*Northwest Bible Church – Jul. 25, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans. 9:17-18**

*The Hardening of Pharaoh*

**Audio Notice:** We are sorry, but there was a malfunction with the church computer during the digital recording of this sermon which caused the loss of this sound file. We do however have it recorded on tape. It will take some extra time to transfer the tape audio back into a file format. Please check back later for this sermon audio.

**INTRO**    Overview:
        The objection in v. 14 has two parts - Is God unjust to love Jacob and hate Esau (v. 13).

        v. 14 Is God unjust?
        v. 15 #1 - in choosing to love Jacob? [No], because Scripture says . . .
        v. 16 Therefore . . .
        v. 17 #2 - in choosing to hate Esau? [No], because Scripture says . . .
        v. 18 Therefore . . .

**I. OBJECTION: IS GOD UNJUST TO HATE AND REJECT ESAU?**    A. The modern idolatry concerning the love of God.

    B. God does not have saving love for everybody. Jn. 3:16 does not teach this.

**II. ANSWER (v. 17): PHARAOH IS AN EXAMPLE OF GOD’S RIGHT TO DO WITH HIS CREATURES AS HE SO DESIRES.**
        "For" looks back to v. 14 and parallels the "for" in v. 15. Ex. 9:16 is the quotation.

    A. God raised up Pharaoh (v. 17).
The word probably has the connotation of "I have brought you onto the scene of history to play a specific role for my sovereign purpose." Prov. 16:4 The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

    B. God demonstrated His power in Pharaoh (v. 17).

        1) This power of God is for both salvation (1:16) and judgment (9:22).

        2) In order to display His power, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (v. 18).
This is not an isolated event, see Ex. 14:17; Deut. 2:30; Josh. 11:20; Isa. 63:17; 1 Kngs 12:15; Jn. 12:40; 2 Thess. 2:11; Rev. 17:17; Rom. 11:7, 25, etc.

                This is the connection between Rom. 9:17 and v. 18.

            a) The hardening here means "to make spiritually insensitive and stubborn."
In Exod. 4-14, Pharaoh’s resistance to God’s purpose is caused by his hardness of heart. By hardening Pharaoh’s heart, he would not relent which brought more judgments on him.

            b) This hardening is unto condemnation/ eternal damnation.
                (1) See close parallel with vv. 22-23.
                (2) The word group "harden" is consistently used in Scripture to depict a                     spiritual condition that renders one unreceptive and disobedient to God and His word (Moo, p. 596).
                (3) See the parallel hardening of Israel in 11:7, 25 which excludes them from                     salvation.
                (4) There is no evidence in Exodus that Pharaoh ever genuinely repented..

            c) How does God harden hearts? Active or passive?

            d) Is God unfair and unjust to do this? No.

Pharaoh was a sinner.
God used Pharaoh to exalt His character and His name which is an infinitely good deed.

    C. God proclaimed His name through Pharaoh (v. 17).

**III. CONCLUSION (v. 18): GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN BOTH SHOWING MERCY AND HARDENING HEARTS.**
    A. This is a conclusion of vv. 13-17. God shows mercy on whom He desires (Jacob), and He hardens whom He desires (Pharaoh).

    B. If God’s mercy is unconditional (vv. 11-16), is the hardening unconditional too?

            Qualified Yes.
            1) "He hardens whom He desires." Notice the singular.
            2) Parallel with vv. 11 and 13.
            3) In Exodus the divine hardening preceded Pharaoh’s self hardening.
            4) However, from the standpoint of God’s eternal purpose (v. 11), election and rejection have fallen humans in view. All humans are sinners and all deserve justly God’s wrath and hardening, so hardening is based on God’s good purpose, not our actual sinfulness.

**IV. AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.**

    Holy fear and humble praise.