

Hebrews 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Analysis

The warning against hardening hearts recalls Israel's rebellion at Massah and Meribah (Exodus 17, Numbers 20). The Greek 'sklērynēte' (harden) can be reflexive - don't harden yourselves. This assumes human responsibility in belief/unbelief, though Reformed theology also affirms God's sovereign grace in softening hearts. The 'provocation' (Greek 'parapikrasmou') refers to bitter rebellion against God.

Historical Context

Massah and Meribah were watershed moments where Israel tested God by demanding water. These incidents became paradigmatic examples of unbelief in Jewish tradition, used to warn subsequent generations.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What circumstances tempt you to harden your heart against God's word?

- How does remembering past instances of God's faithfulness prevent present unbelief?

Interlinear Text

μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ
not **Harden** G3588 **hearts** G2588 **your** G5216 **as** G5613 **in** G1722 G3588
 G3361 G4645 G2588 G5216 G5613 G1722 G3588

παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ
the provocation **in** G3588 **the day** G2250 **of temptation** G3986 **in** G1722 G3588
 G3894 G2596 G2250 G3986 G1722 G3588

ἐρήμῳ
the wilderness
 G2048

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 28:14 (Parallel theme): Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Exodus 17:7 (Parallel theme): And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Jeremiah 7:26 (Parallel theme): Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.

Daniel 5:20 (Parallel theme): But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

Psalms 78:56 (Parallel theme): Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:

Psalms 78:18 (Parallel theme): And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

Job 9:4 (Parallel theme): He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Proverbs 29:1 (Parallel theme): He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Exodus 8:15 (Parallel theme): But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Matthew 13:15 (Parallel theme): For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

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