

**AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION
OF THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART IN
EXODUS 4-14 AND ROMANS 9**

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1. Introduction

The ninth chapter of Romans has been one of the key texts throughout church history for debates concerning predestination, reprobation and free will. One of the crucial passages in this perplexing chapter has been vv 17-18, where Paul alludes to God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Exod 9:16 and chaps 4-14). While this problematic passage was not a primary point of debate in the Augustinian-Pelagian controversy, it did become important beginning with the discussions of the Reformation period. In trying to refute Erasmus' claim that Pharaoh first hardened his heart freely apart from divine influence, Luther attempts to argue that God was the ultimate cause. John Calvin agreed with Luther, but Sebastian Castellio and Jacob Arminius agreed with Erasmus. The debate has continued even into the twentieth century, especially undergoing scrutiny in recently published literature.¹ It is surprising, however, that apparently no writer in the history of this discussion has ever attempted to exegete all of the hardening predictions as they appear in consecutive order throughout their context in Exod 4-14.² Many attempt to solve the issue by focusing on only one hardening statement and determining its implications for the others, often according to their own theological predispositions.³

¹ Those most recently arguing along the lines of Castellio and Arminius are R. T. Forster and V. P. Marston (*God's Strategy in Human History* [Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1973] 69-78, 155-77); J. D. Strauss ("God's Promise and Universal History" in *Grace Unlimited* [ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975] 197-8). Cf. also J. W. Wenham, *The Goodness of God* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1974) 123. For the most recent Calvinistic view see John Piper, *The Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983) 139-54.

² In this respect, one of the best studies is that of Martin Luther (*Bondage of the Will* Tappan: F. H. Revell, 1957) 195-212), although the most complete exegetical and contextual study very recently is that of F. Hesse. *Das Verstockungsproblem im Alten Testament* (BZAW74; Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1955). In addition, since the first draft of the present article was completed, John Piper has published a thorough exegetical survey of the hardening statements as they occur consecutively in Exodus 4-14 (*The Justification of God* 139-54). As will be seen, Piper's work lends impressive support to the argument of this article.

³ This is true of both the Arminian and Calvinistic traditions.

Nevertheless, the historical debate has generated the following questions: (1) Who is the ultimate cause of Pharaoh's hardening? (2) If the hardening is at all associated with God, is it an unconditional or conditional judgment with respect to Pharaoh's sin? (3) When Paul refutes the idea that God is unjust (v 14) in rejecting Esau rather than Jacob before they were born (vv 10-13), does he give an understandable explanation for this refutation (γάργ, v 17), or does he merely refute the idea without offering any rationale in defense of God's rejection?⁴ (4) Does the hardening involve God's dealing with certain individuals or nations only on the plane of history or does it have reference to a general principle concerning God's eternal rejection of man from salvation? The purpose of this study is to attempt to answer these questions through a contextual exegesis of each hardening passage in Exod 4-14.⁵ Perhaps the conclusions may contribute to a better understanding of Paul's allusion to Pharaoh's hardening. Therefore only brief comment will be made about Romans 9 at the conclusion of this discussion, since a thorough exegesis of that chapter is not intended here.

II. *The Contextual Idea of Exodus 1-15*

In Exodus 1-15 Yahweh is seen as beginning to fulfill the patriarchal promise by means of redeeming Abraham's seed out of Egypt. It is in this "actualization of promise" context that God's revelation of his name as YHWH takes on most significance; this divine name emphasizes God as the one who is to effect his patriarchal promise, since intrinsic to the meaning of the name itself is that of God as a "controlling and effecting reality."⁶ In view of this it is understandable that Moshe Greenberg says, "The plague story, then, revolves around the theme: revelation by God of His name--his essence, his power, his authority--to Pharaoh, to the Egyptians, and to all men. . . [it is a] demonstration of God's essence to the arrogant pagan world and onlooking Israel. . . [it is] the decision of God to break into history on behalf of Israel."⁷

III. *The Terms Used for Hardening*

Exodus 4-14⁸ uses three terms for *hardening*: *hazaq* ("to be strong"),

⁴ This question is the corollary of that posed by John Piper concerning the basis of Paul's denial that God is unjust in electing Jacob over Esau ("Prolegomena to Understanding Romans 9:14-15: An interpretation of Exod 33:19," *JETS* 22 [1979] 204).

⁵ This article is a revision of part of my 1976 Th.M. thesis at Dallas Theological Seminary.

⁶ Cf. W. Eichrodt, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (vol. I; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 191. In Exodus this divine name is predicated of God about 100 times in contexts revealing him as a controller of historical events. Most of these occurrences are found in Exod 4-15.

⁷ Moshe Greenberg, "The Thematic Unity of Exodus 3-11," *WCJS* 1 (1967) 153.

⁸ Verse references in chap. 8 of exodus are from the MT, while versification according to the English version is placed afterword in brackets.

kabed ("to be heavy") and *qasa* ("to be difficult").⁹ In contrast to *qasa*, *hazaq* and *kabed* are used abundantly throughout the OT and are fluid terms.

In the light of OT usage, the essential idea of *hazaq* is that of "having power to accomplish a function" or it may secondarily refer to a strong desire which is prerequisite for accomplishing something.¹⁰ It can also mean "to be firm, secure," which usually stresses the strength of something to continue to perform its function.¹¹ The use of the word with respect to Pharaoh is probably similar to that in Josh 11:20, where Yahweh gives the Canaanites a strong desire to fight and actually to carry out a military campaign against Israel, which resulted in the Canaanites' destruction ("For it was of the Lord to make strong their hearts"). Likewise, Pharaoh exhibited a "strong will" in refusing to let Israel go, and this led to his destruction.

Kabed has the central meaning of "heaviness, weightiness." In its most concrete usage it refers to a quantitative heaviness (of wealth, animals, people, etc.) but it can also indicate a qualitative weightiness, referring to an intensification of the quality of actions or attitudes.¹² From this fluid backdrop, *kabed* in Exod 4-14 may be seen to be used qualitatively rather than quantitatively, with a stress on Pharaoh's attitudes rather than on actions. Pharaoh's rejection of God's requests becomes so psychologically intensified that it results in an immovably heavy volition which cannot be changed.

The primary use of *qasa* in the OT revolves around the idea of "being difficult." It is often used qualitatively to refer to such an intense performance of an activity that the activity becomes "cruel, fierce or severe." Men's dealings with others become so intensely wrathful that they are said to be "cruel" (Gen 49:7); a person's speech becomes so emphatically wrathful that it is "fierce, harsh;"¹³ a battle can be fought so intensely that it becomes "severe."¹⁴ The word also

⁹ *Hazaq* in the Piel occurs seven times (4:21; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:8, 17), and five times in the *Qal* (7:13, 22; 8:15[19]; 9:35; 14:4); *kabed* occurs once as an adjective (7:14), four times in the *Hiphil* (8:11[15], 28[32]; 9:34; 10:1); *qasa* occurs twice in the *Hiphil* (7:3; 13:15). Contemporary OT critics base part of their theory for diverse sources in Exod 4-14 on these different terms used for hardening and the supposed different theology associated with each. The present approach assumes unity of authorship, since this was presumably the way Paul would have viewed Exodus.

¹⁰ "power in accomplishing functions," especially of a military nature (cf. *Qal* in Josh 17:13; Judg 1:28; 7:11; I Sam 17:50; 2 Sam 2:7; 10:11-12; 16:21; I Chron 19:13; cf. Piel in Judg 3:12; Exek 30:24; Hos 7:15; Nah 2:2; 3:14; 2 Chron 26:9, 32:5; cf. *Hiphil* in 2 Kings 15:19; Isa 41:13; 45:1; Jer 51:12; Ezek 30:25; Nah 3:14; Dan 11:21; 2 Chron 26:8); "to strengthen," in the sense of "encouraging one to carry out an assigned function" (Deut 11:8; 31:6-7, 23; Josh 1:6-7, 9; 10:25).

¹¹ E.g. cf. in *Qal*, 2 Kings 14:5; Isa 28:22; Ezra 9:12; 2 Chron 25:3; 2 Sam 18:9; cf. *Piel*, Isa 33:23, 54:2; Jer 10:4; Ps 64:5; 147:13.

¹² E.g., when a person continually exhibits a certain quality, it could be said that he is "weighty" in that quality. Sometimes it indicates a stress on the quality of man's or God's activities (cf. Judg 20:34, the intensity of a battle; cf. I Sam 5:6, 11, the intensity of divine judgment). On occasion it may refer to an emphasis on the quality of man's attitude (cf. 2 Chron 25:19, an improperly high attitude, i.e. pride.).

¹³ Cf. Gen 42:7; I Sam 20:10; 2 Sam 19:44; I Kings 12:13; 1 Kings 14:6; 2 Chron 10:14.

¹⁴ Cf. 2 Sam 2:17. Cf. also Cant 8:6.

means "difficulty" with reference to an action that cannot easily be performed.¹⁵ When the judges of Israel could not easily perform their role in certain cases, these cases were said to be "difficult" (Exod 18:26; Deut 1:17). A possible transitional link may lie between this root's qualitative and resultative meanings: the intense severity or fierceness of an action may be viewed from the difficult result it produces (2 Sam 2:17).¹⁶ In Exod 7:3 and 13:15 it appears to refer to the severely stubborn nature of Pharaoh's volition which made his decision in favor of Israel's release too difficult ever to be reached.

In conclusion, these three verbs in Exod 4-14 are all related to Pharaoh's refusal to obey Yahweh's command to release Israel. Whether or not the verbs are fundamentally synonymous can only be answered after an exegesis of their contexts.

IV. *Hebrew and Egyptian Views of the Heart*

In the OT *leb* ("heart") may denote intellectual activity (204 times) emotional activity (166 times), volitional activities (195 times)¹⁷ and personality or character. The heart is also seen to be spiritual in that many of its decisions concern one's religio-ethical relationship with God.¹⁸ Perhaps the heart may be seen as that faculty which combines into a psychical unity the volitional, intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of a person. Among these the volitional, decision-making aspects should be viewed as primary but always influenced by the thoughts and emotions, all of which impinge on the spiritual.¹⁹ Consequently, the heart is often viewed as the inner, spiritual center of one's relationship to God.

In Egypt is found the same variation of meaning as in the OT.²⁰ It

¹⁵ Whether of giving birth (Gen 35:16), performing labor (Exod 1:14; 6:9; Deut 26:6) or answering a request (2 Kings 2:10). The metaphor of the "stiff neck" in the OT compares Israel's unwillingness to serve and obey "the way" of Torah to cattle who are *difficult* to steer (cf. Jer 17:23; 19:15 [see Jer 5:5 and Hos 4:16]; Prov 29:1; Neh 9:16, 17, 29; 2 Chron 30:8; 36:13; Exod 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6,13).

¹⁶ Cf. Deut 15:7; 1 Sam 20:10; 1 Kings 12:13-14; 14: 6f.; Cant 8:6.

¹⁷ Statistics are derived from H. Wheeler Robinson ("Hebrew Psychology," *The People in the Book* [ed. A. S. Peake; Oxford: Clarendon, 1925] 362-3), who also notes that about a third of the 851 uses of *leb* "denotes the personality as a whole, the inner life, the character" (ibid. 362).

¹⁸ Cf. Eichrodt, *Theology*. 2.142-4. E.g. Deut 5:29; 29:4; 1 Sam 16:7; Prov 4:23; 5:12; 6:21; Ezek 11:10; 36:26; Joel 2:13. Cf. F. H. von Meyenfeldt, "Einige algemene beschouwingen, gegrond op de beteknis van het hart in het Oude Testament" in *Wetenschappelijke bijdragen (Festschrift D. H. Th. Vollenhoven; ed. S. U. Zuidema and K. J. Popma; Potchefstroom: Franeker-T. Wever, 1951) 61*, who observes that *heart* in the OT is used 318 times in a religious sense (see further von Meyenfeldt's *Het Hart [Leb, Lebab] in het Oude Testament* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1950]).

¹⁹ For similar conclusions cf. Eichrodt *Theology*. 2.142-5; A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1949) 76-88; and E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York; Harper and Row, 1958) 163-5.

²⁰ See H. Bonnet, "Herz," *Reallexikon der Agyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: W. deGruyter, 1952) 296-7; S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ., 1973) 57-8, 63-4, 126, 137.

may be that the concepts of the heart ('ib) as an inner spiritual centrum and volitional, decision-maker were emphasized even more by the Egyptians than by the Hebrews.²¹ Indeed, these aspects became so emphasized that the heart came to be viewed as the "seat of destiny," determining one's life.²² It is probably because of this apparent autonomy of the heart that it came to be seen as a "second being of man, next to and outside of him,"²³ and it even came to be said "that 'the heart' of a man [is] his God himself."²⁴ The heart was also seen as a divine instrument through which a god directed a man²⁵ and the organ by which man could receive and comprehend divine commandments.²⁶

The spiritual-intellectual-volitional emphasis is found in the Exodus plague narratives, as will be seen in the exegetical section.

V. An Exegetical Survey of the Hardening Passages

The hardening predictions will be exegeted contextually as they appear in consecutive order in each distinct plague narrative scene. Their relationship to one another will be investigated, with special focus upon the subject of the hardening activity and the interrelationship of the hardening expressions. This exegesis is conducted with the aim of answering the four theological questions raised in the introduction.

The pre-plague narratives (3:18-7:5)

The first hint of the hardening is found in Exod 3:18-20, where Yahweh commands Moses to request Israel's release (v 18). Yahweh then says that he "knew" (*yada'ti*) that Pharaoh would not permit this request. The hint of hardening is found in the prediction of Pharaoh's refusal of Moses' request in v 19. This "hint" becomes an explicit prophetic announcement in 4:21.

Exod 4:21 has been the *classicus locus* of the hardening debates in Exodus. It will receive special focus here, but it still cannot be understood fully until it is seen in its contextual and theological relationships with the other hardening predictions.

In v 21a Yahweh commands Moses to perform wonders, since he has given Moses the power to do such; however, due to Moses' uncertainty about his whole mission (cf 4:1-17), Yahweh tells Moses

²¹ Besides *'ib*, *hati* is another characteristic Egyptian word for "heart," which is essentially synonymous with *'ib*. So Bonnet, "Herz," 297 who argues against A. Piankoff's attempts to see in *hati* only reference to the emotions and views *'ib* as referring exclusively to the intellect (*Le couer dans les textes egyptiens depuis l' Ancien jusqu'a la fin du Nouvel empire* [Paris: no pub. listed, 1930] as cited by Bonnet).

²² Cf. H. Brunner, "Das Hen als Sitz des Lebengeheimnisses," *ArchFOr* 17 (1954-1955) 140.

²³ W. Spiegelberg, "Das Hen als zweites Wesen des Menschen," *Zietschrift fur Agyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 66 (1931) 36.

²⁴ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* 64; Bonnet, "Hen," *Reallexikon* 297.

²⁵ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* 65.

²⁶ Jacob, *Theology* 164. n. I.

that Pharaoh's reaction to the signs will be (4:21c, *welo' yesallah et-ha'am*, "so that he will not send out the people"), so that when this reaction occurs it will not discourage Moses, but he will remember Yahweh's prediction and realize that Yahweh is still in control of the apparent failure. It is evident that v 21b states the definitive cause of 21c, i.e., *wa'ani 'ahazzeq 'et-libbo* ("but I will harden his heart").

The first consideration of the v 21b clause concerns the exact nuance of the Piel stem of *'abazzeq*: the specific sense could be causative, but it is better to see it having an intensive-iterative idea, looking at a "strengthening and repetition"²⁷ of the hardening action, with Yahweh as sole subject "busying Himself eagerly"²⁸ in the action. The sense is that Yahweh will not only be involved in hardening Pharaoh's heart once, but a repeated number of times,²⁹ as the context of the following narratives makes evident. The prefixed conjugational form of the verb does not function as a cohortative, but as a specific future.³⁰ The relationship of clause b with clause c is expressed by the purposive *waw*.³¹ The specific lexical idea of the verb is that Yahweh will give Pharaoh the psychological power which would cause the accomplishment of a refusing action. Thus, at least from 4:21 it should be concluded that just as Yahweh gave Moses power to perform a theocratic function (v 21a), so he gave Pharaoh power for the accomplishment of a non-theocratic function,³² although both are to be seen as contributing to a *Heilsplan* goal.

A further observation with respect to the time scope of v 21 may be made, as seen in the verse's relation to vv 22-23: the time period involved in vv 21-23 is inclusive of 5:1-11:10, i.e., apparently from the time that Moses returns to Egypt until he performs the first nine plague signs (ten miracles), it is predicted that Yahweh will harden Pharaoh's heart with a view to Pharaoh's refusal. Therefore, there are two phases of the hardening: (1) that which occurs in 5:1-11:10 before the final plague and (2) that which occurs subsequent to the final plague, resulting in Egyptian disaster at the Red Sea (cf. Exod 14:4, 7, 17). Thus, 4:21 apparently indicates a divine control of Pharaoh's

²⁷ Cf. E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 141. #52F.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 141 #52F.

²⁹ That the plural aspect of the *Piel* is definitely in mind is clear from clause a, i.e., Moses was to perform a series of wonders (*hammopetim*), each of which was to be received negatively because of the repeated hardening action.

³⁰ So W. Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970) 122.

³¹ NASB renders it "so that".

³² It is the volition with which *'ahazzeq 'et-libbo* is specifically concerned as 10:27 clarifies (*'aba lesalham*); YHWH was to influence Pharaoh's intellect and emotions that his volition was to decide to choose a "refusing" course of action (v 21b), which he would then perform (v 21c). Most of the instances in the Targum describe the "disposition" or "design of his heart" being hardened. In the light of our discussion of *leb*, Pharaoh's inner spiritual being should also be seen as affected by this course of action.

actions in 5:1-11:10.³³ But further discussion must bear out whether or not this is, indeed, the case.

The next passage deserving comment, even though it does not contain an explicit hardening statement, is Exod 5:2, where Pharaoh is viewed as exercising his first refusal to Moses' first request. This appears to be the first partial fulfillment of Yahweh's hardening prophecy in 4:21. However this could be doubted for two reasons: (1) If the 4:21 hardening relates only to "sign-reaction," then it cannot be applied to 5:2, since no signs are given; that is, if 4:21 refers only to Pharaoh's hardened rejection of miraculous signs which were intended to compel him to release Israel, then 5:2 cannot be a beginning fulfillment since no signs are mentioned toward which he could be hardened. (2) Some would not see Exod 5:2 as the beginning fulfillment of 4:21 since Yahweh is not mentioned there as causing Pharaoh's refusal.³⁴ Yet the following reasons argue in favor of a connection between 4:21 and 5:2: (1) Although the 4:21 hardening is integrally related to the performance of signs, it is even more related to refusal of Moses' request to release Israel. The hardening of 4:21 is not conditional on the performance of signs. Hence, signs could be absent and hardening present.³⁵ The argument rests with the one attempting to prove an absolute and strictly necessary relation between hardening and "sign-reaction." (2) Even if the sign theory were valid, it still could not be shown that Moses did not perform a sign similar to the ones he performed for Israel in the immediately preceding verses, since it is a characteristic of the plague narrative to assume certain events, without

³³ So R. E. Clements (*Exodus* [Cambridge: University Press, 1972] 30); J. Rhymer (*The Beginnings of a People* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1966] 93-4). However, G. Beer disagrees, viewing 4:21 as an antinomy between human freedom and divine sovereignty (*Exodus* [Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939] 37).

³⁴ I have never seen this first alternative in print, but it is more viable than the second. If this alternative proves erroneous, the second should also.

³⁵ Regardless of how one views the copulative between 4:21a and 4:21b, a validation of either view should not rest only on an interpretation of such a fluid word as *waw*. In 4:21 two functions are in view: (1) Moses' sign-performing function would supposedly influence Pharaoh to release Israel; (2) Yahweh's hardening function was to influence Pharaoh negatively toward refusal, thus reversing any positive effect the signs might have had. However, the idea of a request is also assumed in 4:21 (d. its relation to 3:18-20). In 4:21 it would seem that hardening is primarily related to the refusal of request; it is possible to have "request" without "signs" and still have "hardening" towards "refusal." Signs are meaningless without request since they are brought about to convince one who has already refused, but request is not meaningless without signs. Furthermore, hardening refers primarily to influence against request, and only secondarily to signs when they accompany requests, so that there may be the presence of request without signs, but with hardening. (This is not only suggested by the psychology of hardening, but also by Exod 7:2-4; 14:4, 8, 17; Deut 2:30; Josh 11:20.) Furthermore, in the plague narratives Pharaoh's acts of refusal, which are appended with explicit hardening notations, may still be seen as acts resulting from hardening (cf. 10:10-11 with 10:1). See further *infra*.

stating their occurrence.³⁶ (3) the divine omnipotence necessary for a proper effecting of the Heilsgeschichteplan of Exodus is incongruous with a "by chance" refusal of Pharaoh, since this refusal was already an integral part of the plan.³⁷ (4) Another argument for God's control of Pharaoh is found in 5:22-23. In 5:22 it is said that Yahweh had brought harm to Israel (*hare 'ota la'am hazzeh*), whereas in v 23 Pharaoh is said to have brought harm (*hera' la'am hazzeh*). Verse 22 specifically refers to the previous events where hard bondage was imposed on Israel, which was a direct result of Pharaoh's refusal in 5:2; thus, both bondage and refusal are included in the thought of v 22, so that Yahweh should be seen as the ultimate cause of Pharaoh's refusal in 5:2. After 5:22 views Yahweh as cause of the refusal resulting in harder bondage, v 23 then sees Pharaoh as Yahweh's secondary effecting agent.³⁸ (5) The divine commentary on the Pharaohs during the whole course of Egyptian bondage views their harsh actions toward Israel as being directly caused by Yahweh (Ps 105:25): *hapak libbam lisno 'ammo lehitnakkal ba' abadayw* ("He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants"). The Pharaoh's actions of Exod 5 were the zenith of this harsh bondage, so that it would certainly seem to be included in the thought of Ps 105:25. This is especially interesting, since the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exod 14:4 is described in 14:5 with wording similar to this Psalm (*wayyehopek lebab par'oh wa'abadayw*, "the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned"). This may be further evidence then that the refusal was a beginning fulfillment of 4:21.³⁹

³⁶ Cf. even 4:21 where the "request" is assumed and not stated; in addition, many of the ten plague narratives make the same omission, with the assumption definitely in mind. In three of the narratives, Moses does not effect the plague as divine intermediary, but God comes to act more directly in effecting the signs himself. If 4:21 were taken to mean that God would never effect a sign unless it were through the instrumentality of Moses, then these three narratives could never have occurred (cf. 8:13-19, 20-28; 9:6-7).

³⁷ Cf. Exod 3:18-20 and note the phrase *wa'ani yad'ati ki lo'-yitt'in 'etkem melek misrayim lahalok* (3:19). Space does not allow for a word study of *yada*, but most scholars admit the word has a much stronger sense than our Western concept of foreknowledge. It is generally agreed that it revolves around the nuance "to be actively-experientially involved in a relationship" (cf. the standard Old Testament theologies, e.g., Vriezen, Jacob, Eichrodt, Pedersen, etc.). It is well known that this applies to covenant relations, but it may also refer to non-covenantal, judgmental relations (Jer 16:21; Ezek 25:14; Ps 106:8). When used of Yahweh the emphasis is upon his "knowing" which "establishes the significance of what is known." (R. Bultmann, *γινωσκω*: The OT Usage [of *Yada*], *TDNT*.I.698; cf. further Exod 33:12; Gen 18:19; 2 Sam 7:20; Ps 1:6; 144:3; Jer 1:5; Hos 13:5; Amos 3:2). "To know anything is to have power over it" (Jacob, *Theology* 284). The parallel could be drawn that just as Yahweh used Abraham in his *Heilsgeschichteplan* to fulfill a purpose (Gen 18:19), so he did with Pharaoh.

³⁸ Piper, (*Justification of God* 142-3) makes the same basic observation, but gives no convincing reason for his assertion that the reference to "evil" is limited only to the physical realm and not to the moral.

³⁹ Cf. inter alios Clements (Exodus 34): "[in Exod 5] the divine plan at first appears to be thwarted and the situation temporarily worsens. Yet in reality God is at work in this . . . The Lord Himself is hardening Pharaoh's heart. . . ." F. Hesse (*Verstockungsproblem* 8) sees *kabed* ("heavy") in Exod 7:14 as a verbal adjective, which designates a hardened condition of Pharaoh even before the beginning of the chap. 7 plague narrative.

The last pre-plague narrative hardening prediction is 7:3. This is similar to 4:21, but there are some major differences. First, the *Hiphil* 'aqseh ("I will make difficult") is used instead of 'ahazzeq in the *Piel*. Furthermore, the "request" is explicitly stated in 7:2, so that the hardening is especially related to Yahweh influencing the Pharaoh's volition against giving in to the request; 'aqseh probably has the specific lexical idea of "difficult," i.e., Yahweh's influence upon Pharaoh's mind and volition would be so "intensely severe" that a positive decision to the request would become too "difficult" to make, so that only a refusal could result. Exod 7:4a emphasizes this refusal in terms of Pharaoh "not listening" to Aaron's request. Exod 7:3b most likely expresses the purpose of the hardened refusal: Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he could make a pyrotechnic display of his "signs" and "wonders" in Egypt. Thus, the hardening purpose of 7:3⁴⁰ may be contrasted with that of 4:21b-c where it was seen to be that of influencing Pharaoh not to let Israel go upon request. Furthermore, in 4:21 the sign performance was mentioned before the hardening activity, whereas here it is mentioned after.

As 4:21-23 denoted the first phase of Pharaoh's hardening, so also does 7:2-5. The phrase 'et-'ototay we'et-mopetay be'eres ("signs and wonders in the land") refers to the first ten miracles (nine plagues) which occur in 7:9-11:10 (cf *kol-hammopetim*, 4:21a) and are the precursors of the climbing death plague of the Egyptian first-born (12:29-31). Exodus 7:5 contains a further clarifying note which 4:22-23 did not clearly specify, viz., Yahweh's "stretching out his hand on Egypt" is probably a figurative description of the death plague already mentioned in Exod 4:21-22 and must also include the Red Sea deliverance, and, thus, the second phase of the hardening in Exod 14.41

A final note is in order with respect to the nuance of the *Hiphil* 'aqseh since some have recently questioned the normal causative sense of the *Hiphil* hardening predications with God as subject in the plague narrative, arguing for a "permissive" or "declarative" nuance and even

⁴⁰ Most translations render the *waw* connecting the hardening clause with the following sign clause merely by a simple "and" (so LXX, Vulgate, KJV, Jerusalem Bible, Luther). However, the NASB renders it in a purposive (resultative?) manner ("that"), whereas the NIV and RSV "translate it circumstantially (*and though*). The former views the hardening as the basis for the signs, while the latter views the signs as instigating the hardening response of "not listening." The purposive use is favored by the context of Exod 4-14, since statements are found throughout which harmonize better with it (so Exod 3:18-20; 9:16,28-30; 10:1-3,29; cf. Rom 9:17). Furthermore, in many of the plague narratives Pharaoh is not given opportunity to respond to the apparent threat, but the threatened judgment begins immediately to take place, so that the threat "actually puts the forthcoming judgment into motion" (C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* [Phil: Westminster, 1967] 66; cf. also 217-18). These *unconditional Unheilsankündigung* narratives appear in Exod 7:14-25, 26[8:1]-8:11[15]; 8:16[20]-28[32]; 9:1-7, 13-35 and 10:1-20 (note esp. 7:17, 19; 8:1[5], 19[24]; 9:5, 18). This observation fits in better with a pre-sign hardening scheme.

⁴¹ The final phrase of 7:4, *bispatim gedolim* ("by great judgments"), must also refer to the same thing.

viewing it with the sense of "to help."⁴² In deciding upon matters of grammar in crucial and debated theological texts of Scripture, any interpreter is faced with a tension between his theological assumptions and the objective facts of grammar. Such is the case here. A canon in grammatical interpretation in such texts where contexts cannot absolutely determine a particular grammatical option is: the exegete should conclude with that option which is most usual elsewhere. In the present case, according to this canon, the basic causative sense of the *Hiphil* stem should be preferred over the declarative.⁴³ Consequently, 7:3 most likely views Yahweh not as permitting or tolerating Pharaoh's hardening, but as its direct cause. While agreeing with Kautzsch and Cowley's view of *qasa* as having a basic causative-transitive force, their more specific classification of it as denoting "the entering into a certain condition and the being in the same"⁴⁴ should be seen as less probable than that normal force of the *Hiphil*, which "expresses action in some particular direction."⁴⁵ If so, the 7:3 hardening expression is a second prophecy of the first phase of the hardening, stressing Yahweh as influencing Pharaoh's volition and intellect to act in a refusing direction, in conformity with the lexical force⁴⁶ of *qasa* as explained at the beginning of this discussion.

The beginning of the first phase of the hardening: the introductory miracle narrative (7:8-13)

In Hebrew style 7:6 is probably a summary statement of all that

⁴² Forster and Marston are the most recent advocates of the possibility of such a view. For example, the *Hiphil* perfect *hikbadi* ("I will make heavy") in 10:1 they say has the possible meaning "that the Lord actively accepted, and would further utilize Pharaoh's 'heavy' heart for his own ends of revealing Himself through increasingly wonderful signs" (*God's Strategy in Human History* 167). They feel that it is impossible in these narratives to distinguish clearly whether or not the *Hiphil* hardening predictions are causative or permissive (tolerative), and because of the apparent ambiguity decide in favor of a permissive nuance.

⁴³ Even though Foster and Marston in mentioning the declarative sense admit, "We would like to be cautious here," they go on to cite an incomplete word study by D. F. Payne (unpublished) that concludes in favor of a permissive sense. Their conclusions are not very persuasive since their grammatical interpretations are somewhat based on an apparent misuse of Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*: in arguing for the declarative meaning they cite Gesenius in support of the idea that this stem may sometimes be taken this way (*God's Strategy*, 167, 177). However, when one turns to the appropriate sections of Gesenius, one not only finds that the declarative sense is not the most usual, but in addition that two of the verbs in the *Hiphil* which are used for the hardening in Exodus are classified as causative: *kabed* is rendered "to make heavy," while *qasa* is classified under a "causative and transitive" category (*Grammar* 145, #53c-e). These writers misuse Davidson's *Grammar* in the same way (*God's Strategy* 167, 177), since Davidson places the *Hiphil* of *kabed* in the same causative category as Gesenius, i.e., "to make heavy" (A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Grammar* [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1943] 96).

⁴⁴ Kautzsch and Cowley, *Grammar* 145, #53d-e.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 145. #F.

⁴⁶ As the Piel verbal nuance in 4:21 was seen to have a plurative sense, so here the *Hiphil* lends itself well to a causative-transitive idea denoting "a series of actions" so that the hardening action by Yahweh is not to be a singular occurrence but repeated (*Ibid.* 145, #53d).

Moses and Aaron did in 7:8-11:10. The first miracle narrative (7:8-13) is introductory to the first plague narrative (7:14-25), and is crucial in its relation to the previous hardening predictions. The first problem of the 7:13 hardening statement concerns the exact function of the *Qal wayyehezaq* ("Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened"), which acts as a preterite with *waw* consecutive.

A close examination of the exact verbal nuance of the perfect here is crucial, since the same verb form is repeated three times in the following narratives (cf. *hazaq* in 7:22; 8:15[19] and *kabed* in 9:7). The perfect may be viewed either as denoting aoristic action or perfective action. If the former be preferred, it would specifically refer to definite past action and be rendered in a passive sense, with an unstated subject doing the hardening ("was hardened, strengthened"); if the latter alternative be correct, it would refer to a present perfect action, which, in contrast to the aoristic, would conceive of the subject (Pharaoh's heart) as in a given condition resulting from a preceding action ("was hard," "had become hard").⁴⁷ Although both alternatives are possible, the present perfect is probably preferable for the following reasons: (1) even though a passive sense is possible for a semantically stative perfect *Qal* verb, a transitive-passive nuance is somewhat unusual, and especially so for the *Qal* stative of *hazaq* in the light of its usage elsewhere;⁴⁸ (2) the word order in the MT designates the heart as the subject of the verb; (3) when the writer wants to express the heart as the object being acted upon, the *Hiphil* or *Piel* stems together with the direct object sign (*et*) are employed (cf. *hazaq* 4:21; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).⁴⁹ (4) the unique use of a verbal adjective (*kobed*) for the hardening (7:14) could continue the idea of v 13 and point further to a perfective condition in v 13.

If this preference is accepted, the verb refers to Pharaoh's heart already being in a hardened condition before the signs of this narrative were performed before him. But this still leaves us with the problem of whether Pharaoh or Yahweh previously caused this subsequent condition. The hardened condition of 7:13 should probably be traced back to the first historical instance of Yahweh's hardening of Pharaoh, discussed in chap. 5. This was a condition of his volition characterized by a "refusal power" with respect first to request and then to signs. The

⁴⁷ This is the most basic and usual idea among the verbs in the perfective action category. For the various options of verbal nuance for the perfect verb, consult P. P. Jouon *Grammaire de l'Hebreu Biblique* (Rome: Institute Biblique Pontificale, 1947) 294-300, ##a-m; Kautzsch and Cowley, *Grammar* 309-313, ##106a-p; B. L. Waltke, "A Revision of Jouon's *Grammaire de l'Hebreu Biblique*" (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, unpub, 1975) 10-30. Perhaps it might be best to designate the verb in 7:13 as an intransitive, semantically stative perfect.

⁴⁸ See F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C. A. Briggs (*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1972] 304, *hazaq*: *Qal* #1) who assert that every OT usage in the *Qal* is to be understood intransitively i.e., "be or grow strong." Cf. similarly L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Lelden: E. J. Brill, 1951).1.286, *hazaq*: *Qal* #3.

⁴⁹ See also 7:3; 8:11[15].28[32].10.1

waw probably functions resultatively--even after the sign Pharaoh "did not listen to them," as a result of his condition. This appended phrase appears five other times directly following a hardening predication, four of which occur with *hazaq* (cf. 1:22; 8: 11[15], 15[19]; 9:12). In sum, it describes Pharaoh's decision of refusal which was motivated by his volition.

The concluding phrase appended to v 13, *ka'aser dibber YHWH* ("as the Lord had said"), is probably the most significant in the whole plague narrative complex, especially as it pertains to the cause of the hardening. This phrase may also provide confirming evidence for our present perfect preference of *hazaq* and for linking the hardened condition of 1: 13 to Yahweh's ultimate influence. The phrase occurs six times between 1:1 and 10:1 as a concluding formula to six different hardening predictions.⁵⁰ Because this phrase takes on great importance in the present argument, it must fully be explained within its pentateuchal context.

Of the approximately 200 times the phrase is employed in the Pentateuch, nearly 150 of these denote an exact correspondence between a preceding action and a subsequent action (or word).⁵¹ Of these, about 95 refer to acts to be accomplished or having been accomplished in exact correspondence with the way in which Yahweh previously said they would. Two of these denote that the performance of a future act by Yahweh will be effected in exactly the same way as a past act performed by him (Deut 28:63; 31:4). In other passages it is used in the same manner except that the future act is to be performed in exactly the same way it had been previously predicted or commanded by Yahweh (or occasionally Moses), and either Yahweh or man is to be the effector of the action.⁵² In many of these verses *ka'aser* appears in the same concluding formula as in Exod 1:13 (with the exception that *siwwa* ["to command"] usually replaces *Dabar* ["to speak"]). Some of these uses are found in a context of promise-fulfillment: the previously spoken word is seen to have been "certainly spoken" so that it had of necessity to occur,⁵³ and consequently may be viewed in the framework of prophetic promise.

⁵⁰ In addition to 7:13, cf. 7:22; 8:11[15], 15[19]; 9:12, 35. These six formulas not only refer to the hardening phrase proper, which has reference to Pharaoh's will, but also to the immediately following phrase, *welo' sama' 'alehem* ("and he did not listen to them"), which refers to the action inspired by the volition (cf. 4:21 and 7:3-4).

⁵¹ E.g., Exod 5:13; 21:22; 40:15; Lev 4:10, 20, 31, 35; 16:15; 18:28; 24:20; 27:14; Num 2:17; 21:34; 27:13; Deut 2:12, 22, 29; 3:6; 4:33; 6:16; 22:26; 32:50; 34:22. Sometimes the nature and performance of the future action is in exact correspondence with a previously spoken word (Gen 18:5; 21:1a; 27:14 [cf. Gen 24:4], 19; 34:12; 40:22; 41:13, 21, 54; 43:17; 47:11; 50:6, 12; Exod 8:23[27]; 12:32; Num 14:17; 21:34; 32:25, 27; Deut 19:19; 23:24). Of the remaining fifty uses in the Pentateuch, about twenty are temporal.

⁵² Cf. the predictive sense (often with *dabar*) in Gen 24:51; Exod 13:11; Deut 1:11; 6:3; 10:9; 11:25; 12:20; 13:17; 18:2; 19:8; 26:15, 18-19; 28:9. Cf. the preceptive sense in Genesis (7 times), Exodus (24 times), Leviticus (13 times), Numbers (18 times) and Deuteronomy (12 times).

⁵³ Cf. Gen 21:1a, lb; Deut 26:15; 18:2; 10:9; 2:14. See also the same phrase where it refers to a future fulfillment of prophetic promise (Gen 24:51; Deut 1:11; 6:3; 10:9; 11:25; 12:20; 26:19; 31:3). In all of the above verses *dabar* is used with *ka'aser* and YHWH in the usual formula of Exod 7: 13ff.

It is probably in this precise sense that the *ka'aser dibber YHWH* formulas of Exod 7:13ff should be understood. The reasons for this should already be evident, but are as follows: (1) the majority of the times when the three words YHWH, *dibber* and *ka'aser* occur together in the Pentateuch, they function within either a promise-prophetic framework or a promise-prophetic fulfillment framework; (2) the prophecies of Exod 4:21 and 7:3 are further evidence that 7:13 is a specific fulfillment of them, especially since 7:13 contains the two most essential elements of these prophecies as having been accomplished, i.e., "hardening" and "not listening." However, even if it be somehow concluded that 7:13 is not a prophetic fulfillment formula, the concluding formula must nevertheless be viewed as denoting an accomplished act in which the essential details of the act are performed in exact correspondence with the previously spoken word of Yahweh. When one refers back to this spoken word (4:21; 7:3), he finds three essential details of which the future act was to consist: (a) the heart of Pharaoh was to be hardened; (b) this hardening was to result in Pharaoh "not listening" or "letting Israel go" and (c) *the subject of this hardening act was to be Yahweh himself*. The first two elements are clearly indicated in 7:13, but Yahweh is not directly mentioned. It should be concluded, though, that Yahweh is viewed as the ultimate cause of the hardening in this verse because of the predominant "exact correspondence" character of the *ka'aser* phrase.⁵⁴ The same conclusion should also be drawn at Exod 7:22; 8:11[15], 15[19]; 9:12 and 9:34.⁵⁵ Thus the 7:13 hardening is to be seen as either the continuation of Pharaoh's hardened condition in 5:2 or as the resulting condition of a second hardening by Yahweh prior to the serpent miracles.⁵⁶

The first plague narrative (7:14-7:25)

This narrative begins in 7:14 by a declaration of Pharaoh's heart as being in the same condition as described by 7:13: "Pharaoh's heart is heavy (*kabed*)." Apparently the condition of Pharaoh's heart must be

⁵⁴ In this regard it is significant to see the same usage of the *ka'aser* formula in Josh 11:20, where Yahweh hardens the Canaanites.

⁵⁵ Among the few interpreters attempting serious study of the concluding formulas is Piper, whose discussion confirms the conclusions independently reached here ("Justification of God" 144-145). Hesse's thorough treatment suffers from uncleanness with respect to the implications of the formulas for the ultimate cause of the hardening (*Verstockungsproblem* 47-8). A. B. Ehrlich explains that in 4:21 Yahweh's purpose of telling Moses about the hardening was so that he would not be discouraged when his signs had no effect on Pharaoh. Thus, when Moses recounts the actual hardening occurrences in these narratives he expresses his remembrance of Yahweh's prediction of such in 4:21 by the *ka'aser* phrase (*Randglossen zur Hebraischen Bibel I* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1908] 275; so also B. Baentsch, *Exodus-Leviticus-Numen m Handkommen tar zum Alten Testament I, 2* [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903] 59; R. R. Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," *CBQ* 41 [1979] 32, who views a "P" redactor as adding these concluding phrases in order to show that "Yahweh is in total control of events and causes the hardening" even in chaps. 7-9; see also Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* 211).

⁵⁶ Hesse prefers the former option (*Verstockungsproblem* 10), which seems best.

traced back to the same divine cause of the v 13 condition.⁵⁷ It is significant that here the hardening is mentioned before the performance of any signs. The reason for this may be two-fold: (1) the hardened condition of 7:13-14 warrants the performance of the next miracle, so that the signs are not a willy-nilly concatenation of events, but always a dynamic-historical divine response to the "failure" of the previous miracle; (2) at the same time the writer is likely giving a reason for the forthcoming negative response to the signs.⁵⁸ Both motives are probably in view. The specific idea of *kabed* here probably shows that Pharaoh's volition had been given such intense power for refusal, that it became "too heavy," so that other influences would not be able to move or change its direction—even signs.

Chap. 7:22b states the concluding reaction of Pharaoh to the signs, which is the result of v 14, with the same meaning as 7:13, since the verb again is to be taken with a stative-intransitive force⁵⁹ ("and Pharaoh's heart *was strong* [*wayyehezaq*], and he did not listen to them, just as Yahweh said"). The verbatim repetition of the 7:13 hardening statement in 7:22, and its subsequent occurrences (cf. 8:15[19]; 9:1), point both to a continuing inner disposition and an external response pattern, the latter of which builds drama into the historical narration and the former imparting further understanding about why each sign itself does not effect the release of Israel. So the continued repetition of the hardening statements and the display of signs have a literary, rhetorical and theological role.⁶⁰ Therefore, in the 7:14-25 narrative Yahweh is viewed again as the ultimate cause of the hardening activity which had brought Pharaoh's heart into such a condition, as emphasized by the concluding *ka'aser dibber YHWH* phrase, which views the hardening as a fulfillment of 4:21 and 7:3. The narrative thus begins and ends with God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See likewise Hesse, *Verstockungsproblem* 8.

⁵⁸ This would provide further support for the above argument concerning 4:21 and 5:2ff. that hardening is not contingent upon performance of signs, since the conclusion of this narrative (7:22) links the hardening to God's influence in 7:13, where the hardening is viewed as being the primary reason for the signs and not vice-versa. The same relationship between hardening and signs occurs in John 12:37-40 (cf. Isa 6:9-10).

⁵⁹ For the rationale see above.

⁶⁰ The signs also have a dynamic redemptive-historical role in intensifying the hardened condition of Pharaoh, as well as increasing the amount of revelation for which he would be held accountable (cf. Matt 11:20-25; 13:10-16). I am grateful to the Rev. Ivan Davis for pointing out the importance in a discussion such as this of highlighting the historical integrity of Pharaoh's actions and of the repeated signs.

⁶¹ However, G. Fohrer, after admitting that some of the hardening predictions have a divine cause, says without explanation that 7:13, 22; 8:15[19] and 9:35 do not apparently view YHWH as the cause (*Überlieferung und Geschichte des Exodus* [Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1964] 61). On the other hand, K. Berger affirms that wherever the LXX renders *hazaq* by *σκληρύνω* in the Exodus narratives (cf. 4:21; 7:22; 8:15[19]; 9:12, 35, 10:20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8,17) that God is always the source of the hardening ("Hartherzigkeit und Gottes Gesetz: Die Vorgeschichte des antijüdischen Vorwurfs in Mc 10:5," *ZNW* 61 [1970] -7).

The second plague narrative (7:26-8:11[15])

With this narrative the performance of signs occurs first (8:2[6]-3[7]), with an apparent positive effect (8:4[8]-7[11]); but with relief from the plague (8:8[12]-10[14]) comes "hardening" (cf. *wehakbed* ["he (Pharaoh) made heavy his heart"], 8:11a [15a]). It is probably best to view the *Hiphil* infinitive absolute "as a substitute for the finite verb. . . as the continuation of [the] preceding finite verb" *wayyar'* ("he saw")⁶² in 8:11a [15a]. Because of the concluding *ka'aser* formula, the conclusions for 7:13, 22 are applicable here.

Interestingly, the fact that Pharaoh is viewed as performing the hardening in 8:11a [15a] is a comment by the writer on the historical integrity of the narration and about the dispositional reality of Pharaoh's genuine choice, i.e., his hardened refusals are not mechanistic mock actions. Nevertheless, in view of the *ka'aser* formula Pharaoh must be viewed as YHWH's agent, who truly hardens himself—however, never independently, but only under the ultimate influence of Yahweh.⁶³

In short, in this narrative is seen Yahweh's omnipotence over the Pharaoh, as Yahweh positively influences him externally with signs (8:6[10]-8[12]), but then negatively influences him internally with a power for refusal.

The third plague narrative (8:12[16]-15[19])

This narrative is similar to the introductory miracle narrative (7:8-13), with Yahweh's command appearing first, followed by sign performance and concluding with the negative hardening reaction in 8:15[19] ("But Pharaoh's heart was strong [*wayyehezaq*], and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord said."). The conclusions of this narrative are the same as that in 7:8-13. The hardened condition should be seen as a result of the hardening of the preceding narrative (cf. again the stative-intransitive sense of *hazaq*).

The fourth plague narrative (8:16[20]-28[32])

The order of events here is almost identical to the 7:26[8:1]-8:11[15] narrative: divine command (vv 16[20]-19[23]), sign performance (v 20[24]), positive reaction by Pharaoh (vv 21[25]-25[29]), plague relief (vv 26[30]-27[31]) and a resulting transitive hardening action (v 28[32]), "But Pharaoh made heavy [*wayyakbed*] his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go."⁶⁴ Since this denotes an activity rather than a

⁶² Kautzsch and Cowley, *Grammar* 345, ##113Y-Z. Hesse views the verbal action in a reflective sense, which is possible (*Verstockungsproblem* 9).

⁶³ For this particular sense of agency, cf. the significance of 5:22-23 (discussed supra) as well as 3:21-22 and 12:33-36; 12:12-13, 23, 27; 13:15; 33:2; 34:11. This idea of divine actions standing ultimately behind human actions is an apparently common idea in the A.N.E. (for illustrations and discussion cf. B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods* [Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1967] 18-21, 36-39, 47, 55, 111; Hesse acknowledges the possibility of the same concept for the hardening from the viewpoint of the Elohist [*Verstockungsproblem* 46]).

⁶⁴ The *Hiphil* prefixed conjugation with *waw* consecutive functions as a perfect definite past and should be taken transitively since it is in the *Hiphil* (cf. Kautzsch and Cowley, *Grammar* 145 ##c-e).

condition, it should be seen as a third hardening *occurrence* since chap. 5. Again, the integrity of history and the dispositional reality of Pharaoh's choice are reflected in an expression of self-hardening. Again, however, "the king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of Yahweh, he turns it wherever he wishes" (Prov 21:1), first influencing it positively, then reversing the positive effect by negatively influencing him toward a refusal: Pharaoh's "yes" (8:24[28]) is reversed to "no" (8:28[32]). The conclusions of this narrative concerning the cause of the hardening are identical to that of 7:26[8:1]-8:11[15]. Not only does the order of events argue for this identity, but so also does the phrase *gam bapa'am hazzo't* ("this time also") of 8:28[32] which identifies the hardening activity of this narrative as being of the same nature as in the previous narratives: Yahweh is the ultimate cause and Pharaoh's acts are not independent but influenced.⁶⁵ No doubt this phrase also highlights the rising drama in the narrative.

The fifth plague narrative (9:1-7)

The order of this narrative is almost identical to 7:8-13: divine command (9: 1-5), sign performance (9:6-7) and a concluding hardening ("But the heart of Pharaoh was heavy [*wayyikbad*], and he did not let the people go."). This is an unusual hardening predication in that the *ka'aser* formula is not added, nor is any other phrase explicitly relating it back to the hardening action of the previous narratives. However, because of the narrative's identical structure with 7:8-13 and the observation that all the previous hardening expressions are traceable to Yahweh as ultimate cause, it is probable that the present expression should be similarly interpreted. Further, the hardening here can be traced back directly to the hardening action of 8:28[32] via its stative-intransitive verbal nuance, describing a condition which is a result of the previous activity.⁶⁶

The sixth plague narrative (9:8-12)

The exact sequence of the previous narrative also appears here. The main difference is that for the first time Yahweh is the stated subject of the hardening, so that its cause here clearly lies with him. Since Yahweh is subject, *wayhazzeq* ("and he [YHWH] made strong") may be seen as a definite past, functioning transitively, with *leb par'oh* ("the heart of Pharaoh") as object, and should be viewed as the fourth actual hardening occurrence. This first explicit mention of Yahweh as subject

⁶⁵ While recognizing the ultimate influence of divine hardening upon Pharaoh's decisions, H. Frey nevertheless affirms that Pharaoh had free will in order to maintain an ethical basis for the hardening (*Das Buch der Heimsuchung und des Auszugs* [Stuttgart: Calver, 1957] 107-108). B. Baentsch views 8:28[32]; 9:34 in a similar way (*Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri* 78). Hesse is confusing at this point, asserting that 8:28[32] and 9:34 stress Pharaoh's "responsibility" (*Verstockungsproblem*" 45). "Responsibility" should not be used in such discussions since it cannot be determined whether one means "freedom," "Accountability," or both.

⁶⁶ See the above discussion of 7:13, 22 and 8:15[19].

of the hardening, together with a concluding *ka aser dibber* YHWH clause (v 12), serves to identify Yahweh as the subject of the previous . . . hardening statements also coupled with the *ka aser* formulas, all of which now become more clearly seen as prophetic fulfillments of Exod 4:21 and 7:3-4.⁶⁷

The seventh plague narrative (9:13-35)

This narrative, as has been the case previously, follows the same order as the second and fourth plague narratives 7:26[8:1]-8:11[15] and 8:16[20]-28[32]. Again, the *Hiphil wayyakbed* ("he made heavy") is employed with the same sense as in 8:28[32]. The "hardening conclusions" here coincide with the earlier conclusions of the 8:16[20]-28[32] narrative, although this narrative adds the fact that the hardening action which Pharaoh performs under Yahweh's influence is "sin"⁶⁸ (cf. 9:27, 34). The phrase *wayyosep labato'* ("he sinned again"⁶⁹ or "he continued to sin."⁷⁰) in v 34 connects the hardening statements of v 34 with all the previous ones.

It is evident that vv 34-35 do not function separately (cf. the copulative), but as a unity ("he sinned again and made heavy [*wayyakbed*] his heart [v 34b] . . . and Pharaoh's heart was strong [*wayyehezaq*] . . . just as Yahweh said [v 35]."). Together they again seem to display the familiar transitive-intransitive pattern: v 34 has a transitive hardening expression (the fourth such thus far), and v 35 follows with a semantically stative-intransitive verb, describing the, resulting condition of the hardening activity in the previous verse. In fact, these verses appear to be a summary of the hardening motif throughout chaps. 7-9. In this light, v 34 may also be subsumed under the previous hardening statements which are linked to God's influence in 4:21 and 7:3.

Exod 9:30 carries significance in that it appears to be an interpretation by Moses on the basis of Pharaoh's past reactions. He is affirming both the historical and theological integrity of the hardening narratives ("I know that you do not yet fear the Lord."). Moses seems finally to discern the reality of the hardening decree of Yahweh in 4:21 and 7:3, which has now become for him the practical basis of his expectations about Pharaoh's future negative responses, as Yahweh reaffirms to him in 10:1-3. There is a hardening factor in Pharaoh which is quite independent of his relationship to the signs (cf. 10:29).⁷¹

The eighth plague narrative (10:1-20)

This is the most complex plague narrative thus far: hardening (v 1), divine command (vv 1-2), positive reaction by Pharaoh (vv 8-9), his

⁶⁷ Cf. Piper (*Justification of God* 145) whose argument is very similar to my own on this point (see below).

⁶⁸ For the difficult problem of theodicy to which this conclusion drives us see further *infra*.

⁶⁹ So NASB and BDB 415, *yasap: Hiph #2a*.

⁷⁰ Cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti*.1.387, *yasap: hif #5*.

negative reaction (vv 10-11), sign performance (vv 12-15), Pharaoh's positive reaction, admittance of sin, relief (vv 16-19) and the typical concluding hardening remark (v 20). Since 9:34-35 seem to function as a literary device for summarizing the sequential hardening predications--the *hardening motif*--of these narratives, the *Hiphil hikbadti* ("I [Yahweh] have made heavy his heart, 10:1) begins a new section that looks ahead, and functions best as a prophetic perfect rather than a definite past referring to the previous action. The verb here shows Yahweh has determined not only the hardening later in this narrative, but the rest of the events involved (cf. v 1a and 1b).⁷² Pharaoh's volition is reversed four different times in this one narrative (vv 8-9, 10-11, 16-17, 20). The reversal in vv 10-11 should be seen as partial fulfillment of the hardening prediction in 10:1, both viewing Yahweh as ultimate cause of the hardening. Verse 20 should be seen in the same way ("But Yahweh made strong [wayhazzeq] Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.")

The ninth plague narrative (10:21-29)

The sequence here is identical to that of 7:26; [8:1-8:11[15]; 8:16[20]-28[32] and 9:13-35, with the hardening predication taken in the same sense as 10:20, with the same theological conclusion. Note the explicit connection in v 27 between "hardening" and Pharaoh's volitional faculty ("But Yahweh made strong [wayhazzeq] Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go.").

The introduction to the death plague (11:1-10)

Verse 9 is a prediction that Pharaoh will again be hardened so that Yahweh can bring on the death plague of chap. 12. Verse 10 is the summary of the whole narrative from 7:6-10:29,⁷³ viewing Yahweh as the ultimate cause of all the hardening occurrences throughout:⁷⁴ "And Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; yet Yahweh made strong [wayhazzeq] Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go out of his land." This is the formal ending of the first phase of the hardening. The concluding hardening remark in 13:15 (*hiqsa*, "he was stubborn") denotes that the hardening influence was directed toward Pharaoh's intellectual-volitional faculty in such an intensely severe manner that a decision for release was impossibly "difficult" to reach.⁷⁵

⁷¹ This again testifies to the thesis that hardening is the inceptive cause for signs and not vice-versa.

⁷² So Hesse, *Verstockungsproblem* 10. D. F. Payne argues that the *Hiphil* in 10:1, even though it denotes that Yahweh is "behind" the hardening and that it was "part of God's plan," still asserts that he "could not however deduce from the statement itself whether Pharaoh had any volition in the matter or not" (Forster and Marston [*God's Strategy* 168] citing Payne [source unpublished]). But our exegesis has shown that although Pharaoh did have volition, it was always under the influence of Yahweh.

⁷³ Cf. the summary statement at the beginning of the narrative in 7:6.

⁷⁴ See Piper's explanation from the parallels of 4:21; 7:3-4 and 11:9-10, which gives evidence in favor of my observation here (*Justification of God* 150-51).

The second phase of the hardening (14:1-31)

In this second phase the hardening is not directly related to the performance of signs. However, its nature continues to exhibit the "reversal" characteristic of the hardening influence. A Prediction of hardening occurs again in 14:4 and is explained in 14:5: the fulfillment fit of the prediction in v 5 describes the hardening influence of v 4 as expressing itself through causing Pharaoh's intellectual-volitional faculty to "reverse" the former decision concerning the release of the Israelites, with the result that Egypt pursues Israel.⁷⁶ Verse 8 notes Yahweh's continuing effectuation of his reversing influence begun in v 5, as does v 17.

VI. *Conclusion to the Exegesis*

Lexical Conclusion

The three hardening terms are synonymous in the sense that they always refer to an intellectual-volitional power of refusal with respect to a decision of Israelite release. This decision also affected the center of Pharaoh's spiritual being, as suggested by *leb*. Furthermore, it is evident that *hazaq* and *kabed*, in particular, refer to this "volitional power of refusal" as a reversal from an opposite volitional decision. The result of this reversed power is almost always mentioned immediately following each hardening predication.⁷⁷ On the other hand, there do seem to be possible distinctions in usage among the three words.⁷⁸ The term *hazaq* may specifically stress the volition's strong desire to refuse Israelite release.⁷⁹ The idea with *kabed* may emphasize the qualitative intensity of the volition's power with respect to refusal, so that such a power of decision is seen to be so psychologically "heavy" that it cannot be changed by anyone except Yahweh. *Qasa* stresses the result of this intense power as it relates to Pharaoh's reason, i.e., this

⁷⁵ Here Pharaoh is viewed as the cause; but, in view of the preceding discussion, he is to be seen as an agent under the causative influence of Yahweh. The Targum says that it was "the word of the Lord" that hardened Pharaoh's heart in 13:15 (cf. J. W. Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathon Ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch* [New York: KTAV, 1968] 483).

⁷⁶ That this "change of heart" was not a "strengthening of a previously made decision" is evident not only from context, but from the term *wayyehapek*, which is probably another term for "hardening." Its basic nuance is that of "turn" and often refers to a "turn in the opposite direction." Cf. Exod 10:19 (wind "turned the reverse way"); Esther 9:1 ("to be turned to the contrary"). One of its predominant uses in the Pentateuch is that of a reversal in something's intrinsic nature (cf. Exod 7:15, 17, 20; Lev 13:3, 4, 10, 16, 17, 25, 55; Deut 23:6). Cf. especially Ps 105:25 where *hapak* is used with reference to YHWH changing the hearts of the Egyptians to hate Israel.

⁷⁷ This is found usually in the form of *welo'sama'alehem* or *welo' silla et ha'am*.

⁷⁸ Compare the following discussion with our introduction. While we can agree with Piper that the three terms do not have "Fundamentally different meanings (*Justification of God* 142), he is perhaps too simplistic in not recognizing their secondary semantic distinctions.

⁷⁹ Contra Piper who sees the idea of strengthening as completely lost (*Justification of God* 141).

power makes a decision for release too "difficult" ever to be reached.⁸⁰

Exegetical Conclusions: Yahweh as the Ultimate Cause of Pharaoh's Hardening

The exegesis of the plague narrative complex has shown a definite pattern of a hardening motif (1) the introductory miracle narrative (7:8-13) and the first plague narrative (7:14-25) describe a "hardened" condition (7:13, 14,22), which assumes that a previous action has occurred that caused the condition. Our exegesis has argued that this first action occurred in 5:2 (or somewhere soon after) as a beginning fulfillment of 4:21, which views Yahweh as cause of the hardening. (2) A second hardening act (8:11[15]) occurs in the second plague narrative (7:26[8:1]-8:11[15]) with the resulting condition again (8:15[19]) described in the third plague narrative (8:12[16]-15[19]). (3) The same pattern occurs a third time in plague narratives four (8:16[20]-28[32]) and five (9:1-7) respectively; (4) then in the sixth narrative (9:8-12) Yahweh is explicitly identified as the subject of the previous hardening acts, mainly by showing that he is to be identified with all the previous *ka'aser* prophetic fulfillment clauses. (5) The seventh narrative (9:13-35) summarizes the pattern of the preceding narratives by employing vv 34-35 as a concluding emphasis of the transitive-intransitive ("act-condition") hardening pattern. What further substantiates this pattern is that the transitive hardening predication are always in the *Hiphil* of *kabed*⁸¹ and the intransitive hardening statements are in the *Qal* of *hazaq*.⁸²

The significance of this pattern⁸³ lies in the observation that even when Pharaoh is subject of the hardening, or when the subject is unmen-

⁸⁰ It is sometimes deduced that the hardening predictions are metaphorical pictures of the malfunctioning of the ethico-religious faculty. So K. L. Schmidt ("Die Verstockung des Menschen durch Gott," *TZ* 1 [1949] 1-2) and Piper (*Justification of God* 140-42), the latter of whom gives the most cogent explanation of a metaphorical meaning. While the idea of *malfunctioning* is certainly part of the intended meaning, the metaphor is imprecise, and, in fact, the meaning is probably not even derived from any metaphor because: (1) *hazaq* and *kabed* may be too flexible in their verbal nuances to be designated as obvious pictorial terms and then metaphorically applied (cf C. Brook-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor* [London: Seeker and Warburg, 1965] 209); (2) in the phrase "he hardened his heart," heart is probably not even a pictorial reference to the actual organ, whose underlying significance is intellect, volition, spiritual faculty, etc, but is perhaps best understood as a "dead metaphor," like "foot of a mountain" or "leg of a table." Therefore, heart is best taken as a literal reference to the intellectual-volitional faculty of man, which has ethico-religious implications, affecting the spiritual centrum of life (cf. Hesse, *Verstockungsproblem* 7-8, 22 and *supra*).

⁸¹ Cf 8:11[15], 28[32], 9:34 (note the adjectival exception of *kabed* in 7:14).

⁸² Cf. 7:13, 22; 8:15[19]; 9:35 and, uniquely, the *Qal* intransitive of *kabed* in 9:7. When Yahweh is subject, the stem is usually *Piel*, thus denoting his intense involvement in the hardening.

⁸³ The pattern in 7:8-9:35 seems to betray and point to the work of one mind rather than many conflicting sources, which were harmonized by a theologically ingenious final redactor-*contra* Hesse (*Verstockungsproblem* 18-19,45ff.), W. Fuss (*Die Deuteronomistische Pentateuchredaktion in Exodus 3-17* [Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1972], e.g. 84-263) and R. R. Wilson ("The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," 18-36).

tioned, these statements describe a resulting condition traceable to a previous hardening action caused by God (cf 7:13, 14, 22; 8:15[19]; 9:7, 35). Therefore these statements cannot refer to Pharaoh independently hardening his heart, as many commentators argue. This is not to say that the reality of Pharaoh's volitional decisions and accountability should be overlooked or ignored; the concern of this study is about the ultimate cause of the hardening.

Beginning with 10:1 the predications are usually in the Piel and have Yahweh as subject, thus denoting his integral involvement (though cf. 13:15). Thus, the exegesis has shown these hardening patterns, together with 4:21, 7:3 and 10:1ff, involved Pharaoh in a hardening nexus from which he could not escape nor exercise any totally independent self-determining actions, since Yahweh was the ultimate cause of the hardening.

Exegetical Conclusions: The Purpose of Pharaoh's Hardening

As the narratives develop there is a thematic progression with respect to the purpose of the hardening: (1) that the uniqueness of Yahweh's omnipotence would be demonstrated to the Egyptians (7:17; 8:6[10], 18[22]; 9:16; 10:1-2; 14:4, 17-18); (2) that Yahweh's acts would become a memorial in Israel and its later generations (10:1-2; 13:14-16); (3) then 14:4, 17, 18 summarizes the whole purpose of the *Heilsgeschichte* program: it is for Yahweh's *glory*.

Having said this, the overarching theme of Exod 1-14 may now be stated: Yahweh hardens Pharaoh's heart primarily to create an Israelite *Heilsgeschichte*, necessarily involving an Egyptian *Unheilsgeschichte*--all of which culminates in Yahweh's glory. Yahweh caused the *kabed* of Israel's bondage (Ps 105:25; Exod 5:9) and the *kabed* of Pharaoh's heart, both of which culminate in his own "*ikkabeda* (Exod 14:4, 17, 18).

VII. *Theological Implications of the Exegetical Conclusions*

Do the above exegetical conclusions help us toward answering the four questions raised in our introduction with respect to Rom 9 and, if so, how? With respect to the first two questions concerning the ultimate cause of the hardening and its conditional or unconditional nature, the above conclusions lead to some straightforward yet difficult answers. First, our study has shown that God was the ultimate cause of all of the hardening actions throughout Exod 4-14 so that at no time was Pharaoh's volition independent of Yahweh's influence when he hardened his heart. This may be especially significant since the hardening may be viewed as a polemic against the Egyptian idea of Pharaoh's deity and the belief that Pharaoh's heart was the all-controlling factor both in history and society.⁸⁴ Second, it is never

⁸⁴ Cf. a Memphite mythological text where the gods Re and Horus exercise absolute control over everything by means of their hearts (J. B. Pritchard, "The Theology of Memphis," *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* [Princeton: Princeton Univ, 1969] 5-6). Since the Pharaoh was viewed as the divine incarnation of these two gods, Helmer Ringgren rightly concludes that the heart of the living Pharaoh also was seen as possessing the same power (*Word and Wisdom* [Lund: Haken Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1947] 22).

stated in Exod 4-14 that Yahweh hardens Pharaoh in judgment because of any prior reason or condition residing in him.⁸⁵ Rather, as stated in the exegetical conclusion, the only purpose or reason given for the hardening is that it would glorify Yahweh. Therefore, the divine hardening of Pharaoh was unconditional.⁸⁶ All that can be said is that Yahweh deemed it necessary to include Pharaoh's disobedient refusal in the historical plan, which was to glorify himself.⁸⁷

A classic and important objection to this idea is that it associates God too closely with the cause of sin.⁸⁸ No doubt the theologian must be very careful in discussing God's relation to sin. Nevertheless, the above exegesis shows that Exod 4-14 says that God was the ultimate, unconditional cause of Pharaoh's volition while holding him accountable for his disobedient volitional acts. While many theologians see an antinomy between divine sovereignty and human freedom in Exod 4-14⁸⁹ and Rom 9, the present evidence places the mystery between divine sovereignty and human accountability.⁹⁰ Paul's apparent expres-

⁸⁵ Hesse asserts that the hardening was not based on the ethical behavior of Pharaoh (Verstockungsproblem 54). Many have attempted to deny this by saying that since Yahweh is not mentioned as subject until 9:12, Pharaoh had to be the subject of the previous predications. (M. Erb, seemingly indifferent theologically, affirms the basic argument presented here ["Porosis und Ate"; unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Eberhard-Karls-Universität zu Tübingen, 1964] 308).

⁸⁶ However, Jewish tradition viewed the hardening of Exod 4:21 and 10:1 as a retributive judgment for some preceding sin (cf. respectively R. Exodus v 7 and xiii.3). For the most thorough exegetical argument in favor of the conditional view see J. Morison's 550 page work *An Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (London: Ward and Co, 1849), 306-384. Cf. further C. Hodge, *Epistle to the Romans* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972) 399; W. G. H. Thomas, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966) 257; F. Leenhardt, *Epistle to the Romans* (London: Lutterworth, 1961) 254; R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Minn: Augsburg, 1961) 616-17.

⁸¹ The systematic theologian may assert that Pharaoh's hardening was contingent upon his fallen position in Adam, but neither Exodus nor Romans even hints that this was a reason for the hardening. In fact, Rom 9:11 seems to indicate that the pre-natal election and rejection of Jacob and Esau was contingent neither on works nor on any condition residing in them. This may be evident further from observing that the "purpose of God" in preferring Jacob for blessing and Esau for cursing is based on his choice (κατ' ἐκλογῆν), so that the ultimate cause of the selection and rejection lies within the determining, unconditional being of God himself. Hence, the divine dealings with both Jacob and Esau are not based on or influenced by either their actions or their natures which give rise to such actions. So Calvin (*Romans* 215) and Piper (*Justification of God* 155, 160-62).

⁸⁸ E.g., Eichrodt, *Theology*. 2.426 n. 5; J. Daane, *The Freedom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 80.

⁸⁹ So G. Fohrer, "Action of God and Decision of Man in the Old Testament" in Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of *Die Outestamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika* (1966) 131-9; H. W. Robinson, *The Religious Ideas of the OT* (London: Duckworth, 1949) 179; G. C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 212.

⁹⁰ So J. Hempel, *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: A. Topelmann, 1964) 54; and apparently Hesse, *Verstockungsproblem* 46-54, 96, who speaks of this sovereignty-accountability distinction as a *Spannungsverhältnis* and the ultimate theological Meisterfrage of Exodus 4-14 (cf. *ibid.* 51, 54 and 96).

sion of this antinomy is found in the hypothetical Jewish objection which he anticipates in his allusion to Pharaoh's hardening, i.e., how can God blame a man for sin, since man cannot resist God's decree ($\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta$) which includes sin (cf. Rom 9:19).⁹¹

This antinomy leads directly to our third question concerning whether or not Paul gives an understandable explanation in Rom 9:17 supporting his denial that God is unjust (9:14). Neither Moses nor Paul leaves room for the possibility that God was unjust or immoral in his dealings with Pharaoh or Pharaoh had a *peccatum alienum*. Paul alludes to Exod 9:16 in affirming the justice of God: "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." Paul's wording comes closer to the LXX than the MT, since he sees that God's power was demonstrated in Pharaoh and not merely before his eyes. In this regard, Paul's use of $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$ could be synonymous with *'amad* (MT) or $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ (LXX), but its LXX usage elsewhere denotes an "arousing" or *inciting*," so that here it may well be a reference to God's internal hardening or *inciting* of Pharaoh's heart.⁹² Thus, Paul seems to be alluding to Exod 9:16 as a summary of the purpose of the hardening throughout Exod 4-14--that God's name should be *proclaimed* "in all the world." If God had not repeatedly hardened Pharaoh, there would have been no drawn out series of plagues and there would have been no proclamation of God's omnipotence. Thus, *Paul sees hardening as the key to the proclamation of the divine name*.⁹³ That Paul understands Exod 9:16 in terms of hardening is clear from his summary of this allusion in Rom 9:18b ("he hardens whom he wills").⁹⁴

But how does Paul's use of Exod 9:16 argue for God's justice? The phrase "proclaim the name" of Yahweh is also found in Exod 33:19, a

⁹¹ This hypothetical objection becomes real in R. Exod xiii 3, which gives the following evaluation of Exod 10:1: "Does this not provide heretics with ground for arguing that he had no means of repenting since it says: For I [Yahweh] have hardened his heart?" The Midrashic writer then explains the hardening in the following way: "God warned Pharaoh five times before chap 10:1, and finally God hardened Pharaoh's heart as a retributive penalty for him hardening it himself previously."

⁹² $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$ may be understood in Rom 9:17 as "to appoint," "to rise up on the scene of history," etc. M. Stuart has shown that throughout the LXX $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$ is best viewed under a more subsuming idea of "incite," "stir up," "excite," "arouse," rather than merely through the idea of "historical appointment": e.g., 2 Chron 36:22; Ezra 1:1,5; Pss 7:6; 34[35]:23; 43[44]:23, 56[57]:8; 58[59]:4; 77[78]:65; 79[80]:2; 107[108]:2; Cant 2:7; 3:5; 4:16; 8:4-5; Ecclesiasticus 22:7; Jonah 1:4; Hag 1:14; Zech 2:13; 4:1; 13:7; Isa 38:16; Ezek 2:2; 2 Macc 13:4. Stuart concludes that the LXX usage denotes a "sense of bringing out of a state of rest or inaction or inefficiency into a contrary state, i.e., in the sense of exciting" (*Epistle to the Romans* [Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1832] 396), so that this meaning may be in Paul's mind with reference to God's inciting Pharaoh's heart to disobey his command to release Israel. Cf. the same kind of meaning for $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$ in Isa 45:13 with reference to Cyrus, only three verses after the potter-clay metaphor to which Paul alludes in Rom 9:20 (cf. also Isa 29:16; 64:8). See Piper for a full discussion of $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$; his conclusion is similar to that reached here, but is arrived at by means of different argumentation (*Justification of God* 146-8, 158-60).

⁹³ So also Hesse, *Verstockungsproblem* 50.

⁹⁴ That v 18b is a summary of v 17 is clear from observing that v 18a ("He has mercy on whom he desires obviously is the summary of vv 15-16).

verse to whom Paul alludes in Rom 9:15 to support God's justice in the election of Jacob over Esau. If it can be determined how Exod 33:19 is a rationale for divine justice, perhaps this may be the key to Paul's use of Exod 9:16.⁹⁵ John Piper has argued that the proclamation of God's name and the demonstration of his glory in the OT are synonymous,⁹⁶ so that Exod 33:19 "God's glory and his name" refer fundamentally to his "essential nature mainly to dispense mercy. . . on whomever he pleases apart from any constraint originating outside his own will. This is the essence of what it means to be God. This is his name"⁹⁷ and it is what brings him glory. This meaning of "proclaiming the name" certainly seems applicable also to the Exod 9:16 phrase⁹⁸ and generally coincides with our exegetical conclusions, yet specifically in this context it now refers to the unconditional dispensing of judgment rather than mercy.⁹⁹

Hence, Paul is arguing in Rom 9:17 that God's justice/righteousness (*sedeq*) is shown and consists in his acting for his name's sake or glory, i.e., acting unconditionally according to his intrinsic nature. Thus, for Paul, God's actions would be unjust if they were responses conditioned by the creature, whether they be actions of judgment or mercy. While Paul's readership may not have been completely satisfied with his explanation of this theodicy, Paul himself is constrained to conclude, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways!" (Rom 11:33).

In response to the final question posed in the introduction, God's hardening and rejection of Pharaoh (and the Egyptians) does not appear to be limited to divine dealings only on the temporal, historical level, but appears to have a continuity with a rejection from eternal salvation.¹⁰⁰ This may be evident from the following considerations in Exodus: (1) hardening of the heart probably has implications in the

⁹⁵ Although Exod 9 uses *σπλαγγέλλω* and Exod 33 has *καλέω*, the two verbs are virtually synonymous in their contexts. It is notable that two of the only other three OT uses of the phrase found in Exod 9:16 show that "proclaiming the name" of Yahweh is to extol his justice and sovereignty (cf. Deut 32:3; Ps 21[22]:23, 32).

⁹⁶ J. Piper, "Prolegomena to Understanding Romans 9:14-15," 214-15.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 215. See supra.

⁹⁸ The Targum of Exod 9:16b reads "that they might acknowledge the *might of My name* in all the earth." In the OT the *sem YHWH* most often refers to God's holiness as it is demonstrated by power, so that the phrase "stands for God's essential nature revealed to men as an active force in the lives of the people" (A. P. Ross, "Popular Etymology and Paranomasia in the Old Testament," unpub Ph.D. dissertation [Univ of Cambridge, 1982] 21-2).

⁹⁹ See Piper (*Justification of God* 55-68) where he further discusses Exod 33:19 and Rom 9:15 and strikingly applied his conclusions to Rom 9:17-18 in the same way we have (ibid. 160-62). Note that the name of YHWH also expresses his sovereignty in judgment elsewhere (cf. Ezek 6:13-14; 7:27; 11:10, 12:15-16; 12:25).

¹⁰⁰ Contra Forster and Marston, *God's Strategy in Human History* 66-77. However, it is also possible to agree with Piper (*Justification of God* 46, 156-7, 160), who says that although he cannot determine whether Pharaoh was consigned to eternal punishment, the principle of God's hardening relationship with him is applied by Paul to the sphere of spiritual reprobation.

spiritual realm affecting Pharaoh's eternal destiny, since in the OT *leb* ("heart") refers very often to the inner, spiritual center of one's relationship with God,¹⁰¹ as is also true of "heart" in the Egyptian literature; (2) this is supported by observing that Pharaoh's hardening of his heart is referred to as "sin against the Lord" for which he needs "forgiveness" (10:16-17; cf. 9:34). Therefore the hardening does not merely concern Pharaoh's intellectual-volitional faculty, but also the spiritual center of his being, since he repeatedly disobeyed God's command and deserves judgment. This is significant in the Exodus account, since the Egyptians viewed Pharaoh as divine and sinless while living, and believed at death he was exempt from judgment but became the god (Osiris) presiding over judgment after his death.

In addition to this, other terms in the immediate context of the Rom 9 hardening statement are used there and elsewhere in the Pauline corpus with reference to the eternal destinies of people,¹⁰² so that it would appear likely that Paul has the same concerns in Rom 9:17 and that he likewise understood the Exodus hardening. The context also points to a concern for eternal destinies in Rom 9, since Rom 8:29-39 refers to assurance of eternal salvation and Rom 10-11 focus on the problem of why national Israel is not in such a salvific condition. Could Paul have expressed such grief about his hardened brethren and wished himself "accursed" on their behalf if issues of eternal destinies were not at stake?¹⁰³ Therefore the hardening is not limited to unique historical situations, but is an expression of a gnomic principle of God's eternal dealings. The principle of such dealings is based on God's unconditional nature, as Paul's use of Exod 9:16 has shown. That such a principle is in Paul's mind is apparent from Rom 9:18, where he generalizes the individual OT examples of the divine dispensing of mercy and hardening;¹⁰⁴ the former explains God's dealings with the

¹⁰¹ Although Hesse acknowledges that "Altes wie Neues Testament schen im Herzen das Zentrum des religiös-sittlichen Lebens" (*Verstockungsproblem* 21), he later states that to interpret Pharaoh's hardening in terms of an eternal rejection (*ewige Verwerfung*), which he sees Paul doing, is to go beyond the meaning in Exodus, since God has only a historical--not a spiritual--relation with Pharaoh (ibid 33-4). For a discussion of those commentators who argue against and those who argue for an idea of eternal reprobation in Rom 9:17 see Piper (*Justification of God* 156-7), whose own argument lends support to our present explanation (ibid. 157-60). Cf. also O. Schmitz, "Verstockung," *RGG* 5, 1574, who says hardening in the NT always concerns man's failure to respond to the announcement of salvation and it always relates to divine judgment.

¹⁰² See discussion of the usage of the following words in Piper, *Justification of God*: ἀπωλεία (182-184), ἐλέω (158), τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ (i.e., τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας) and τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός (49-52). Cf. likewise Paul's usage elsewhere of words synonymous with σκληρύνω (ibid. 157-8) and καλέω (Rom 8:30; 9:7, 24-25; I Cor 1:9; 7:22, 24; Gal 1:15; 5:8, 13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15; I Thess 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thess 2:14; I Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 1:9-10; and ὀργῆς (Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; Eph 2:3; 5:6; Col 3:6; I Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9 and elsewhere in the NT).

¹⁰³ See likewise the thorough discussion of Piper, *Justification of God* 29-30, 40, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Note the generalized use of the relative pronoun(ὃν). My conclusions about Exod 4-14 and Rom 9:17-18 are given extensive support in Piper's work (ibid. 138-62), which also shows how the whole of Rom 9:1-23 provides further confirmation of these conclusions (his discussion covers 300 pages).

Israelite remnant and Gentiles, while the latter explains the present rejection of the majority of the Jewish nation.

The results of this study lend support to the idea that there is an equal ultimacy or parallel between election and reprobation in terms of unconditionality.¹⁰⁵ Rom 9:18 appears to be the clearest textual expression of such a symmetry.

In the light of these results, it is appropriate that Paul concludes 9-11 with, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory, Amen" (Rom 11:36).

¹⁰⁵ Contra Berkouwer, *Divine Election* 212; J. Daane, "Something Happened to the Canons," *RJ* 21 (Feb, 1971) 21-22; and H. R. Boer, "Reprobation: Does the Bible Teach It?," *RJ* 25 (April, 1975) 7-10; idem, "Reprobation in Modern Theologians," *RJ* 15 (April, 1965) 13-15, who argue that there is no biblical evidence for unconditional reprobation.

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