relevant expressions in these 3 verses is to say something like: "Pharaoh honored his own heart", making himself more self-confident.

Let's now look at the third group of statements, the ones that are presented in the passive voice.

5 VERSES IN THE PASSIVE VOICE

In these verses two of our three Hebrew words are used. Here are these 5 verses.

And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and **Pharaoh's heart was hardened** (chazaq), neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. (Exodus 7:22)

Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and **Pharaoh's heart was hardened** (chazaq), and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. (Exodus 8:19)

And **the heart of Pharaoh was hardened** (chazaq), neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses. (Exodus 9:35)

And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And **the heart of Pharaoh was hardened** (kabad), and he did not let the people go. (Exodus 9:7)

And the LORD said unto Moses, **Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened** (kabed), he refuses to let the people go. (Exodus 7:14)

In the above list the first three verses use the Hebrew word "chazaq", the fourth verse uses "kabad", and the last verse uses "kabed". "Kabed" is an adjective that is formed from "kabad", and the meaning is essentially the same as "kabad".

None of these five verses say that God did something to Pharaoh. And more importantly, **none of these verses use the Hebrew word that includes "to harden" amongst its meanings**; none of these verses have the verb "qashah".

We have already established that neither "chazaq" nor "kabad" really mean "to harden". So in these 5 verses "hardened" is once again a mistranslation, and that is in addition to none of these verses saying anything about God doing something to Pharaoh's heart.

This concludes an examination of all 19 verses.

There is one statement in the New Testament that people will quote to claim that God actively hardens some people's hearts. Some of those people use the phrase "the divine hardening of hearts", squarely placing the responsibility for such hardening on God, something that is completely unjustified. The passage in question is Romans 9:18. Let's examine it.

ROMANS 9:18

Here is this verse.

Therefore has He mercy on whom He will *have mercy*, and **whom He will He hardens**. (Romans 9:18)

There you are, people will say. Here Paul tells us in black and white that God decides to harden some people's hearts. And here the Greek verb "skleruno" is correctly translated as "hardens". So here you can't claim some or other mistranslation.

So what about it? Did Paul really mean to say that God actively hardens the hearts of certain people? Let's examine this more closely.

1) For a start, the statement "whom He will He hardens" is **not a quotation from the Old Testament**! This expression is something that Paul himself was saying. None of God's statements to Pharaoh apply here, because those statements are all mistranslations of the Hebrew text, as we have already seen. So we need to look elsewhere in the Old Testament for some answers.

Now one statement in the Old Testament, that could be appealed to is Isaiah 63:17, a Scripture we have not yet examined, because it does not apply to Pharaoh. Let's now look at this verse.

O LORD, why have **You made us to err from Your ways**, *and* **hardened** (Hebrew is "qashach") **our heart** from Your fear? Return for Your servants' sake, the tribes of Your inheritance. (Isaiah 63:17)

We should recognize that this verse is not presented as a statement made by God. This verse is in fact part of a prayer by the Prophet Isaiah. In this prayer Isaiah is expressing his own understanding. And this statement is really **a question that Isaiah was asking God**.

Next, the Hebrew word here translated as "hardened" is "qashach". While to us it looks very much like "qashah", it is in fact a completely different word, which (according to Hebrew scholars) is not at all connected to the word "qashah" we looked at earlier. Anyway, this word "qashach" is only used twice in the Old Testament, and never in connection with Pharaoh. Interestingly, the two unrelated Hebrew words "qashah" and "qashach" also both mean "to harden". That's what Hebrew scholars tell us.

What we should take note of here is that in Isaiah 63:17 the word "qashach" is used **with the hiphil stem**, as is also the Hebrew verb translated as "made us to err". So in this verse Isaiah is asking God as to why God "**has caused**" the people to err from God's ways, and why God "**has caused**" their hearts to be hardened.

This is not a statement about something that God Himself actively did, although that is how it is unfortunately misrepresented in our English text. It is a part of a prayer in which Isaiah expressed his own perception or assessment of the situation. It is a statement about what God "caused to happen" as a response to the people's endless sins and transgressions. From other Scriptures we know that God allows Satan to deceive people, and to tempt people to harden their hearts.

This is in agreement with our assessment of all the verses that speak about Pharaoh. And there is no direct statement in the Old Testament that Paul was quoting in Romans 9:18.

2) Next, Paul himself was fluent in Hebrew. Paul very clearly understood the differences in meanings that are represented by using the qal stem and the hiphil stem. And had Paul been writing in Hebrew he would have been able to express those distinctions very precisely.

But Greek verbs don't really have the equivalent of a Hebrew "hiphil stem". So in writing to the Romans Paul had to make do without ready access to something like using a Greek verb with a hiphil stem. That just wasn't possible. So in translating thought concepts from the Hebrew language to the Greek language, there were certain limitations.

3) Paul's statement in Romans 9:18 is based on everything that Paul has already said to the Romans in the preceding chapters. We are expected to understand Romans 9:18 on the foundation of everything that went before in this letter to the Romans. So let's do that.

In Romans 1 Paul had talked about humanity in general. There Paul said:

Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness** through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: (Romans 1:24)

Here Paul is referring to people getting involved in sexual perversions. Now when Paul said that God gave them "up to" or "over to" such perverse and depraved practices, by no stretch of the imagination did Paul mean that God somehow influences human beings to become sexual perverts. Human beings themselves, no doubt influenced by Satan, the arch-pervert, decided to get involved in these perversions.

Paul means that God did not intervene, except with Sodom and Gomorrah, when human beings did these perverse things. "God gave them up to" means that **God allowed** human beings to use their own free wills to engage in perverse conduct.

Next:

For this cause **God gave them up unto vile affections**: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: (Romans 1:26)

Paul is still talking about sexual perversions. But note the expression "**for this cause**". When Paul said that God "gave them up unto" vile affections, Paul means that **God responded** to people's rejection of "the truth of God" (verse 25) by allowing their minds to adopt perverse and depraved ways of thinking.

Paul assuredly did not mean to imply that God influenced people to become perverts. Let's continue.

And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind**, to do those things which are not convenient; (Romans 1:28)

This is the key!

When people don't "like to retain God in their knowledge", then that does something to their minds. **It is a matter of cause and effect.** The cause is people's active rejection of a truth of God, and it doesn't matter which truth they reject. The only thing that matters here is that it is a wilful rejection of some truth of God. The consequence of that rejection is that for some areas of life their minds can no longer reason correctly. And as long as they continue to actively reject some truth of God, so long their minds will be

incapable of correctly discerning certain things.

That is what Paul means by "God gave them over to ..." certain things.

There is only one way for people in that situation to cease being "given over to" a certain perverse way of using their minds. That one way is for those people to stop "changing the truth of God into a lie" (Romans 1:25) ... and with different people in that situation this will involve different truths. They have to first stop rejecting whatever truth is involved in their specific situation, and then they will no longer be "given over to a reprobate mind".

In Romans Paul's discussion of the human mind continues through the first three chapters. Those chapters form the foundation for everything Paul says afterwards to the Romans.

We might also consider that Paul's statements in verses 24 and 26 and 28 about "gave them up to" and "gave them over to" **basically express the equivalent of the hiphil stem in Hebrew**. Can you see that? Paul is not saying that "God did it". No, in these verses Paul is saying "God caused something to be done", but without God Himself being actively involved. In writing these three verses Paul was thinking like a Hebrew-speaking Jew, and he found a way to express a hiphil meaning in Greek. Can you see that?

In Romans 9:18 Paul is basically doing the same thing, saying that those people whom God has given over to "a reprobate mind", God has also "given over to" a hardened heart and mind. God responds to a rejection of His truth by "giving people over to" a hardened attitude.

But Paul did not mean that God actively hardens the attitudes of certain people. Hardening their attitudes is something people who are under the influence of "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4) will readily do of their own accord. Romans 9:18 does not conflict with anything we have seen in the statements that apply to Pharaoh.

There is one more verse in the Old Testament that we should also consider.

DEUTERONOMY 2:30

Here is the verse.

But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD your God **hardened** (Hebrew "qashah") his spirit, and made his heart **obstinate** (Hebrew "amats"), that he might deliver him into your hand, as *appears* this day. (Deuteronomy 2:30)

Here we have one more verse that tells us that God actively hardened someone's heart. This is also a misleading translation.

Let's first look at the Hebrew word that is translated as "obstinate". The English word "obstinate" has a rather negative connotation. According to Webster's, it "implies usually **a perverse or unreasonable persistence**". In other words, "obstinate" implies a really bad attitude.

So our English translation makes the following two statements about what God did:

1) God actively "hardened" Sihon's spirit.

2) God actively gave Sihon "a perverse bad attitude".

What this implies is that God really set the man up to oppose Israel, and that Sihon didn't have a choice. But that is a very misleading representation for this verse.

For a start, the Hebrew word "amats" does not imply any kind of bad attitude. The word means: to be **strong**, **alert**, **bold**, **brave**. "Amats" is used 41 times in the Old Testament, and Deuteronomy 2:30 is the only place where it is ever translated as "obstinate", incorrectly so. Consider the first place in the OT where this word "amats" is used.

And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in your womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from your bowels; and *the one* people **shall be stronger** (Hebrew "amats") than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger. (Genesis 25:23)

"Shall be stronger" does not imply any bad attitude, does it? It would have been ridiculous to here translate "amats" as "the one people shall be more obstinate than the other". "Shall be stronger" is a correct translation in Genesis 25:23. And "made strong" is also the correct translation in Deuteronomy 2:30. So let's correct that. Now our translation looks as follows:

But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD your God **hardened** (Hebrew "qashah") his spirit, and made his heart **strong** (Hebrew "amats"), that he might deliver him into your hand, as *appears* this day. (Deuteronomy 2:30)

There are different very easy ways that a person's heart can be made strong. Simply having a large army or having a lot of weapons can make people feel strong. A wimpy criminal with a gun pointed at a strong muscular man can feel strong in relation to that man. The gun in his hand gives him that feeling of strength.

Circumstances can make people feel strong. The Philistines felt strong as long as they had Goliath to taunt the army of Israel. But once David had killed Goliath the Philistines felt weak, and they fled.

My point is this:

While Moses in Deuteronomy 2:30 said that God had made Sihon's heart "strong", in practice **it didn't really require any specific intervention from God to give Sihon that feeling of strength and confidence**.

When Israel asked for permission to travel through Sihon's land (Numbers 21:22), Sihon looked at his own potential army and he said to himself: I am stronger than they are. They are just a bunch of ex-slaves who have been running round the desert for 40 years. I can defeat them. And so Sihon "gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel ... and fought against Israel" (Numbers 21:23). And that was the end of Sihon.

The circumstances, as Sihon assessed them, led to Sihon's heart being strengthened. God didn't do anything specific to Sihon's mind. Sihon's carnal mind was going to all on its own be opposed to anything that represented the true God. Sihon's assessment caused him to boldly go out with his army to fight against Israel.

Now we come to the Hebrew word "qashah" translated as "hardened". And yes, here the verb "qashah" is also used with the hiphil stem. Thus it really means that God caused Sihon's spirit to be hardened. So let's now have a fully corrected translation for this verse.

But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD your God **caused** his spirit **to be hardened** (Hebrew "qashah"), and **made** his heart **strong** (Hebrew "amats"), that he might deliver him into your hand, as *appears* this day. (Deuteronomy 2:30)

There are two statements here regarding what God did: God caused Sihon's spirit to be hardened, and God made Sihon's heart strong. Both these statements refer to exactly the same thing, namely that Sihon was **resolute and determined** (i.e. hardened spirit) and **very confident** (strengthened heart) in going out to oppose and to fight against Israel.

This attitude and approach required **nothing more than a completely wrong assessment of the situation**. And a provocation from Satan could easily have triggered that wrong assessment and also Sihon's subsequent attitude towards Israel. And the statement in Deuteronomy 2:30 would still be accurate.

God did not give Sihon a rebellious, obstinate heart. Sihon already had that to start with, since he was totally carnal. And God did not somehow actively harden Sihon's heart. That hardening was achieved by being provoked by Satan, with the result that Sihon assessed the situation totally incorrectly. God did very little in Sihon being resolved to fight against Israel, other than providing the circumstances for the whole situation.

Okay, so much for Deuteronomy 2:30. So here is what we have seen in examining "Pharaoh's hardened heart":

IN CONCLUSION

1) The translators translated 3 different Hebrew verbs as if those words were synonymous, which they are not.

2) Two Hebrew words, which are used in 18 of our 19 verses, don't really mean "to harden". So none of those 18 verses, when translated correctly, state that God "hardened" Pharaoh's heart.

3) In the one place where the one Hebrew word that does include "to harden" amongst its meanings is used, the translators very conveniently ignored the use of the hiphil stem with this verb. And so they translated this one place as though the word "qashah" was used with the qal stem. But **that is not correct**. The correct meaning in that verse with the hiphil stem is that God "would cause" something to happen. God "would cause" Pharaoh's heart to be hardened. How God would achieve that is not stated. If we read the rest of the Bible, then we should be able to figure out for ourselves that Satan is the agent God invariably uses in such situations.

4) In other words, the Bible shows repeatedly that God has other individuals do things for Him. God uses angels to do good things; and God uses demons to do bad things. But God is always in control. And that is also what happened with Pharaoh in Egypt.

5) In that situation God used Satan to present tempting thoughts to Pharaoh's mind, even as Satan also presents tempting thoughts to all of our minds. And Pharaoh could have chosen to resist those tempting thoughts, even as we can choose to resist Satan's tempting thoughts in our lives. But Pharaoh didn't resist Satan, and therefore Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go.

6) **The gross mistranslations** in our English Bibles can be readily traced back, by way of the Latin Vulgate version, to the sloppy Greek language LXX version. The mistranslated precedents set by the

Greek LXX, and then copied by the Latin Vulgate, **have been faithfully followed by all our English language translators**.

7) We should understand that these mistranslations are an offence to God in heaven, because they imply that God would actually force some people to sin. But that is clearly contrary to God's character. **God will never force any human being to sin.** There is no such thing as "divine hardening of the heart", as some commentators assert. All such assertions are a form of blasphemy.

I have shown that the premise, which was in my mind before I had even started this specific investigation, is correct. God Himself did not harden Pharaoh's heart. With this present article as a foundation, I have continued this subject in my next article, which is titled "Harden Not Your Hearts".

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