

Hebrews Bible study
Wednesday, April 29, 2020
Hebrews 3:14-19

We are still in an exposition of Psalm 95:7-11 stressing that Christ is greater than Moses. There is a continual warning against unbelief and disobedience. There is a continual image of the way the people hardened their hearts and sinned in the wilderness.

Hebrews 3:14-19:

¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, ¹⁵ while it is said,

*“Today if you hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.”*

¹⁶ For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Verse by verse:

Verse 14:

- This verse is very much comparable to verse 6. “We are partakers with Christ” (verse 14). “We are His house” (verse 6). There is an added phrase in each verse. There is a conditional clause:
 - verse 6: “**If** we hold onto our courage and the hope of which we boast.”
 - Verse 14: “**If** we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.”
 - both of these verses seem to be challenging the believers to persevere in the faith.
 - It appears by verse 14 that at one time the people had confidence in Christ.
- What does it mean to share in Christ? That is a powerful statement. Earlier in verse 6 the text said that Christ is the Son over God’s house. In verse 4 the text said that God is the builder of everything. Verse 3 implied that Jesus is the builder. Knowing what we know from John 1:1-17 and Col 3:15-19 there are major implications to the idea of sharing with Christ.
 - →But we don’t share with Christ unless we hold firmly until the end.

IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

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The psalm states that God's people could be cut off from the covenant if they refused to heed it; thus the writer warns his readers that they become sharers in Christ's kingdom (2:5–16) **only if they persevere to the end.**¹

The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

3:14. *The statement, **we have come to share in Christ** might be more literally rendered, "we are partners with the Christ." The word "the" found in the original probably gives to "Christ" the sense of "the Messiah." In the word "partners" the reader meets again the Greek *metochoi*, used in 1:9 and 3:1 of the "companions" of the messianic King. Once again, the writer reverted to the supreme privilege of being among the "many sons" whom God is bringing to the glory of shared dominion over the created order which Christ is destined to rule. But again too, like the privilege of serving in the priestly house (v. 6), this role is contingent on continuing fidelity: **if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first.** In this connection, Revelation 2:26-27 comes readily to mind: "To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—he will rule them with an iron scepter."²*

ESV Study Note:

Heb. 3:14 *For we have come to share in Christ.* The evidence of the Christian truly partaking of Christ's salvation involves endurance **to the end**. The condition (**if indeed**) has been understood in various ways. Some have argued that the condition ("if") indicates that true Christians can lose their salvation. Scripture is clear, however, that true believers cannot lose their salvation, as evidenced, e.g., by [John 10:27–29](#) ("no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand"), [Eph. 1:4](#) ("he chose us in him before the foundation of the world"), and many other Scripture passages (e.g., [John 6:39–40](#); [Rom. 8:35, 38–39](#); [Phil. 1:6](#); [1 Pet. 1:3–5](#)). **Hebrews 3:14** should be understood in connection with [v. 13](#), as is indicated by the linking word "for" (Gk. *gar*). That is, [v. 14](#) is linked to the exhortation not to become hardened (in unbelief and sin). Thus the logic of the argument is that those who are hardened or who become

Christ's ***Christ**. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term for "Messiah." Some Gentile readers, unfamiliar with the Jewish sense of the term, may have taken it merely as Jesus' surname, a usage that became more common over time.

kingdom ***Kingdom**. This term means "rule," "reign" or "authority" (not a king's people or land, as connotations of the English term could imply). Jewish people recognized that God rules the universe now, but they prayed for the day when he would rule the world unchallenged by idolatry and disobedience. The coming of this future aspect of God's reign was generally associated with the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Because Jesus came and will come again, Christians believe that the kingdom has been inaugurated but awaits consummation or completion. "Kingdom of heaven" is another way (Matthew's usual way) of saying "kingdom of God." "Heaven" was a standard Jewish way of saying "God" (as in Lk 15:21).

¹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 3:14). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

²Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:787). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

*hardened (v. 13) give outward evidence that they are not (and never have been) genuine believers who “share in Christ,” because genuine believers do not become hardened; instead they persevere—that is, they **hold** on to their **original confidence** firm to the end. Of course, Scripture also encourages believers to pray for and seek to bring back any who have fallen away (James 5:20; 1 John 5:16), in the hope that they will turn back. Still, this passage should be viewed as a sober warning—intended as a means that God uses to keep Christians resolved in faith and obedient until the end. The ongoing experience of perseverance results in “confidence” and assurance that one does in fact “share in Christ.” **This verse then provides a grave warning to everyone who claims to be saved—that is, to examine oneself carefully to be sure that one is in fact a genuine believer, because if there is no evidence of perseverance in faith and obedience, then there is real reason to doubt that such a person has ever been saved.***

Warning Passages in Hebrews

- [2:1–4](#) *how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? (v. 3).*
- [3:7–18](#) *do not harden your hearts. ... Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God (vv. 8–13).*
- [6:4–8](#) *For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened ... and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance (vv. 4–6).*
- [10:26–31](#) *For if we go on sinning deliberately ... there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins... . How much worse punishment ... will be deserved ... ? (vv. 26, 29).*
- [12:25–29](#) *See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape ... much less will we (v. 25).*

Verse 15:

- This is once again a quote from Psalm 95:7-11. This is also in verse 7 above. The writer is continuing to provide commentary on this passage
- There is an image the audience would understand of when the people provoked the Lord in the Old Testament.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

3:15. The renewed quotation of part of the writer’s text in Psalm 95 connects with the caution just uttered in Hebrews 3:6. The readers must hold their confidence firmly to the end and not, like the Israelites of old, **harden their hearts as . . . in the rebellion.**³

Verse 16:

³Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:787). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

3:16–19. *Following Greek argumentative practice, the writer produces a series of rhetorical questions and their obvious answers, reinforcing his point.*⁴

- The author uses a rhetorical question. All those who came out of Egypt heard and rebelled.

Verse 17:

- Another question is posed, and the author is still writing about the event in Israelite history.
- He was angry with those who sinned.
- There is a picture of corpses in the desert and that is because that is what happened. God didn't allow those people to go on.
 - →sin is contagious and it pollutes others.

Verse 18:

- The writer continues with the questions
- Those who disobeyed were never to enter God's rest
 - →God's rest: assurance of being in the will of God

Verse 19:

- Because of their unbelief these people were not able to enter God's rest

Num 14:2, 11, 30; Deut 1:35, 36, 38: passages about the unbelief about the people
Num 14:29: their corpses will fall in the wilderness; 1 Cor 10:5
Numb 14:23: they will not see the land...

John 3:18, 36; Rom 11:23; Heb 3:12 passages on unbelief
John 3:18: he who believes Him not is judged already...

⁴Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 3:16). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.