

"DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS"



"For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion'" (Heb. 3:14, 15)

Hebrews is a book of exhortation which helps Christians anchor their faith securely. For these reasons we remain moored in this great book and will do so for some time.

We become partakers of Christ if we **hold** the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Jesus was not a quitter and set the pattern of steadfastness for us. Our love and devotion to Christ must **hold** firm until the end. The problem comes when the day arises where we are no longer teachable, where we will no longer *hear*, due to the hardened state of our hearts. Let us make no mistake about it; refusing to hear is paternal to rebellion. Samuel told Saul in 1 Samuel 15:23 that "stubbornness" is as the sin of idolatry. Let us appreciate that the condition of the heart does matter!

The Hebrew writer quotes from Psalm 95:7, 8. The foregoing picture of this Psalm describes the people as a flock of sheep:

"For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice:" (Ps. 95:7).

These Old Testament saints were supposed to be "as sheep" and the Lord "as their shepherd." But unlike sheep, they would not heed His call and rebelled against His word. They went astray in their hearts, and this brought upon their utter rejection (Ps. 95:10). The Lord swore in His wrath that "They shall not enter My rest" (Ps. 95:11). What words of doom! What a vow devoid of grace! This devastating judgment fell from the wrath of God in heaven on His people who, although they were most familiar with His work, would simply no longer hear His voice. Again, let us appreciate that the condition of the heart *does matter*.

"Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deut. 5:29).

Let us join with David:

"My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise" (Ps. 57:7)

Next week we will keep our anchor in three questions posed from Hebrews 3:16–19.

—Steven J. Wallace

