

SERIES: "LAST...BUT NOT LEAST":

An In Depth Study of MALACHI

- the Final Prophet of the Old Testament Era-

PART IV - Malachi and ELECTION

WEDNESDAY, January 7th, 2009

I. Following the truths related to JACOB and ESAU in Romans 9:6-16, the Apostle Paul next deals with the matter of Pharaoh. (vs17,18)

II. Contrary to what Calvinists teach concerning this passage, this has nothing to do with the matter of his eternal destiny.

III. God simply knew IN ADVANCE (i.e. Foreknowledge) the evil, self-willed heart of this tyrant (cf. Exodus 9:16)

IV. God did NOT cause Pharaoh to sin (nor has He ever done so for ANYONE!). Rather, He sovereignly arranged circumstances and events to put this particular man - whose every quirk and wicked impulse He Foreknew in complete detail - to be in authority at that particular time in order to use his evil to fulfill His will!

V. This is the aspect of sovereignty to which we do not object! We affirm as both Biblical AND reasonable God's sovereign right to arrange circumstances and to position on the stage of life those players whom He FOREKNOWS, so that His will is effected in human affairs - ALL while never violating their will or encouraging their CRIMES.

VI. MOST IMPORTANTLY, God would NEVER exercise His sovereignty to cause some - and NOT others - to believe and be saved.

VII. Therefore, this account has nothing to do with any of the elements in T. U. L. I. P. that affect personal salvation - NOR did God override Pharaoh's MORAL choice in the process.

VIII. There is ONLY ONE Biblical EXPLANATION for God taking SOME to Heaven - and sending OTHERS to Hell. Scripture declares that salvation is a genuine offer: that men may CHOOSE either to receive OR to reject CHRIST and that God in His omniscient Foreknowledge knows how each person will respond.

IX. In Romans 9:23, the Scripture declares that God, "to make His power known, ENDURED with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction". BUT "ENDURING" is NOT equal to CAUSING them to do evil. RATHER, God sometimes elects to use those whose hearts are evil and endures their

OPPOSITION and wickedness to the extent that it fits into His will. In this way God is able to make the wrath of man to "praise" Him! (Psalm 76: 10)A

X. Concerning the matter of God "hardening" the heart of Pharaoh, this, too, had NOTHING to do with whether or not he would go to Heaven - but ONLY with God's use of him at the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

XI. God was well aware of Pharaoh's predisposition towards evil and expressed this to Moses in Exodus 3:19. This was well before a word was spoken about God "hardening" his heart. Calvinists unanimously avoid that verse when dealing with this subject and begin their argument at Exodus 4: 21! In fact, Pharaoh "HARDENED" his heart twice before a single word was recorded regarding GOD'S act of "HARDENING".

XII. The CRITICAL truth to keep in mind here is that God did NOT give Pharaoh the wicked desire to rebel against Him! What God DID give him was the courage to carry out that desire.

XIII. Furthermore, there is not a single indication that Pharaoh would have been unable to submit to God by a genuine response from his heart!

XIV. This example does NOT support TOTAL DEPRAVITY (T) as Calvinists insists it does. Rather, through His Foreknowledge, God knew that Pharaoh, like ESAU, would reject His will - just as He KNEW that Jacob would submit to it. Pharaoh was an evil man who had long abused the people of God. He selfishly desired to protect his own interests by keeping the people as SLAVES!

XV. If Pharaoh really were "TOTALLY DEPRAVED" (T), why would God have to harden his heart? How could a "TOTALLY DEPRAVED" heart - in complete (total) opposition to God - become HARDER than it already was? (words mean something like "totally")

XVI. Romans 9: 20, 21 - on the POTTER and the CLAY - does NOT (as Calvinists also insist) prove that God predestines some to heaven and some to hell. Paul is referring to God's use of the innate evil of wicked men - like ESAU and Pharaoh - when it suits His PURPOSE AND fulfills His Will! Nor does the fact that God brings these "vessels of wrath" to the destruction they deserve

PROVE that this is His will for them OR that they have NO CHOICE - MUCH LESS THAT THEY WERE predestined to destruction!

On the contrary, II Peter 3:9 clearly teaches;
"The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish
But that all should come to repentance!"

Hardened
Hebrew
CHAZAQ =
TO strengthen or
to give
courage