

Together
Hebrews 3:12-14
Dr. Pierre Cannings

Introduction:

Attention:

Subject: It is primarily hortatory in nature. The situation of the original readers (3:12–14) is compared to that of the wilderness generation (3:15–19).

Scripture:

Body:

- I. Stay Together 12-13
 - a. Take Care
 - i. Be careful,” followed by the negative particle and the verb in the indicative mood, introduces a sharp warning. The writer is apprehensive that the community may falter in its response to the promise of God.
 - ii. Brethren
 1. Neither here nor anywhere else in his letter did the writer betray the slightest suspicion that his audience might contain people who were not real Christians. Instead, they were regarded as “brothers” (as here) or as “holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling” (v. 1).
 - b. Any of You
 - i. Any of You
 1. Recognizing that it is individuals who are exposed to the peril of apostasy, his pastoral concern extends to every member of the congregation (τινὶ ὑμῶν, “[even] one among you,” v 12; cf. 3:13; 4:1, 11; 6:12; 12:15).
 - ii. Unbelieving Heart
 1. Unbelieving - **unwillingness to commit oneself to another or respond positively to the other’s words or actions, *lack of belief, unbelief***
 - a. The reference to “an evil unbelieving heart” interprets the expression in v 10, “their hearts are always going astray,” which in OT terms is described as “turning away from the living God.”

- b. The reproach of unbelief is narrowly related to the tradition concerning Israel at Kadesh in the Pentateuch (Num 14:11, “How long will they refuse to believe me?”; cf. Deut 1:32; 9:28; Ps 106:24).
- c. But it should not be interpreted to suggest that the author thought the “evil unbelieving heart” already existed among the readers. As noted previously, the heart includes the entire human personality of mind, will, and emotions.
- d. In Heb 10:22, with language very similar to 3:12, the author exhorted his readers to draw near to God with a “true heart ... having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience.” Finally, the author spoke of the heart being strengthened by grace (13:9), which contrasts with a hard heart due to sin’s deceitfulness (3:13)
- e. In Num 14:9 the basic meaning of the Hebrew word is “to rebel.” The Greek noun can mean either “rebel” or “apostate,” and context must determine which is intended. Both meanings appear to be equally legitimate in the present context

iii. Falling Away

1. Falling - *withdraw and to distance oneself*

- a. The allusions to Num 14 are significant because they indicate that unbelief is not a lack of faith or trust. It is the refusal to believe God. It leads inevitably to a turning away from God in a deliberate act of rejection. The play on words ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι, “unbelief in turning away,” reinforces the fact that falling away and unbelief reflect the same disposition
- b. It recognizes that the Christian community is not immune from the recalcitrant spirit expressed by the generation in the desert.
- c. This falling away is not passive but deliberate disobedience. This is the antithesis of the spirit of those who draw near to God (see 10:22).
- d. The language and imagery of Hebrews 3 are paralleled in the other warning passages in the epistle with such verbs as *pararreō* (“drift away” in 2:1), *parapiptō* (“fall away” in 6:6), and *apostrophō* (“turn away” in 12:25). In the NT the primary meanings of the verb ἀφίστημι [*aphistēmi*] are “to (physically) depart, to be separated from” (Lk. 2:37, 4:13,

Acts 12:10, 15:38, 19:10) and “to (be) release(d)”, or “to send away” (Lk. 13:27, Acts 2:38, 22:29, 2 Cor. 12:8). Especially in the latter writings of the NT the verb is used with the specific meaning of “falling away from the faith / Lord” (Lk. 8:13) and it probably acquired the status of *terminus technicus* to describe the falling away from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim. 2:3

iv. Living God

1. This phrase corresponds to “as I live” in Num 14:21, 28. In 14:3–4 the wilderness generation was about to abandon God by faulting him for bringing them out of Egypt. According to Num 14:9, Joshua warned the people not to abandon God by disobeying his command to enter the promised rest. By analogy, the readers of Hebrews were in danger of doing the same thing, as chap. 4 makes clear. Rhetorically, the author connected the “living God” (3:12) with “the word of God is living” (4:12) to form a possible chiasm—God/living and living [word]/of God.

c. One Another

i. Encourage - **to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage**

1. Encourage

- a. The verb παρακαλεῖν covers warning and reproof as well as encouragement, with the implication that reproof should be given in a brotherly and loving way
- b. The avoidance of apostasy demands not simply individual vigilance but the constant care of each member of the community for one another (v 13). The admonition “encourage one another every day” may actually presuppose a daily gathering of the house church, which would provide the occasion for mutual encouragement
- c. One preventative against such a tendency would be a spirit of mutual concern and admonition among the Christian brotherhood. Accordingly they were to **encourage one another daily ... so that none would be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness** (v. 13). This exhortation is still completely pertinent to any local congregation at the present time, where the hardening tendencies of sin can often be counteracted by truly concerned fellow Christians

2. **One Another**

- a. The reflexive pronoun ἑαυτούς, “one another,” which is used here instead of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους,

“each other,” emphasizes the mutual responsibility that each member of the community should feel for the others

- b. Both here and throughout the epistle (4:1, 11; 10:24–25; 12:15–16; 13:1–3), the author challenged the community of readers to devote themselves to watching out for each other.

3. Day after Day

4. Called Today

- a. The quality of the day is that it is a day of promise (cf. 4:1). But it forces upon the community the same alternatives of faith and obedience or unbelief and disobedience which confronted Israel at Kadesh (Num 14:34b).
- b. “Today” is no longer the today of the past, surveyed by the psalmist in his situation, but the today of the present, which continues to be conditioned by the voice of God that speaks day after day through the Scriptures and in the gospel tradition.
- c. The urgency for encouragement and reproof is that the community of faith experiences an unresolved tension between peril and promise. The danger of deception by sin and apostasy persists so long as the moment of demand and opportunity, which is called “Today
- d. The expression **as long as it is called Today** alludes to the “Today” in Psalm 95:7 and means something like “while you still have opportunity.”
- e. The clause “as long as it is called Today” means that encouragement is to continue as long as “Today” lasts. The context does not specify this length of time, but it is to be understood as more than a single day from the context and especially from Heb 4:7.

ii. Hardened

1. Hardened

- a. The passive voice of σκληρυνθῆ, “be hardened,” is important because it indicates that sin is conceived as an agent that deceives and leads an individual to an irretrievably hopeless position. In this context ἁμαρτία, “sin,” has a specific connotation. It is the sin of refusing to obey God and to act upon his promise (Num 14:19,

2. Deceitfulness of Sin

- a. Deceitfulness - *to be seduced*

II. Hold Together v.14

a. Partakers of Christ

i. Partakers

1. 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**
2. We have come to share” translates the perfect tense of *ginomai* (“to become”) with the noun *metochos* (“partner”). The perfect tense possibly intimates a relationship begun in the past that continues in the present, but it definitely indicates the aspect of a “timeless conclusion.

ii. Hold Fast - **to adhere firmly to traditions, convictions, or beliefs, hold to, hold fast to keep confidence firm**

1. The verb *katechō* (“hold”) conveys the idea of maintaining or possessing. That which the readers are told to “hold” is the “confidence we had at first,” which refers to the readers initial faith in Christ. The word *hupostasis* (“confidence”) can also mean “trust,” “assurance,” or “steadfastness
2. The appeal to hold firmly to the basic position held at the beginning in v 14 presents the antithesis to the ἀποστῆναι, “turning away,” in v 12
3. It draws its emotional force from the disposition of Israel at Kadesh, where the people determined to elect new leadership and return to Egypt (Num 14:3–4) rather than to maintain their position and to act on the promise of God
4. firm guarantee,” also reflects business terminology. These words are used here metaphorically. The relationship between Christ and the community is conceived in the binding terms of a business partnership. The community can rely on the faithfulness of Christ (cf. 3:1–2), but they too must display “good faith.” They have been placed under obligation.
5. the assurance that the community enjoys a firm relationship with Christ is of crucial importance. It is one of the central assertions in the homily, which provides strong encouragement even as it

summons the readers to display genuine and persevering faith (cf. 3:6; 4:14

iii. Beginning of Assurance

1. Assurance - To emphasize the importance of steadfast *commitment to professed obligation*
2. Firm until the end
 - a. The readers are reminded that perseverance until the time of the actual realization of the promise and entrance into the eschatological rest prepared for the people of God is required of those who are “partners with Christ.” The community is called to expectant waiting.

III. Together Today

a. Hear My voice

- i. The fresh quotation of the opening lines of the psalm (95[LXX 94]:7b–8a) does not mark a new stage in the argument but summarizes the argument presented to that point. The recognition of the periodic sentence in vv 12–15 makes that clear
- ii. The quotation draws together the key words and concepts interpreted in vv 12–13 and serves to bring the exhortation before the community in a form that had immediate relevance for them. The response of the desert generation at Kadesh can momentarily be forgotten as the community hears the Holy Spirit warning them not to respond to God’s voice with stubborn rebelliousness
- iii. 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**
- iv. The crucial issue in v. 15 is what should be grammatically connected to *en tō legesthai* (“As has just been said”), the preceding or the following. Both are possible and commentators seem about evenly divided on the issue. If it is taken with the preceding clause, it gives the reason for what is stated. Lane (against Hofius) views it as a summary of 3:12–14. If it is taken with what follows, it is the condition whose consequence is expressed in the next verse

Conclusion

Word Studies

Unbelieving - **unwillingness to commit oneself to another or respond positively to the other's words or actions, *lack of belief, unbelief***¹

Falling – withdraw and to distance oneself

Encourage - to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage²

Hardened - to cause to be unyielding in resisting information, harden³

Deceitfulness – to be seduced

Hold Fast- to adhere firmly to traditions, convictions, or beliefs, hold to, hold fast⁴ ***to keep confidence firm***

Assurance- To emphasize the importance of steadfast *commitment to professed obligation*⁵

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 103.

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 765.

³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 930.

⁴ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 533.

⁵ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1040.

Commentary Studies

12–13 The writer has selected certain words and thoughts from the quotation that he considers appropriate to his readers and works them into his pastoral instruction. The reference to an “evil heart” that “turns away” from God (v 12), the description of the present period as “Today,” and the warning not to allow themselves “to be hardened” by sin (v 13) are interpretive links with the citation. They serve to draw the text into the experience of the hearers.

The imperative βλέπετε, “Be careful,” followed by the negative particle and the verb in the indicative mood, introduces a sharp warning. The writer is apprehensive that the community may falter in its response to the promise of God. Recognizing that it is individuals who are exposed to the peril of apostasy, his pastoral concern extends to every member of the congregation (τινὶ ὑμῶν, “[even] one among you,” v 12; cf. 3:13; 4:1, 11; 6:12; 12:15). The reference to “an evil unbelieving heart” interprets the expression in v 10, “their hearts are always going astray,” which in OT terms is described as “turning away from the living God.”

Particular importance must be attached to the term ἀπιστία, “unbelief,” because it is introduced at the opening and close of the writer’s commentary (vv 12, 19). That element was not contributed by Ps 95. The reproach of unbelief is narrowly related to the tradition concerning Israel at Kadesh in the Pentateuch (Num 14:11, “How long will they refuse to believe me?”; cf. Deut 1:32; 9:28; Ps 106:24). The description of the heart as πονηρά, “evil,” also reflects the influence of Num 14, where the term occurs twice in the expression “this *evil* congregation” (Num 14:27, 35) but nowhere else in the Pentateuch (Vanhoye, *Bib* 49 [1968] 19). The allusions to Num 14 are significant because they indicate that unbelief is not a lack of faith or trust. It is the refusal to believe God. It leads inevitably to a turning away from God in a deliberate act of rejection. The play on words ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι, “unbelief in turning away,” reinforces the fact that falling away and unbelief reflect the same disposition (cf. Hofius, *Katapausis*, 124, 131–32). The pastoral injunction in v 12 takes up the plea of Joshua and Caleb in Num 14:9, “Do not turn away from the Lord” (cf. Deut 1:28, “Your brothers turned away your heart”). It recognizes that the Christian community is not immune from the recalcitrant spirit expressed by the generation in the desert.

The avoidance of apostasy demands not simply individual vigilance but the constant care of each member of the community for one another (v 13). The admonition “encourage one another every day” may actually presuppose a daily gathering of the house church, which would provide the occasion for mutual encouragement (cf. Windisch, 31; Michel, 106). The verb παρακαλεῖν covers warning and reproof as well as encouragement, with the implication that reproof should be given in a brotherly and loving way (Forkman, *Religious Community*, 47–50). The reflexive

pronoun ἑαυτούς, “one another,” which is used here instead of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους, “each other,” emphasizes the mutual responsibility that each member of the community should feel for the others.

The urgency for encouragement and reproof is that the community of faith experiences an unresolved tension between peril and promise. The danger of deception by sin and apostasy persists so long as the moment of demand and opportunity, which is called “Today,” is valid. The initial word in the quotation from Ps 95:7b, σήμερον, “Today,” provided the writer with a catchword for bringing the biblical statement before his hearers sharply. “Today” is no longer the today of the past, surveyed by the psalmist in his situation, but the today of the present, which continues to be conditioned by the voice of God that speaks day after day through the Scriptures and in the gospel tradition. Moreover, its perspective extends from the present to the approaching parousia and judgment (“as long as ‘Today’ lasts”; cf. 9:27–28; 10:37–39). The quality of the day is that it is a day of promise (cf. 4:1). But it forces upon the community the same alternatives of faith and obedience or unbelief and disobedience which confronted Israel at Kadesh (Num 14:34b). The prospect of “being hardened by the delusive attractiveness of sin” is possible only in response to the revelation of God. The passive voice of σκληρυνθῆ, “be hardened,” is important because it indicates that sin is conceived as an agent that deceives and leads an individual to an irretrievably hopeless position. In this context ἁμαρτία, “sin,” has a specific connotation. It is the sin of refusing to obey God and to act upon his promise (Num 14:19, 34 LXX; cf. Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*, 25).

14 In the periodic sentence that extends from v 12 to v 15, the assurance that the community enjoys a firm relationship with Christ is of crucial importance. It is one of the central assertions in the homily, which provides strong encouragement even as it summons the readers to display genuine and persevering faith (cf. 3:6; 4:14). Hofius (*Katapausis* 133, 215, n. 820) has argued that μέτοχοι is an eschatological technical term, designating the companions of the heavenly hosts or of the Lord (cf. *1 Enoch* 104:6 [Greek fragment]; *Epistle of the Apostles* 19). It seems preferable to recognize that the term μέτοχοι commonly carries the nuance of “partner” in the papyri. The word βεβαίαν, “firm guarantee,” also reflects business terminology (MM 107, 406; Wikgren, “Greek Idioms,” 147). These words are used here metaphorically. The relationship between Christ and the community is conceived in the binding terms of a business partnership. The community can rely on the faithfulness of Christ (cf. 3:1–2), but they too must display “good faith.” They have been placed under obligation.

The conditional clause introduced by ἐάνπερ, “supposing that,” resumes the ἐάνπερ of 3:6 and stresses the provisional character of the relationship. The appeal to hold firmly to the basic position held at the beginning in v 14 presents the antithesis to the ἀποστῆναι, “turning away,”

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

n. note

1 Enoch Ethiopic, Slavonic, Hebrew Enoch

MM J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder, 1930)

in v 12 (Hofius, *Katapausis*, 133). It draws its emotional force from the disposition of Israel at Kadesh, where the people determined to elect new leadership and return to Egypt (Num 14:3–4) rather than to maintain their position and to act on the promise of God (cf. Vanhoye, *Bib* 49 [1968] 21). The readers are reminded that perseverance until the time of the actual realization of the promise and entrance into the eschatological rest prepared for the people of God is required of those who are “partners with Christ.” The community is called to expectant waiting.

15 The fresh quotation of the opening lines of the psalm (95[LXX 94]:7b–8a) does not mark a new stage in the argument (as argued by Hofius, *Katapausis*, 133–37) but summarizes the argument presented to that point. The recognition of the periodic sentence in vv 12–15 makes that clear. The writer desired to show the Christians addressed that what is written in the psalm has direct bearing upon their lives. The quotation draws together the key words and concepts interpreted in vv 12–13 and serves to bring the exhortation before the community in a form that had immediate relevance for them. The response of the desert generation at Kadesh can momentarily be forgotten as the community hears the Holy Spirit warning them not to respond to God’s voice with stubborn rebelliousness.⁶

3:12–13. **See to it, brothers** introduces the author’s application of his text to his Christian readership. Neither here nor anywhere else in his letter did the writer betray the slightest suspicion that his audience might contain people who were not real Christians. Instead, they were regarded as “brothers” (as here) or as “holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling” (v. 1). The widespread view that he was concerned about mere professors of the faith as over against genuine believers is not found in the text.

Each Christian brother, therefore, should be most careful to guard against a **sinful, unbelieving heart** which God’s flock in the wilderness displayed, the kind of heart **that turns**

Bib Biblica

⁶ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, vol. 47A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 86–88.

away from the living God. One preventative against such a tendency would be a spirit of mutual concern and admonition among the Christian brotherhood. Accordingly they were to **encourage one another daily ... so that none would be hardened by sin's deceitfulness** (v. 13). This exhortation is still completely pertinent to any local congregation at the present time, where the hardening tendencies of sin can often be counteracted by truly concerned fellow Christians. The expression **as long as it is called Today** alludes to the "Today" in Psalm 95:7 and means something like "while you still have opportunity."

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."

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.**⁷

3:12 The final paragraph of this chapter (3:12–19) comprises the author's application of the quotation to his readers. It is primarily hortatory in nature. The situation of the original readers (3:12–14) is compared to that of the wilderness generation (3:15–19). [The question of how v. 12](#)

⁷ Zane C. Hodges, "[Hebrews](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 787.

is related to what precedes is not easy to answer. Some say it is connected to the *dio* of 3:7⁵²⁰ and is parenthetical. Others begin a new sentence with v. 12 and see it as an application of the preceding comments.⁵²¹

The imperative “see to it” introduces an urgent warning, implying “that there is urgent cause for apprehension founded on the actual state of the case.”⁵²² But it should not be interpreted to suggest that the author thought the “evil unbelieving heart” already existed among the readers. As noted previously, the heart includes the entire human personality of mind, will, and emotions. The noun *apistia* (“unbelief”) is translated by the NIV as a participle, “unbelieving.” The genitive phrase “heart of unbelief” is, according to Delitzsch, a qualitative genitive “in the widest sense,” not the genitive of cause or the genitive of consequence.⁵²³ Westcott argued that “evil heart” should be seen closely together with “unbelieving,” which characterizes the “evil heart.”⁵²⁴ Unbelief stands in contrast to “faithfulness,” which was the glory of Moses and Christ (3:1–6). This “unbelief finds its practical issue in ‘disobedience.’”⁵²⁵ The importance of the heart for the author appears later in 8:10 and 10:10, where the Jeremiah quotation indicates that the new covenant includes a provision for a clean and established heart. In Heb 10:22, with language very similar to 3:12, the author exhorted his readers to draw near to God with a “true heart ... having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience.” Finally, the author spoke of the heart being strengthened by grace (13:9), which contrasts with a hard heart due to sin’s deceitfulness (3:13).

According to Delitzsch, the *apistia* is both the root and the fruit of *ponēra*, and we don’t have to decide between the meaning of “unbelief” or “unfaithfulness”: the word contains both meanings “which mutually involve each other.”⁵²⁶ *Mēpote* introduces a clause that can be interpreted as expressing the content of seeing: “see to it that there not be an evil unbelieving heart.”⁵²⁷ It can also be taken to indicate purpose: “Take care, brethren, [in order] that there not

⁵²⁰ E.g., Alford, “Hebrews,” 68; and Westcott, *Hebrews*, 83.

⁵²¹ So Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 46; and Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 86.

⁵²² Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, 1:173.

NIV New International Version

⁵²³ Ibid., 174. See BDF §165.

⁵²⁴ Westcott, *Hebrews*, 83.

⁵²⁵ Ibid. This phrase “evil, unbelieving heart” verbally resembles 4 Ezra 3:20–22; 4:30; 7:92.

⁵²⁶ Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, 1:174. Following Danker, DeSilva explained that in common Greek usage, the noun *pistis* (“faith”) “refers both to the responsibility accepted by another to discharge some duty or provide some service and the trust placed in that person by the one who awaits the fulfillment of the obligation” (*Perseverance in Gratitude*, 144).

⁵²⁷ So Bruce, *Hebrews*, 99–100; Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 82; and the NIV.

be” (NASB). *Mēpote* followed by the indicative implies urgent cause of apprehension founded on the actual state of the case and marks the reality and urgency of the danger.⁵²⁸ The entire construction to this point may be Semitic, as noted by many.⁵²⁹

A key phrase in v. 12 that impinges on the interpretation of the warning passages in Hebrews 6 and 10 is *en tō apostēnai*, the aorist active infinitive of *aphistēmi* (“that turns away”). Lane agreed with the NIV and translated the phrase “that turns away,” taking the infinitive in an epexegetical sense. The word carries with it the notion of movement away from a point of reference—in this case, the living God. In Acts 15:38 it means “desert.” There is little doubt that the author was thinking of Num 14:9 (LXX): *apo tou kuriou mē apostatai ginesθε*, where the very word in its nominal form is used. In Num 14:9 the basic meaning of the Hebrew word is “to rebel.” The Greek noun can mean either “rebel” or “apostate,” and context must determine which is intended. Both meanings appear to be equally legitimate in the present context. Gheorghita gave a “slight advantage” to the reading “do not become apostates.”⁵³⁰ On the other hand, Wevers

NASB New American Standard Bible

⁵²⁸ Delitzsch, *Hebrews* 1:183; and Westcott, *Hebrews*, 83.

⁵²⁹ Bruce, *Hebrews*, 145. Stephen’s similar statement, “turning back in their hearts to Egypt” (Acts 7:39), echoes Num 14.

NIV New International Version

LXX Septuagint

⁵³⁰ Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint*, 109. He stated that the case for “commit apostasy” as opposed to “rebel” is “strengthened by the Greek translation of Num 32:9 and Deut 1:28, two subsequent passages relating the particular event that took place during the encampment in Hazeroth (Num 12:16)” (110–11). He admitted that the case for the meaning “apostate” remains open to debate but concluded his discussion of this issue with the following: “Whether Num. 14:9 LXX μὴ ἀποστάται γίνεσθε ὑμεῖς should be read ‘do not become rebels’, identical with the Hebrew text, or ‘do not become apostates’, thus departing from the meaning of the Hebrew text, it is almost certain that the Author read it with the latter and not the former meaning. If the former rendering is correct, the meaning shift took place in the process of translation, if the latter, the meaning shift occurred as a result of translation. The Septuagint consequently supplied not only the lexical unit underlying the Author’s allusion to Num 14, but also a particular theological perspective on that event in Israel’s history” (111). I cannot see how Gheorghita could draw this conclusion given the evidence he himself presented.

translated it, “do not rebel against YHWH,” noting that the LXX rendering best fits the Hebrew verb.⁵³¹

The language and imagery of Hebrews 3 are paralleled in the other warning passages in the epistle with such verbs as *pararreō* (“drift away” in 2:1), *parapiptō* (“fall away” in 6:6), and *apostrephō* (“turn away” in 12:25). Gheorghita stated:

In the NT the primary meanings of the verb ἀφίστημι [*aphistēmi*] are “to (physically) depart, to be separated from” (Lk. 2:37, 4:13, Acts 12:10, 15:38, 19:10) and “to (be) release(d)”, or “to send away” (Lk. 13:27, Acts 2:38, 22:29, 2 Cor. 12:8). In addition to these frequent connotations, the verb ἀφίστημι and its cognate noun ἀποστήναι [*apostēnai*] are occasionally employed by other NT writers with the same meaning as in Hebrews. Especially in the latter writings of the NT the verb is used with the specific meaning of “falling away from the faith / Lord” (Lk. 8:13) and it probably acquired the status of *terminus technicus* to describe the falling away from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim. 2:3 [sic]).⁵³²

The semantic range of this verb in the NT is much less extensive than in the LXX, where no less than 40 different Hebrew verbs are employed.⁵³³ The phrase in Num 14:9 (LXX) is *mē apostatai ginesthe*, which translates the Hebrew *’al-timrōdû* (“do not rebel”). The Hebrew verb *mārad* (“to revolt/rebel”) and its cognate noun *mered* (“rebellion”; only in Josh 22:22)⁵³⁴ are translated by the verb *aphistēmi* or its cognates more than a dozen times in the LXX. Our author used the verb *aphistēmi* only once in this passage and did not use it again in any of the other warning passages, which argues against understanding his meaning as “apostasy” in the traditional sense of that term.

LXX Septuagint

⁵³¹ J. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 214.

⁵³² Gheorghita, *Role of the Septuagint*, 108.

LXX Septuagint

⁵³³ J. A. L. Lee contended that in the Pentateuch, the verb is used with a broad semantic range. He listed five different meanings: (1) “to cause to revolt”; (2) “stand back, aloof”; (3) “withdraw, depart” (from an activity or place); (4) “rebel, revolt”; and (5) “shrink, abstain” (*A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch*, SBLSCS 14 (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1983) 35–38.

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⁵³⁴ HALOT 2:632.

LXX Septuagint

The author warned his readers not to turn away from “the living God.” The absence of the Greek articles in this phrase focuses on God’s character and nature. Westcott translated it “from Him who is a living God” because of the anarthrous construction, and he explained that the phrase suggests “the certainty of retribution on unfaithfulness.”⁵³⁵ This phrase corresponds to “as I live” in Num 14:21, 28. In 14:3–4 the wilderness generation was about to abandon God by faulting him for bringing them out of Egypt. According to Num 14:9, Joshua warned the people not to abandon God by disobeying his command to enter the promised rest. By analogy, the readers of Hebrews were in danger of doing the same thing, as chap. 4 makes clear. Rhetorically, the author connected the “living God” (3:12) with “the word of God is living” (4:12) to form a possible chiasm—God/living and living [word]/of God.

Lane and the NIV take the infinitive clause *en tō apostēnai* as a comment on the unbelieving heart as one “that turns away.”⁵³⁶ Ellingworth said it expresses the possible result of the unbelieving heart: “should fall away as a result of disbelief.” His point that the danger the author fears for his readers “seems to have been a passive drift (2:1) away from faith rather than active revolt” tones down the harshness of the term and tends to interpret the infinitive in light of 2:1 rather than vice versa.⁵³⁷ Hughes interpreted the phrase to mean “a heart that is evil because it is unbelieving.” Following Aquinas, Hughes correctly explained that this is not a case of a heart that has not yet come to belief, but a heart that departs from belief.⁵³⁸

This falling away is not passive but deliberate disobedience. This is the antithesis of the spirit of those who draw near to God (see 10:22). Peter referred to those who have “left the straight way and wandered off” (2 Pet 2:15). He went on to say about them that “if they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning” (2 Pet 2:20).⁵³⁹ The author used *apostēnai* only this once in the entire book, which leads to a crucial question: If

⁵³⁵ Westcott, *Hebrews*, 83. The phrase is common in the LXX and the NT and occurs several times in Hebrews (9:14; 10:31; 12:22).

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⁵³⁶ See Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 82; and the NIV.

⁵³⁷ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 222. Attridge correctly stated that passive disbelief is not only what the author has in mind in light of his use of “disobedience” in the following verses (*Hebrews*, 116). Ellingworth is correct that the phrase “cannot be pressed to imply a return to paganism.”

⁵³⁸ Hughes, *Hebrews*, 145. Koester is correct when he noted: “The explanatory comment in 3:12b shows that the unbelieving heart is not primarily one that has never come to belief, but a heart that abandons the God it has known” (*Hebrews*, 258).

⁵³⁹ Cf. Luke 8:13; Jer 10:5–10. There is a similar use of this word in Shepherd of Hermas 2.3.2: “you are saved by not having fallen away [ἀποστῆναι] from the living God.”

apistia and *apeithēs* are synonyms for *apostēnai*, then is apostasy in the usual theological sense what the author had in mind? It is highly unlikely that the theological sense of the term is what the author intended.

These verses contain an important aspect of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament. The author's reference to the failure of the exodus generation as a warning for his readers is an example of Paul's statement in 1 Cor 10:6–11 that Old Testament events are written as warnings for the church.

3:13 Verse 13 parallels v. 12 with another imperative, “encourage one another,” but with a positive focus signaled by the adversative conjunction *alla* (“but”) to balance out the warning. The contrast highlights the command. This encouragement probably includes within it an element of warning as well as reproof with the present tense implying ongoing encouragement.⁵⁴⁰ Virtually the same statement is made again in Heb 10:25. The use of the pronoun “one another” is reciprocal rather than the reflexive (“encourage yourselves”). The inclusion of *hekastēn* with “day” adds emphasis to the statement and has both a temporal and distributive meaning. This statement and 10:25 may indicate that the readers met together daily.

Both here and throughout the epistle (4:1, 11; 10:24–25; 12:15–16; 13:1–3), the author challenged the community of readers to devote themselves to watching out for each other. Collective responsibility was the order of the day for the author. The warnings were addressed to the entire community, but there is a double reference in vv. 12–13 to individual members. Ellingworth says this illustrates the author's conviction, expressly stated in 12:15, that it only takes one unbelieving member to corrupt the entire community.⁵⁴¹ If the individual is left alone, the author would have agreed with R. Robinson when he wrote, “Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.”⁵⁴² The quotation in v. 8a uses the second person plural, and the author retained it in v. 12 and v. 13. Interestingly, beginning with v. 14 and continuing through the end of this entire section (4:13) and into the opening paragraph of the next major section (4:14–16), all the exhortations are “we” forms. Ellingworth correctly observed that the change is not merely stylistic but integral to the argument as developed in Hebrews 4.⁵⁴³

The clause “as long as it is called Today” means that encouragement is to continue as long as “Today” lasts. The context does not specify this length of time, but it is to be understood as more than a single day from the context and especially from Heb 4:7. It could refer to the second

⁵⁴⁰ On παρακαλέω, its meaning and usage, consult C. Bejerkelund's thorough study of the word as it is used in the Pauline Letters (*Parakalō: Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalō-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen* in *Bibliotheca Theologica Norvegica* 1 [Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967]). A chiasm occurs in v. 13: “encourage” (παρακαλεῖτε) one another each “day” (ἡμέραν), as long as “Today” (Σήμερον) it is “called” (καλεῖται).

⁵⁴¹ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 221.

⁵⁴² From the hymn “Come Thy Fount of Every Blessing,” by R. Robinson, a Baptist pastor in Cambridge in the eighteenth century.

⁵⁴³ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 221.

coming of Christ;⁵⁴⁴ it could be taken in a more generic sense as referring to the time while there is still opportunity to hear God speaking. Whatever the exact meaning, a sense of urgency is indicated since it is obvious that “Today” will not last indefinitely. The Greek definite article precedes the word “Today,” which signals one of three things: (1) the word “Today” itself;⁵⁴⁵ (2) specifying the today as “this today”; and (3) as a reference to the entire quotation introduced by “Today.”⁵⁴⁶ The differences between these three options are negligible for interpretation.

The *hina* (“so that”) clause expresses the purpose for the mutual encouragement. The position of the phrase “of you” is emphatic. The aorist passive subjunctive of *sklēruno* (“may be hardened”) has the passive voice of permission, “to let oneself be hardened.” The passive voice may have the force of the middle voice, “they hardened themselves.” Hughes took the subjunctive as indicating that the hardening had not yet occurred.⁵⁴⁷ The phrase “deceitfulness of sin” personifies sin as a power. Most take the genitive here as subjective; it is sin that deceives.⁵⁴⁸

There is a certain lack of specificity among the terms the author used in these verses. Theologically it is reading too much into the words “sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God” to interpret it in the sense of apostasy as do many interpreters, for the context does not define what the author intended. Taking the Greek term *apostēnai* as it is used here and burdening it with the theological baggage of apostasy is premature. No doubt, many commentators, aware of what comes in Hebrews 6 and 10, are willing to label the term with the meaning of apostasy and interpret it either in an Arminian sense as the loss of salvation, or in a more Calvinistic sense (e.g., John Owen), as describing one who was never truly converted in the first place. It should not be overlooked that the word *apostēnai* does not occur in either Hebrews 6 or 10. One wonders why it would not be used there if the author had apostasy in mind since the warnings in those two chapters are more severe than the warning in chap. 3. It is entirely possible that the author did not think about apostasy in the traditional theological sense of the term. Rather, he probably used the word to describe disobedience that incurs God’s judgment in

⁵⁴⁴ So argued by Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 224, and others.

⁵⁴⁵ So Alford, “Hebrews,” 80; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 251.

⁵⁴⁶ So Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, 110.

⁵⁴⁷ Hughes made this point because of the author’s use of the aorist subjunctive and not the present subjunctive (*Hebrews*, 148).

⁵⁴⁸ Ellingworth said it is probably objective, but by the translation he gave, “sin deceives” (*Hebrews*, 225), he apparently meant to say “subjective.” Other options are qualitative—“sinful deception”; epexegetical—“deception, which is sin”; and ablative (genitive) of source, as Alford took it (“Hebrews,” 69). The concept of sin expressed in Numbers 14 involves distrust towards God’s promises and failure to obey God by trusting those promises. This is a key point for the author of Hebrews. His notion of “sin” throughout the epistle is connected to disbelief and disobedience, as in Heb 11:24–26.

line with what happened in Numbers 14. In Num 14:20 the text explicitly says that God had “forgiven” the people in accordance with Moses’ intercessory prayer. Does this mean that the exodus generation had committed final apostasy against God? Apparently not, since God provided for them and protected them for the next 38 years during their desert experience. In fact, nowhere in Numbers 14 did Moses explicitly mention the irrevocability of the loss of the wilderness generation.⁵⁴⁹ What the people lost was the opportunity to enter the Promised Land, not their covenant status as the people of God. Based on what the author said in Heb 3:12–13, one may infer that apostasy is in view. But it must be admitted that this is an inference since it is not stated directly in the text, and it is not at all certain that such is implied in the text. It is better to interpret it broadly as distrust, disobedience, or disloyalty, and not attempt to define the exact scope of the warning.⁵⁵⁰

3:14 Introduced by *gar* (untranslated in the NIV), this verse provides the grounds for the warning of 3:12. It may refer back to 3:6, repeating the warning found there, which is the subject of the command in 3:13.⁵⁵¹ “We have come to share” translates the perfect tense of *ginomai* (“to become”) with the noun *metochos* (“partner”). The perfect tense possibly intimates a relationship begun in the past that continues in the present, but it definitely indicates the aspect of a “timeless conclusion.”⁵⁵²

The two nouns in the construction *metochoi tou Christou* (“partakers of Christ”) can be construed in more than one way. It may indicate having a personal interest in Christ,⁵⁵³ but this seems too generic for the context. Many take the phrase to mean that believers are partners with Christ, reflecting the root meaning of the Greek word *metochos*.⁵⁵⁴ Others interpret the genitive *Christou* as an objective genitive, meaning that Christ is the object of partaking in the

⁵⁴⁹ Duly noted by DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 146.

⁵⁵⁰ A caution wisely given by Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 221–22.

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⁵⁵¹ So Dods, “Hebrews,” 276–77.

⁵⁵² Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 269.

⁵⁵³ Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 47.

⁵⁵⁴ So Dods, “Hebrews,” 277; and Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 87. See NRSV and the NET Bible for the translation “partners.” Bateman took the phrase “we have become partners with Christ” to imply “that the community takes part in activities and experiences with King Jesus. The added presence of βεβαίος with μέτοχος would appear to emphasize an associate ‘partnership’ with Christ in a legal sense, one that is similar to a business relationship” (“Introducing the Warning Passages in Hebrews: A Contextual Orientation,” in *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, ed. H. W. Bateman [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007], 49).

sense of “we participate in Christ.”⁵⁵⁵ A combination of the latter two interpretations gets nearest the mark.

Eanper introduces a conditional clause, and “if” is a bit weak for this compound particle. A better rendering would be “if indeed.”⁵⁵⁶ The word is stronger than the usual conditional particles *ei* and *ean*. Ellingworth treated the condition as an open one, implying the possibility of not fulfilling the condition.⁵⁵⁷ However, speaking in reference to the conditional statements in Heb 3:6 and 3:14, Fanning stated:

Careful attention to the wording shows that these lines do not cite what *will* be true if they hold on, but what is *already* true of them, and which is to be evidenced by their endurance through temptation. The writer asserted that their continuance in faith will demonstrate that they *are* (present tense in Gk.) members of God’s household, not that it will make it so in the future. Holding on to their confidence will reveal the reality they already *have* come to share (perfect tense) in Christ, not what they will share.... The warnings about falling away and exhortations to endure are designed to make this point.⁵⁵⁸

The verb *katechō* (“hold”) conveys the idea of maintaining or possessing. That which the readers are told to “hold” is the “confidence we had at first,” which refers to the readers initial faith in Christ. The word *hupostasis* (“confidence”) can also mean “trust,” “assurance,” or “steadfastness.” Up to and including the time of the Reformation, the word was usually taken here in a philosophical/theological sense as in Heb 1:3. But since the nineteenth century it is understood here as “firm confidence,” a meaning that builds etymologically from the root of the word as that which “stands under something” as a foundation.⁵⁵⁹ This is followed by the adjective *bebaios* (“firmly”). The believer is to hold firmly “till the end,” which the author did not explain. It could refer to the end of a person’s life, the end of the age, the return of Christ, or as Lane took it, entrance into God’s final rest, linking this statement with “rest” in v. 18.⁵⁶⁰ The almost identical phrase in Greek occurs in Heb 6:11, where the readers are encouraged “to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.”

3:15 The crucial issue in v. 15 is what should be grammatically connected to *en tō legesthai* (“As has just been said”), the preceding or the following. Both are possible and commentators

⁵⁵⁵ So Alford, “Hebrews,” 70; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 117–18; and the NIV.

⁵⁵⁶ As in BDAG 268; and L&N 89.68. Delitzsch stated: “The ἐάνπερ ... implies that the first proposition holds true in all its extent, provided only that the second be added” (*Hebrews* 1:179).

⁵⁵⁷ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 227.

⁵⁵⁸ B. Fanning, “A Theology of Hebrews,” 410.

⁵⁵⁹ See Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, 1:178–79.

⁵⁶⁰ Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 88.

seem about evenly divided on the issue. If it is taken with the preceding clause, it gives the reason for what is stated. Lane (against Hofius) views it as a summary of 3:12–14.⁵⁶¹ If it is taken with what follows, it is the condition whose consequence is expressed in the next verse (as in the NIV)⁸

The application (vv. 12f.) opens with βλέπετε (for the classical ὁρᾶτε) μὴ ... ἔσται (as in Col 2:8 (βλέπετε μὴ ... ἔσται), the reason for the future being probably “because the verb εἰμί has no aorist, which is the tense required,” Field, *Notes on Translation of N. T.*, p. 38) ἐν τινι ὑμῶν—the same concern for individuals as in 4:11; 10:25; 12:15—καρδία ἀπιστίας (genitive of quality—a Semitism here). Ἀπιστία must mean more than “incredulity”; the assonance with ἀποστῆναι was all the more apt as ἀπιστία denoted the unbelief which issues in action, ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι—the idea as in Ezk 20:8 καὶ ἀπέστησαν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν εἰσακοῦσαι μου, though the preposition ἀπό was not needed, as may be seen, *e.g.*, in Wis 3:10 (οἱ ... τοῦ κυρίου ἀποστάντες). Our author is fond of this construction, the infinitive with a preposition. “The living God” suggests what they lose by their apostasy, and what they bring upon themselves by way of retribution (10:31), especially the latter (cp. 4:12). There is no real distinction between θεοῦ ζῶντος and τοῦ θεοῦ ζῶντος, for the article could be dropped, as in the case of θεὸς πατήρ and κύριος Ἰησοῦς, once the expression became stamped and current.

In v. 13 παρακαλεῖτε ... καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν (cp. *Test. Levi* 9:8 ἦν καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν συνετιζων με) emphasizes the keen, constant care of the community for its members, which is one feature of the epistle. In ἄχρις οὔ (elsewhere in NT with aorist or future), which is not a

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. See O. Hofius, *Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief*, WUNT 11 (Tübingen, Mohr, 1970), 133–37.

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⁸ David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 259–267.

common phrase among Attic historians and orators, ἄχρις is a Hellenistic form of ἄχρι (p¹³ M) used sometimes when a vowel followed. Σήμερον is “God’s instant men call years” (Browning), and the paronomasia in καλεῖται¹ ... παρακαλεῖτε led the writer to prefer καλεῖται to a term like κηρύσσεται. The period (see 4:7) is that during which God’s call and opportunity still hold out, and the same idea is expressed in ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι Σήμερον κτλ. (v. 15). ἐξ ὑμῶν is sufficiently emphatic as it stands, without being shifted forward before τις (B D K L d e etc. harkl Theodt. Dam.) in order to contrast ὑμεῖς with οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν (v. 9). As for ἡ ἀμαρτία, it is the sin of apostasy (12:4), which like all sin deceives men (Ro 7:11), in this case by persuading them that they will be better off if they allow themselves to abandon the exacting demands of God. The responsibility of their position is expressed in ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῇ, a passive with a middle meaning; men can harden themselves or let lower considerations harden them against the call of God. As Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* ix.) explains: ὁρᾶτε τὴν ἀπειλήν· ὁρᾶτε τὴν

p saec. iv. [α 1034] cont. 2:14–5:6; 10:8–11:13; 11:28–12:17: *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, iv. (1904) 36–48. The tendency, in 2:14–5:5, to agree with B “in the omission of unessential words and phrases ... gives the papyrus peculiar value in the later chapters, where B is deficient”; thus p 13 partially makes up for the loss of B after 9:14. Otherwise the text of the papyrus is closest to that of D.

¹³ saec. iv. [α 1034] cont. 2:14–5:6; 10:8–11:13; 11:28–12:17: *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, iv. (1904) 36–48. The tendency, in 2:14–5:5, to agree with B “in the omission of unessential words and phrases ... gives the papyrus peculiar value in the later chapters, where B is deficient”; thus p 13 partially makes up for the loss of B after 9:14. Otherwise the text of the papyrus is closest to that of D.

M saec. ix. [0121: α 1031] cont. 1:1–4:3; 12:20–13:25.

¹ The common confusion between αἰ and εἰ led to the variant καλεῖτε (AC).

B saec. iv. [03: δ 1] cont. 1:1–9:18; for remainder cp. cursive 293.

D saec. (vi.) [06: α 1026] cont. 1:1–13:20. Codex Claromontanus is a Graeco-Latin MS, whose Greek text is poorly* reproduced in the later (saec. ix.–x.) E = codex Sangermanensis. The Greek text of the latter (1:1–12:8) is therefore of no independent value (cp. Hort in WH, §§ 335–337); for its Latin text, as well as for that of F=codex Augiensis (saec. ix.), whose Greek text of Πρὸς Ἑβραίους has not been preserved, see below, p. lxix.

K saec. ix. [018:1:1].

L saec. ix. [020: α 5] cont. 1:1–13:10.

d (Latin version of D)

e (Latin version of E)

προτροπήν· ὁρᾶτε τὴν τιμὴν. τί δὴ οὖν ἔτι τὴν χάριν εἰς ὀργὴν μεταλλάσσομεν ...; μεγάλη γὰρ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ ἡ χάρις, “ἐὰν σήμερον τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκουσῶμεν”· τὸ δὲ σήμερον τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ αὖξεται τὴν ἡμέραν, ἔστ’ ἂν ἡ σήμερον ὀνομάζεται.

In v. 14 **μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ** (which is not an equivalent for the Pauline ἐν Χριστῷ, but rather means to have a personal interest in him) answers to **μέτοχοι κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου** in v. 1 and to **μετόχους πνεύματος ἁγίου** in 6:4; **γεγόναμεν** betrays the predilection of the writer for γέγονα rather than its equivalent εἶναι. Ἐάνπερ an intensive particle (for ἐάν, v. 6) **τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως** (genitive of apposition)—i.e. “our initial confidence” (the idea of 10:32)—**κατάσχωμεν** (echoing v. 6b). The misinterpretation of **ὑποστάσεως** as (Christ’s) “substance”¹ led to the addition of αὐτοῦ (A 588. 623. 1827. 1912 vg). But ὑπόστασις here as in 11:1 denotes a firm, confident conviction or resolute hope (in LXX, e.g., Ru 1:12 ἔστιν μοι ὑπόστασις τοῦ γεννηθῆναι με ἀνδρί, rendering ΠΠΠΠ, which is translated by ἐλπίς in Pr 11:7), with the associations of steadfast patience under trying discouragements. This psychological meaning was already current (cp. 2 Co 9:4 μὴ ... κατασχυνοῦμεν ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ), alongside of the physical or metaphysical. What a man bases himself on, as he confronts the future, is his ὑπόστασις, which here in sound and even (by contrast) in thought answers to ἀποσθῆναι.

It is possible to regard v. 14 as a parenthesis, and connect **ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι** (v. 15) closely with **παρακαλεῖτε** or **ἵνα μὴ ... ἁμαρτίας** (v. 13), but this is less natural; ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι (“while it is said,” as in Ps 42:4 ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι) connects easily and aptly with **κατάσχωμεν**, and vv. 14, 15 thus carry on positively the thought of v. 13, viz. that the writer and his readers are still within the sound of God’s call to his οἶκος to be πιστός.⁹

¹ Another early error was to regard it as “our substance,” so that ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς ὑποστάσεως meant faith as “the beginning of our true nature” (a view already current in Chrysostom).

A saec. v. [02: δ 4].

623 saec. xi. [α 173]

1827 saec. xiii. [α 367]

1912 saec. x.–xi. [α 1066]

vg Vulgate

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

⁹ James Moffatt, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*](#), International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1924), 46–48.

