

the exegesis of this passage. What does Paul mean here? Consequently it would be afield to discuss, as many commentaries do, whether God hardens men judicially as a punishment for their own self-hardening, or as an expression of simple penal justice when sin has become a sin against the Holy Ghost. There are no such implications in this verse. One definite ground of hardening is given here-- *ὃν θελεῖ*, We have no right to try to soften or minimize the statement. Any theorizing as to why God chooses to harden some and not others, is foreign to the exegesis of this passage. We have simply the apostle's ringing declaration of God's liberty, untrammelled by human claims or merits, to harden whom He will. But a vital question remains before us. What does the apostle mean by *σκληρύνει*. The word is used in five other N.T. passages. Two of these are in the passive. Acts 19:9-- *ὡς δέ τινες ἐσκληρύνοντο καὶ ἠπείθουν κακολογοῦντες τὴν ὁδὸν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πλήθους,.....*; Heb.3:13--..... *ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῇ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ἀπᾶτη τῆς ἁμαρτίας*. The three active uses are in Heb.3:8; 3:15; and 4:7. All three of these are quotations of the same verse in the LXX, Ps.94:7-8 (In the Heb.and Eng.this is Ps.95:7-8):
..... Σήμερον εἰάν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ,..... The Hebrew word here for *σκληρύνητε* is *קָשַׁר* from *קָשַׁר* .*קָשַׁר* is used in the Hiphil 21 times in the O.T. In 19 of these it has reference to human beings. One of these says, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart" (Exod.7:3): one speaks of how "thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand" (Deut.2:30--the reference is to Sihon,king of Heshbon); seven times the reference is to "hardening one's neck" (2 Ki.17:14; Neh.9:16,17,29; Prov.29:1; Jer.7:26;