

Hebrews 3:14-15 Commentary

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Hebrews 3:1](#)
[Hebrews 3:2](#)
[Hebrews 3:3](#)
[Hebrews 3:4](#)
[Hebrews 3:5](#)
[Hebrews 3:6](#)
[Hebrews 3:7](#)
[Hebrews 3:8](#)
[Hebrews 3:9](#)
[Hebrews 3:10](#)
[Hebrews 3:11](#)
[Hebrews 3:12](#)
[Hebrews 3:13](#)
[Hebrews 3:14](#)
[Hebrews 3:15](#)
[Hebrews 3:16](#)
[Hebrews 3:17](#)
[Hebrews 3:18](#)
[Hebrews 3:19](#)

CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

[Click chart to enlarge](#)

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Swindoll's Chart](#), [Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews](#), [Another Chart](#)

The Epistle to the Hebrews

INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18

EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25

Superior Person
of Christ
Hebrews 1:1-4:13

Superior Priest
in Christ
Hebrews 4:14-10:18

Superior Life
In Christ
Hebrews 10:19-13:25

BETTER THAN
PERSON
Hebrews 1:1-4:13

BETTER
PRIESTHOOD
Heb 4:14-7:28

BETTER
COVENANT
Heb 8:1-13

BETTER
SACRIFICE
Heb 9:1-10:18

BETTER
LIFE

MAJESTY
OF
CHRIST

MINISTRY
OF
CHRIST

MINISTERS
FOR
CHRIST

DOCTRINE

DUTY

DATE WRITTEN:
ca. 64-68AD

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible](#)

Hebrews 3:14 For we have [become partakers](#) of [Christ](#), if we [hold fast](#) the [beginning](#) of our [assurance firm until the end](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: metochoi gar tou Christou gegonamen (1PRAI) eanper ten archen tes hupostaseos mechri telous bebaian kataschomen (1PAAS)

Amplified: For we have become fellows with Christ (the Messiah) and share in all He has for us, if only we hold our first newborn confidence and original assured expectation [in virtue of which we are believers] firm and unshaken to the end. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

NET: For we have become partners with Christ, if in fact we hold our initial confidence firm until the end. [NET Bible](#))

NLT: For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: For we continue to share in all that Christ has for us so long as we steadily maintain until the end the trust with which we began. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: for we have become participators of Messiah and as a present result are participators of Him, if we hold the beginning of our assured expectation steadfast to the end. ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;

FOR WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS OF CHRIST: metochoi gar tou Christou gegonamen (1PRAI):

- Heb 3:1; 6:4; 12:10; Romans 11:17; 1Corinthians 1:30; 9:23; 10:17; Ephesians 3:6; 1Timothy 6:2; 1Peter 4:13; 5:1; 1John 1:3)

For (gar) is a strategic **term of explanation** which should always prompt a pause to prayerfully ponder what the author is saying in a given section. This pause that refreshes will give your Teacher, the Spirit, an opportunity to speak to your heart (so that what you read is more than just head knowledge), not only illuminating the text (see [The Bible and Illumination](#)) but applying the text practically to your personal life (**Application**). Therefore, energized by the Spirit, let us discipline ourselves for godliness and frequently "P & P" (pause and ponder) the Word -- we are sure to be richly rewarded by our Father in Heaven, for "godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come!" (1Ti 4:7-8-note, 1Ti 4:9-10-note)

Dods - In Hebrews 3:6 the writer had adduced as the reason of his warning (**take care**) that participation in the salvation of Christ depended on continuance in the confident expectation that their heavenly calling would be fulfilled; and so impressed is he with the difficulty of thus continuing that he now returns to the same thought, and once again assigns the same reason for his warning: "For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm to the end". ([Hebrews 3 Commentary - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Partakers (partners) ([3353](#)) (**metochos** from **metecho** = have with, describing participation with another in common blessings) describes one who shares with someone else as an associate in an enterprise or undertaking. It speaks of those who are participators in something. Business partner, companion. Participating in. Accomplice in. Comrade.

Because of this condition, some propose that one cannot become, or at least be sure of becoming, a partaker until the end. If the verb were future, that would surely fit—we will be partakers if we hold fast. The verb = perfect tense = completed action w existing results = we have become and remain partakers, if we should hold steadfast.

If verb were future, then partaking would indeed be based upon one's ability or determination to hold on.

As it is, the condition is a test by which one can know if he has faith = test of continuance. The author proposes that Israel's fickle faith did not manifest itself as true faith (cp Heb4:2), nor will such faith today. As Jesus taught, true faith is the implanting of the Word into a receptive, believing heart (Lk8:15 > heard the Word... hold fast = *katecho*)

Partakers is emphatic. In this verse, the writer is referring to the fact that Messiah is the possession of believers. This is the uniform use of metochos in this epistle where the genitive of the thing possessed is given. In 1:9 the word is used of participation with someone. But see other uses in Hebrews (Heb 2:14, 3:1, 5:13, 6:4, 7:13, 12:8).

Metochos is used of those who are participators in something, or of those who are participators with someone. Because we are God's children, we also partake in God's loving chastening (Heb. 12:8). The picture is that of the oneness of **covenant**, where two become one, "*You in me, and I in you*," that is, Christ dwelling in us as a Son in His own house; and believers dwelling in Christ, as sharers of His divine-human life.

The Greek can be taken to mean that we are partakers with Christ, His companions (He 1:9), sharing new life with Him. It is also possible to translate "partakers of Christ," indicating that He is the benefit we share in, through our intimate union with Him.

MacArthur - All Christians, regardless of their status or position before being saved, are now fellow partakers of everything that pertains to Christ through the gospel—which is everything that pertains to Christ. The essence of the gospel is that, through faith in Jesus Christ, believers are made everything He is and given everything He has. The phrase "the mystery of Christ" (Heb 1: 4) is also used in Col. 4:3 as the very essence of Paul's message. It carries the truth of Colossians 1:27, that Christ is in believing Gentiles as well as believing Jews as "the hope of glory" for both. It also carries the truth of Colossians 2:2, that the mystery is "Christ Himself," in whom believers have everything (v. 3). So the mystery is fully understood to be Jew and Gentile in Christ—Christ in Jew and Gentile, so that there is the intimate shared union of eternal life as they both become immersed in the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20). God predestines every believer "to become conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro 8:29). (Ephesians Commentary)

Wuest - The word "**partakers**" is the translation of metochoi which is translated "fellows" in Heb 1:9, its verb form, rendered "took part of" in Heb 2:14. The verb means literally "to hold with," the noun, "one who holds with another." Here the word means "participators." The word is used of those who are participators in something, or of those who are participators with someone. The words "of Christ" are in the genitive case. Thayer in defining this word says, "sharing in, partaking of," with the genitive of the thing. That would mean that those to whom the inspired author of the book is writing, were co-participators of Messiah. They participated together in their possession of Him. In verse 6, the writer is speaking of the fact that true believers are Messiah's house, that is, they are His possession. In this verse, he is referring to the fact that Messiah is the possession of believers. This is the uniform use of metochos in this epistle where the genitive of the thing possessed is given. In Heb 1:9 the word is used of participation with someone. But in Heb 2:14, 3:1, 5:13, 6:4, 7:13, 12:8, it is used of participators in something. The phrase thus refers to the possession of salvation by the believer, a salvation which is in Christ. The words **have become** are the translation of gegonamen, the perfect of ginomai, a word which means "to become." The perfect tense in Greek speaks of an action that was completed in past time, having present results. The translation reads, therefore, "**For we became partakers of Messiah with the present result that we are partakers of Him.**" That is, if these first-century Jews would maintain their faith in Messiah to the end of their lives, that would show that they had become in the past partakers of Messiah, and that as a present result they were partakers of Him. Again as in Heb 3:6, the question is not one of the retention of salvation based upon a persistence of faith, but of the possession of salvation as evidenced by a continuation of faith. The perfect tense reaches back into the past and then speaks of the present. It is not the future of these Jews that the writer is concerned about here, but he is concerned as to whether in times past and as a result at the time of the writing of the epistle they were partakers of salvation in Messiah. ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

IF WE HOLD FAST THE BEGINNING OF OUR ASSURANCE FIRM UNTIL THE END: eanper ten archen tes hupostaseos mechri telous bebaian kataschomen (1PAAS) :

- Heb 3:6, Mt 24:13, 2John 1:9; same idea in 2Th 1:5

PERSEVERANCE: ENDURANCE TO THE END

See also discussions of Hebrews 3:6-note (some of the material below is repeated in Hebrews 3:6) **and Matthew 24:13-note**

CARM Dictionary on perseverance To endure to the end. Theologically, the term perseverance of the saints^a is the teaching that salvation cannot be lost, that the saints will preserve to the end.

Holman Bible Dictionary on perseverance - Maintaining Christian faith through the trying times of life.

Bridgeway Bible Dictionary has a well written summary on **perseverance** - God requires of Christians not only that they believe the gospel, but also that they persevere in living according to the gospel, regardless of the difficulties they meet. Perseverance is proof of the genuineness of faith and leads to spiritual maturity (John 8:31; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3-4; Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 4:1-11; Hebrews 6:11-12). When Jesus called people to believe in him, he made it clear that he was calling them into a continuous relationship with himself. Belief involved more than just a momentary decision; it involved a life of following him as

a true disciple to the end (Mark 8:34-38; Mark 13:13; Luke 9:57-62; John 15:4-6; cf. John 6:60; cf. John 6:66-68). In one of his parables Jesus showed that some people profess to be believers, but later, by their lack of perseverance, prove not to be (Mark 4:15-20). Christians are able to persevere because of the power of God working within them (Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:5; Judges 1:24; Revelation 3:10). In addition to giving his people the promise of his power, God demands that they exercise self-discipline and effort. Christians must be on their guard and persistent in prayer if they are to endure firmly to the end (Luke 21:36; Colossians 4:2). If people have true faith in God, they will prove it by their steadfast trust in his power and promises. Their perseverance is not something God rewards by giving them salvation, but something that gives proof of their salvation. It shows that their faith is genuine (Mark 13:13; Mark 13:22-23; Luke 21:36; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8). At times people may be tempted to give up their Christian commitment. The source of their troubles may be the trials of life, persecution, desire for personal prosperity, worry, laziness or false teaching (Mark 4:17-18; Mark 13:13; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 2:1; Hebrews 10:32-39). Christians can fight against these temptations by training themselves in godliness, resisting the pressures of the world, continuing steadfastly in the truth they have believed, learning more of God through the Scriptures, and giving themselves wholeheartedly to whatever work God has entrusted to them (2 Thessalonians 2:14-15; 1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Timothy 4:15; 1 Timothy 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 6:1-3; Hebrews 10:23; Judges 1:20-21). The outcome of Christian endurance will be the experience of salvation in its fullest expression at the return of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:24-25; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Revelation 2:26-28). The expectation of Christ's return is therefore a constant incentive to perseverance (Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:14; 2 Peter 3:17; 1 John 2:28).

ARTICLES ON PERSEVERANCE:

- [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Charles Buck Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Torrey's Topic - Perseverance](#)
- [Nave's Topic - Perseverance](#)

If is a third class conditional: possibility (see short discussion of Conditional Clauses): Those who persevere in their Christian life know that they have come to share in the life Christ gives (See later in Hebrews this "sharing" refers to sharing His reproach!). Believers who are once in Christ continue to be in Christ. Faith does not come and go. It stays firmly fixed on Christ. These faltering believers (some even apostates) began with loud confidence and profession of loyalty. And now?

Spurgeon - It is not true that one act of faith is all that is required, except you consider that one act to be continuous throughout life. If a man were a believer once, and if it were possible to cease to be so, then, of course, he is ruined. But the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints does not speak in that manner. It says that he who is a believer shall continue so—that he who is right with God shall abide so even to the end, and unless it be so we are not partakers of Christ at all.

Writing to the Corinthians Paul concerning the gospel says..."Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast the word which I preached to you**, unless you believed in vain." (1Cor 15:1-2-see notes)

Regarding the interpretation of (1Cor 15:1-2) note the following thoughts...

Matthew Henry says that "The doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection, is the foundation of Christianity. Remove this, and all our hopes for eternity sink at once. And it is by holding this truth firm, that Christians stand in the day of trial, and are kept faithful to God. We believe in vain, unless we keep in the faith of the gospel."

John MacArthur writes that "By this qualifying statement, Paul recognized and called to their attention that some may have had a shallow, non-saving faith (Matthew 7:13, 14, 22-27). Some believed only as the demons believed (James 2:19), convinced the gospel was true, but with no love for God, Christ, or righteousness. True believers "hold fast" to the gospel (cf. John 8:31; 2Cor 13:5; 1John 2:24; 2Jn 9). ([MacArthur, John: Hebrews. Moody Press](#))

Warren Wiersbe adds that..."The fact that they were standing firm was proof that their faith was genuine and not empty." [Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)

Kistemaker -"The flow of the verse is that the Corinthians are saved because they have received the gospel; but they must hold on to that gospel and so demonstrate this in their conduct. Otherwise their faith will be hollow and worthless. **Faith must exhibit perseverance in the teachings and application of the gospel to be genuinely active.** If this is not the case, says Paul, "you

have believed in vain." ([Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. New Testament Commentary Set, 12 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House](#)) (Bolding added)

John Calvin writes that Paul's "two expressions are very cutting. In the first, he reproves their carelessness or fickleness, because such a sudden fall was an evidence that they had never understood what had been delivered to them, or that their knowledge of it had been loose and floating, inasmuch as it had so quickly vanished. By the second, he warns them that they had needlessly and uselessly professed allegiance to Christ, if they did not hold fast this main doctrine."

The **Life Application Bible Commentary** says that "Paul took these Corinthian believers back to the basics of the message that they had welcomed and received. Because acceptance of that gospel had saved them, they should hold firmly to it. To do otherwise would mean that they had believed in vain. If they could be so easily swayed to other messages, tangents, and untruths, then perhaps what they claimed as belief was not belief at all. If the faith they thought they had could not assure them of salvation, then that faith was worthless."([Barton, B. et al: The NIV Life Application Commentary Series: Tyndale](#))

KJV Study Bible notes that "Not retaining the gospel will show the Corinthians to have "believed in vain", that is, "without effect."

Spirit Filled Life Study Bible comments succinctly that "Only persevering faith is saving faith."

Women's Study Bible comments that "To hold fast means to keep in memory and to hold firmly. It implies continued holding and lasting possession. Paul wanted the Corinthians to hold fast to the essence of the gospel—Jesus' death and Resurrection—lest their faith be "in vain," that is, without cause or purpose."

Wuest - "The **evidence of the fact that the recipient is saved**, is that he retains his profession of faith in Messiah under the stress of persecution, not going back to the 1st Covenant sacrificial system and works orientation of the Pharisees. (Heb 3:12,14). The question is not one of the **retention of salvation** based upon a persistence of faith, but of the **possession of salvation** as evidenced by a continuation of faith." (cf He 10:36; He 11:6). (Untranslatable Riches) (bolding added)

Beginning - A good beginning does not guarantee a good finish. As the king of Israel said, "One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off" (1Kings 20:11).

These faltering believers (some even apostates) began with loud confidence and profession of loyalty. And now?

Assurance (5287) (**hupostasis** from **hupo** = under + **histemi** = stand > refers to a foundation, ground on which something is built) primarily means that on which anything is based.

Hupostasis is common in the papyri in business documents as the basis or guarantee of transactions. More generally anything that settles is hypostasis (cf. curds, or the slimy bottom of stagnant water, or the deposit of moist air, or any kind of residue).

Wuest on hupostasis - Its primary meaning is "that on which anything is based." Hence it takes the sense of hope or confidence. It is the ground of hope they have in Messiah. This word is translated "title deed" in Hebrews 11:1 ("substance" A.V.). The word was used, in secular manuscripts, of the documents bearing on the ownership of a person's property, deposited in the archives, and forming the evidence of ownership. It, therefore, was used of that which formed the basis or evidence of one's assurance of the ownership of anything. Here, it refers to their faith in Messiah which is their ground of assurance that they are saved. If the faith of these Jews is a heart faith, they will persist in that faith to the end of their lives, despite the persecution which they are enduring. If that faith is a mere intellectual assent, it will not be able to stand up under this persecution, but will be repudiated by that person. The first person is saved, the second, unsaved. The phrase "the beginning of our confidence" refers to the incipient confidence they had which had not yet reached its perfection. The words "the end" could refer either to the end of their lives or to the consummation of the whole life of faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says "Now faith is the **assurance** (hupostasis) of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Faith is the solid, unshakable confidence in Christ, the Solid Rock, our support, our confidence and our Source of steadiness. Here, it refers to their faith in Messiah which is their ground of assurance that they are saved. If the faith of these Jews is a heart faith, they will persist in that faith to the end of their lives, despite the persecution which they are enduring. If that faith is a mere intellectual assent, it will not be able to stand up under this persecution, but will be repudiated by that person.

(See also [Assurance](#); [Perseverance](#); [Steadfastness](#))

The faith described in Heb 11:1 involves the most solid possible conviction, the God-given present assurance of a future reality.

Spurgeon on firm or steadfast - Not otherwise. Again I say they who do not hold on and hold out are not really partakers of Christ, but we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Those that fly to this doctrine and that, unsettled spirits, wandering stars, mere meteors of the night, these are not Christ's, but we must hold the beginning of our

faith steadfast unto the end. You are to hold fast, to hold on, and to hold out to the end; and the grace you need in order to do this is waiting for you if you will but look for it, and daily live under the power of it.

Firm (949) (**bebaios** from a root word meaning basis, base or foundation) (Click word study of bebaios) is that which is fixed, stable, sure, attested to and certified. It describes something which is unwavering and persistent. **Bebaios** pertains to that which is able to be relied on or depended on. It pertains to that which is known with certainty. It refers to something that has validity over a period of time (e.g., the promise made to Abraham remained valid to NT believers, see note Romans 4:16). Figuratively **bebaios** refers to that upon which one may build, rely or trust. **Bebaios** is something that can be relied on not to cause disappointment for it is reliable and unshifting. In practice, though not originally, **bebaios** is close to **pistos** (4103) (trustworthy, dependable, reliable, faithful)

TDNT says that **bebaios** "means "standing firm on the feet," "steadfast," "maintaining firmness or solidity," "steadfast for ..." Hence "firm" in the sense of having inner solidity. In respect of abstract things and persons bebaios thus comes to mean "steady," "sure," "reliable" "steadfast," or "certain. " (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

Bebaios has a legal sense, signifying a legal guarantee, obtained by the buyer from the seller, to be gone back upon should a third party claim the thing. Thus in classic Greek **bebaios** described a warranty deed somewhat like a guarantee one might have today on an automobile or similar product. A holy life is like a "**guarantee**" demonstrating one's calling and election to others as well as to one's self.

Even a slight lessening of confidence is a warning. We must "hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first."

Says the author,

"We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first" (v. 14).

The translation—"the confidence we had at first"—is excellent, as are several others:

"the beginning of our confidence" (KJV),

"our original confidence" (NEB),

"the trust with which we began" (Phillips)

The Israelites had no lack of confidence just after the Exodus, but it faded quickly a few days into the wilderness. (cf Marah = bitterness: Nu 15:23)

UNTIL THE END: mechri telous:

A VERY IMPORTANT TIME PHRASE!

Until the end - This means the end of your life on earth. It means you in essence cling to Christ until your last breath, no matter the persecution or cost for claiming Him as your Lord. Your persevering does not save you, because none of us could persevere if we depended on our fallen flesh! We are enabled to persevere by the Spirit of God, and thus our perseverance demonstrates that we in fact do have the Spirit of God (and that He has us)!

The saints' privilege is, they are made partakers of Christ, that is, of the Spirit, the nature, graces, righteousness, and life of Christ; they are interested in all Christ is, in all he has done, or will do.

The same spirit with which Christians set out in the ways of God, they should maintain unto the end. **Perseverance in faith** is the best evidence of the sincerity of our faith. Hearing the word often is a means of salvation, yet, if not hearkened to, it will expose more to the Divine wrath. The happiness of being partakers of Christ and his complete salvation, and the fear of God's wrath and eternal misery, should stir us up to persevere in the life of obedient faith. **Let us beware of trusting to outward privileges or professions**, and pray to be numbered with the true believers who enter heaven, when all others fail because of unbelief. As our obedience follows according to the power of our faith, so our sins and want of care are according to the prevailing of unbelief in us

John Piper asks a very important question - "What then would be the conclusion **if we do not hold fast to our assurance?** The answer is not that you stop being a partaker of Christ, but that **you had never become a partaker of Christ**. Read it carefully: "We have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast to our assurance." And so "If we do not hold fast to our confession then we have not become partakers of Christ." ([Eternal Security Is a Community Project - Desiring God](#)) (Bolding added)

Spurgeon on Perseverance - 'A poor woman had a supply of coal laid at her door by a charitable neighbour. A very little girl came out with a small fire-shovel, and began to take up a shovelful at a time, and carry it to a sort of bin in the cellar. I said to the child, 'Do you expect to get all that coal in with that little shovel?' She was quite confused at my question, but her answer was very striking, 'Yes, sir, if I work long enough.' Humble worker, make up for your want of ability by abundant continuance in well-doing, and your life-work will not be trivial. The repetition of small efforts will effect more than the occasional use of great talents.

Look Back - What was wrong with the ancient Israelites? Why did they have such trouble trusting God? In Hebrews 3, we're reminded that they heard God's promise yet refused to believe. I think I know why—we have the same problem today.

God provided for the people on their desert march. They would be satisfied and happy for a while, but then a new crisis would arise. They would stare ahead at their wall of trouble, become frightened, and lose faith.

Before Moses went up the mountain to get instructions from God, the Israelites had recently defeated the Amalekites. Things were going fine. But when Moses stayed on the mountain too long, the people panicked.

Instead of looking back and recalling that God could be trusted, they looked ahead and saw nothing but the possibility of a leaderless future. So they sought to create "gods that shall go before us" (Exodus 32:1). Their trust was blocked by a fear of the future when it could've been solidified with a simple look back at God's deliverance.

Likewise, our obstacles appear huge. We need to look back and reassure ourselves by recalling what God has already done on our behalf. That backward look can give us forward confidence. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I have learned to love my Savior,
And I trust Him more each day;
For no matter what the trial,
He will always be my stay.
—Hess

Fear hinders faith, but trust kindles confidence.

Hebrews 3:15 [while](#) it is [said](#), "[TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE](#), DO NOT [HARDEN](#) YOUR [HEARTS](#), AS [WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME](#)." ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: en to legesthai (PPN) Semeron ean tes phones autou akousete (2PAAS) Me sklerunete (2PAAS) tas kardias humon hos en to parapikrasmo (NMSD)

Amplified: Then while it is [still] called Today, if you would hear His voice and when you hear it, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion [in the desert, when the people provoked and irritated and embittered God against them]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

NET: As it says, "Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion ([NET Bible](#))

NLT: Remember what it says: "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled." ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: These words are still being said for our ears to hear: 'Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion'. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: While it is being said, Today, if His voice you will hear, stop hardening your hearts as in the rebellion. For who, having heard, rebelled? ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."

WHILE IT IS SAID TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE: Semeron ean tes phones autou akousete (2PAAS)

- **Today** in Hebrews - Heb 1:5 Heb 3:7 Heb 3:13 Heb 3:15 Heb 4:7 Heb 5:5 Heb 13:8
- He 3:7,8 10:38,29

Wuest - The inspired writer warns against hardening the heart in Heb 3:13, and now in this verse exhorts against it. He uses the unbelieving generation in the wilderness as an example, which at the borders of Canaan refused to follow Caleb and Joshua into the Promised Land, but chose to take the advice of the others. In the last analysis it was lack of faith in God and His power to give them victory over the giants. This is the provocation spoken of.

The idea of **hearing** is a key idea in Hebrews...

Hebrews 2:1 (note) For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what **we have heard**, lest we drift away from it.

Hebrews 3:7 (note) Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU **HEAR** HIS VOICE, & DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS

Hebrews 3:15 (note) while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU **HEAR** HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."

Hebrews 4:7 (note) He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU **HEAR** HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."

Hebrews 5:9 (note) And having been made perfect, He became to all those who **obey** (literally "**hear under**", listen attentively **hupakouo** = hupo + akouo) Him the source of eternal salvation,

Hebrews 5:11 (note) Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of **hearing**.

Hebrews 11:8 (note) By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed (literally "**hear under**", listen attentively **hupakouo** = hupo + akouo) by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME: Me sklerunete (2PAAS) tas kardias humon hos en to parapikrasmo:

A SOLEMN EXHORTATION

Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me - What does a hard heart do? It provokes the living God! Woe! **They** refers to the OT Israelites. **Your** refers to the NT Israelites (Hebrews) who were in dire danger of hardening their hearts like their OT ancestors, who also heard but refused to obey. How do you harden your heart and provoke God? You hear His glorious truth and you reject/refuse it! Notice there is hearing and there is hearing! One can hear audible sound waves striking against your ear drums, but it is only those audible sound waves that "strike against your heart" and are obeyed (only possible in the power of the Spirit) that are acceptable and pleasing to God! Not only that, even worse is yet to come because to **hear** and not **do** (see this repeated spiritual truth in Lk 6:46-48+, Lk 8:21+, Lk 11:28+, Jn 3:36+, Acts 6:7+, 2Th 1:8-9+ Heb 3:18,19+ James 1:22+ Mt 7:21-25+, Mt 12:48-50+, Joh 13:17) sadly will result in the hardened hearer suffering an even greater degree of eternal punishment in Hell! (cf Mt 11:22-24+, Luke 10:10-15+)

THOUGHT - Have you sat in church for months, years, even decades, and repeatedly heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ and yet you remain deluded (remember if you are deceived, by definition you do not even realize you are deceived!), thinking that because you have heard the Truth (and/or are attending church on Sunday), that you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven when you breathe your final breath on earth? Please do not be deceived or you will regret it forever and ever. Amen. And do not be deceived by the false teaching that you can pray a prayer to ask Jesus into your heart which guarantees that you have a "fire insurance policy" and insures you will not enter the eternal flames of Hell. While **faith in Jesus alone saves** a soul, faith that truly saves is not alone, but shows itself to be genuine by one's subsequent behavior, not perfection but certainly general direction. There is a lie in some evangelical circles that you can "believe" in Jesus at some point in your life and live the remainder of your life in sin and godless behavior and still expect to go to Heaven when you die. You just forfeit your rewards! This is a lie from the pit of Hell!

Harden (4645) (**skleruno** from **skleros** = hard, dried up, stiff) means to make hard or stiff and figuratively to render stubborn.

The Greek construction of **Harden** with a negative particle ("me sklerunete") = forbids the continuance of an action already going on. The largely Hebrew readers of this epistle were **already hardening** their hearts just like their forefathers had done. The writer draws their attention to this tragic example which should have cut his readers to the quick. He reminds them of what happened to their ancestors who kept hardening their hearts... they died in the wilderness, most of them restless not only in this life but in the life to come!

Heart (2588)(**kardia** [word study]) in the NT does not refer to the physical organ that pumps blood but always refers (figuratively) to the seat and center of human life. The **heart** is the center of one's personality, and as such it controls one's intellect, emotions, and will. If one has a believing heart, such a heart is the wellspring of this person's spiritual life. You do what you do because you believe what you believe in your heart. As Jesus taught "the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Mt 12:34). **What fills your heart as you read these notes? You can know by what has come out of your mouth over the past few days. Remember that "the good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good (agathos)"** (Luke 6:45).

The **heart** is a key word in Hebrews 3-4 - Heb 3:8, 10, 12, 14 Heb 4:7, 12 - Six of the ten uses are in these two chapters! Why would this be the case? Other uses = Heb 8:10, 10:16, 10:22, 13:9.

Spurgeon - Twice over we are warned of this, to avoid hardness of heart. God save us from ossification of heart, petrification of heart, till we get a heart of love or a heart of stone—may God save us from this. The hardening of a tender conscience is a gradual process, something like the covering of a pond with ice on a frosty night. At first you can scarcely see that freezing is going on at all. There are certain signs that a thoroughly practiced eye may be able to detect as portents of ice, but most of us would see nothing. By and by, there is ice, but it would scarcely support a pin. If you should place a needle on it ever so gently, it would fall through. In due time you perceive a thin coating that might sustain a pebble. Soon a child trips merrily over it, and if old winter holds his court long enough, it may be that a loaded wagon may be driven over the frozen lake, or a whole army may march without fear across the stream. There may be no rapid hardening at any one moment, and yet the freezing is complete enough in the end. Apostates and great backsliders do not reach their worst at one bound. The descent to hell is sometimes a precipice, but far more often a smooth and gentle slope.

Compare Paul's explanation of how a **remnant** (see note) came to be in (Ro 11:7ff-note). Israel had seen great miracles few human eyes would ever be privileged to see and they had heard great Spirit filled prophets crying out with words of warning and hope and they had repeatedly turned their back to God's outstretched hand! (Ro 10:21-note).

A bitter provocation, exasperation (Heb 3:8 3:15 4:7 Ps 95:7,8). *PROVOKING GOD* Nu 14:11,23 16:30 Dt 9:7 31:20 Ezra 5:12 Ps 78:40,56 106:7 Isa 3:8 Ezek 8:3 Heb 3:16

Let Go! - A 14-year-old North Carolina boy refused to stop playing his Nintendo Game Boy during school hours. The principal was called in and he still refused to stop. When the school liaison officer tried to search him, the teen kicked and punched him. The police were summoned, yet the boy adamantly resisted. Only after the officers gave him two shocks from a Taser gun were they able to remove the toy from him. He was uninjured, but one officer was bitten by the boy.

How can someone be so obstinate! Consider Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to let God's people go despite numerous plagues (Exodus 5-9). Only after the seventh plague did Pharaoh begin to relent (9:27-28).

Pharaoh was foolish to harden his heart against God. Yet look at who hardened their hearts in the wilderness. Hebrews 3:15-16 says, "If you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?" Even those who had seen God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt rebelled against Him!

Today, let us ponder whether God is speaking to us. Could it be that we are clinging to some "toy" and refusing to let Him be Lord of our lives? —Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, help us when we don't know what to do.
Help us most of all when we know what to do but don't want to do it.
May it never be said that we cling tightly to what displeases You. Amen.

**God must rule our hearts
if our feet are to walk His way.**