

Hebrews 3:14-19

Hebrews 3:14 (NOTES)

- "we [are] partakers of Christ, if we hold fast ... until the end" - This statement is descriptive, not prescriptive. "Descriptive" means to [describe]. "Prescriptive" means to [prescribe], as a medication is prescribed by a physician to achieve an objective, such as to cure an infection. This passage is describing a state of affairs. It is not prescribing a method of achieving an objective. The passage is not telling the reader how to become a partaker of Christ (a prescription). Rather, it is telling the reader how to identify a partaker of Christ (a description).
- Is the following passage descriptive or prescriptive? (Answers: D, P, B) Isaiah 14:12-15, Philippians 4:6-7, Deuteronomy 18:20-22
- "our assurance firm until the end" - What about those who do not persevere till the end of their lives? Are they backsliders or were they never true believers (apostate)? A backslider is a believer who falls into a pattern of unrepentant sin (e.g. - a convert who urns to or returns to the bottle, a born-again pastor who commits adultery, etc.). Backsliders are not lost forever, but they are in desperate need of discipline. The one who walks away from the faith, or who claims Christ, but never lived a changed life, is an apostate, and was never a true believer. An apostate is headed for God's wrath in hell. 1Corinthians 3:11-15, 1John 2:19-24, Jude 1:24-25, John 8:31, Matthew 7:21-23

Hebrews 3:15 (NOTES)

- "IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS" - This is being spoken to unconverted Jews who have yet to recognize Jesus as their Messiah (Christ). This is a central goal of the Book of Hebrews - to convert Jews to Christ, to get them to recognize Him from their own OT Scriptures, and shift their allegiance from trusting in the keeping of the law to trusting in Christ, who was the fulfillment of the law. If they rejected Jesus as Messiah/Christ, the sin of unbelief would relegate them to hell. They needed to work out their salvation through fear and trembling. The Gospel calls human responsibility and reason into action. Philippians 2:12

- At the time of Jesus' earthly Gospel ministry, when He was calling the Jews of His day to repentance and faith in Him, He had come to save the Jews first, then the non-Jews (Greeks/Gentiles). There was a singularly unique opportunity for the Jews of His day to either be saved in two ways (or even twice), or to commit apostasy - to fall away from God. Having been as faithful as fleshly possible as a practicing Jew, even a Bible (OT) - thumping Pharisee could have rendered it all for naught, if he rejected Jesus as Messiah, Savior, Lord. If he did so, he would move out from under the covering (kippur = atonement) offered through the observance of the law and be re-exposed to the wrath of God in hell. If he accepted Jesus as Messiah, Savior, Lord, then his mode of salvation would have shifted from the law to grace through faith (from Old Mosaic Covenant to New Covenant). While both methods pointed to and relied upon Jesus' death and resurrection for salvation, the law was a tutor leading the Jew to his Messiah by grace through faith. Matthew 15:22-24, Romans 1:16, Hebrews 10:26
- Bear in mind that there were Jews before the cross who were unregenerate that accepted/believed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah of the Jews (John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Mary Magdalene, the thief on the cross, etc.). Regeneration came 50 days after the cross at Pentecost. Recognizing Jesus as the Christ did not and still today does not require regeneration. It only requires the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 16:13-17, Acts 2
- I know people (you may, too) who believe that Jesus was the Messiah for whom the Jews had been waiting. I even know people who believe that Jesus fulfilled the OT prophecies of a coming Messiah, but they continue to reject Him as their Savior. Ask any faithful Muslim who knows his Quran.

[\(Jesus in Islam's Quran?\)](#) [And mention] when the angels said, "O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary - distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. (Sura] 3:45)

- Accepting/trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord (Son of God, Redeemer, "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," etc.), however, requires regeneration. John 1:29, 3:3, 1Corinthians 12:3

- "DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS," - As a command, this is something people could do volitionally on their own - that is, not harden their hearts against the knowledge that Jesus was their expected and prophesied Messiah. It is possible for the Holy Spirit to reveal a truth to someone who refuses to move beyond intellectual - ascent that is, agreeing that Jesus was or is the Jewish Messiah, but refusing to accept Him as Savior and Lord. One can reject the witness of the Holy Spirit if he is unregenerate and uncircumcised in heart (same thing). If the witness of the Holy Spirit is rejected, their self-hardened hearts will stand against them at the Judgment. Acts 7:51, Zechariah 7:12, Mark 3:29, Galatians 5:17, 1Corinthians 2:14
- Refusing to accept Jesus is unbelief, and unbelief is disobedience of the same type exhibited by the Jews who refused to enter the Promised Land. One might ask, "How can God find fault if I am not convinced I should trust in Jesus for forgiveness of my sins - it's God's responsibility to successfully convince me and win my heart, after all, right? Proverbs 29:1, Jude 1:5, Romans 9:19-26
- "AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME" - As a warning, this is something to be avoided. Provoking God is never a good idea. To provoke God is to stir up His wrath against oneself. The wrath of God is a terrible thing. Romans 1:18, 12:19, Hebrews 10:29-31

Hebrews 3:16 (NOTES)

- "who provoked [Him] ... all those who came out of Egypt [led] by Moses" - This regards the Jews of the Exodus from Egypt (according to Biblical chronology, March/April 1476 BC - 890 years before the Babylonians destroyed the first temple in 586 BC).

Hebrews 3:17 (NOTES)

- "With whom was He angry for forty years?" - God was angry with the Jews that refused His Promised Land - for the rest of their lives! God closed the door of repentance and grace. Their rejection of His gift of a land flowing with milk and honey in which they would be His people and He would be their God sealed their fate.

- "whose bodies fell in the wilderness" - God made Israel wander around in the wilderness until they all died. This was the sentence God passed on the Jews who committed the sin of unbelief. It was the following generation that entered the Promised Land. Remember, the Promised Land is the NT equivalent of life in Christ. He is our God; we are His people. We live on the earth, but He protects and provides for us. While we remain on the earth, we lack nothing. You could describe our NT Promise Land as our spiritual inheritance in Christ/the abundant life. Life with Him in this life, before the next life, is spiritually abundant - flowing with spiritual milk and honey - not physical things, but spiritual blessings, all of which are sufficient to sustain us till the end. Ephesians 1:3-14, John 10:10

Hebrews 3:18 (NOTES)

- To not enter God's rest is to reject the abundant life in Christ, who Himself is our rest. Matthew 11:28-30

Hebrews 3:19 (NOTES)

- The Israelites that followed Moses out of bondage in Egypt failed to take hold of God's promise of total deliverance. They only bought in halfway. They didn't go all the way. This unbelief not only cost them the abundant life with God in a land flowing with both physical and spiritual milk and honey, but it cost them their spiritual future in eternity. By refusing God's blessings in this life, they forfeited those blessings in the next life. The Book of Hebrews is the roadmap out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land, for the Jew and also for the Greek. The Israelites wanted out of bondage, but they weren't willing to trust God to deliver on His promises and see them through. If He'd had let them, they would have returned to Egypt. Numbers 14:4, Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23