

“Not to be Shaken Loose in the End, Hold on to Christ!”

Scripture: Heb. 12:14-29 (vv. 25-29)

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I. Historical

The book of Hebrews was written to address the doubts of those who were second-guessing their conversion to Christianity. Paul is adamantly reminding these Christians – “You began with God’s plan of salvation, saying in effect, you believed in His word and followed His plan of salvation through the temple sacrifices then when His once-for-all final sacrifice was made in Jesus Christ, you believed”. That was God’s plan. “Do not go back on the steps you have taken!” This is the ultimate and final appeal that Jesus Christ establishes the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ (1:1-4; 9:11-14). His sacrifice takes away our sin; He is all we need to come to God today.

All these chapters thus far are affirming the qualifications of Jesus as the High Priest who has access to God – Let’s not let it slip through our fingers. He has been through weakness and testing, experienced it all, all but the sin. Take the mercy, accept the help. Let’s not intentionally go astray, we are called to be obedient to God! He, Jesus is right alongside God, he surpasses what any other priest has done – the old plan is out and the new plan is in, it’s a better covenant...its in our relationship as believers with a new heart and mind. It’s no longer sacrificing (the Old Covenant) with Jesus it is a New Covenant which is redemption from the sins committed and our inheritance is eternal, and we are perfected in Christ.

II. Biblical Background

Hebrews gives us a clear and strong argument. We don’t need sacrifices and offerings. We must continue to trust God through Jesus, going directly to the throne of grace, helping one another, encouraging each other, and spurring one another on. This kind of faith is demonstrated in Chapter 11 by giving a rollcall of all who had substance who give us a good testimony of God’s approval – they had substance, essence, proof of conviction by living righteous lives. These witnesses then, and you that are being strengthened by studying the Book of Hebrews demonstrates that we are still in the race of living holy lives. So, what is being holy! It is being like Christ and being the extreme example of

that cloud of witnesses. We must be holy because without holiness, no one will see God. Paul warns us to follow the faith heroes; walking a straight path, less you get into rough and stoney ways, become lame and be prevented from reaching the goal. If you get in the proper path, though wounded in a wrong path, your wound will be healed. Fix your eyes on Jesus! You can be holy with Jesus: (12:12-17) follow peace, follow other godly witnesses, don't let any root of bitterness spring up to trouble you and become defiled; no sexual immorality, also be careful of an Esau spirit – selling your blessing just to get by and finding no place for repentance; don't be a despiser of sacred and godly things- this is holy living! Don't be shaken by temptations and riotous living, repent and hold on to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. How better for us to know clearly if we don't study/hear the Word consistently and persistently. One thing that will not be shaken is the Kingdom of God. God's kingdom is unshakable, so let us run this race of faith. Hold on to Christ!

III. Lesson Topic: “Not to be Shaken Loose in the End, Hold on to Christ”

Scripture: Heb. 12:14-29 (vv. 25-29)

1. **Verses 12-17.** We are always exhorted/encouraged throughout Scriptures as believers to be at peace. This is found in our lesson today in full acceptance of life's discipline in the Christian experience. It is important as God's people to live as God's people! We are not to take our standards from ungodly people. “Therefore” links us to what has gone before, we are to put our best efforts forward. We don't want to be limp and weak as demonstrated by this imagery. If we are out of action, we simply must be put right! Let's not be spiritually paralyzed! We are urged to put things right and get moving. Yes, we must have consideration for the weak as Christians. The intent is to care for the defective members of the congregation, the stronger members can help them along the way. When the Christian life is in any way “out of joint”, steps should be taken to revitalize it. Sometimes people are often abrasive and rude, but this is not the way Christians should be. God help us all! We are to make every effort to be in harmony; even though we live in this world, God's standards are not the world's standards. Without this readiness as Jesus demonstrated to us, so must we be separated and holy or else no one will see God. God help us to not become alienated or estranged.

We are exhorted to renew our spiritual vitality and be careful how we live. Folks, you, and I got to work at it, this is the discipline that our Father in Heaven is trying to give. No one is exempt as our aim is to be holy! Three things are shared: 1) Don't fall from grace! He gives us so many opportunities, so let's try not to fail. 2) Guard "against bitter root" – a root that bears bitter fruit – something that can "poison" people and makes them unfit to stand before God. Bitterness has wide ranging effects and can defile "many". 3) Sexual immorality – fornication and "being godless". These are very explicit warnings informing us to not have the likes of Esau, who was interested in the here and now. Insistence on immediate gratification, i.e., bartering on something not quite worth the risk! Esau did in due time came to realize he had made a mistake. He wanted to go back but could not. He could not find a way to change what he had done. The choice was made, and it stands. We can always go back to God, but Esau could not undo his act.

2. **Verses 18-24:** These verses proceed to contrast what the Jewish and Christian ways are associated with Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. The essence here is that great privilege means great responsibility! All represented here is linked with the presence of God: fire, darkness, tempest, trumpet – all striking us as "terror in the heart". To hear the voice of God makes feel in awe and want no more to do with this astounding experience. Nothing can touch anything as awesome as this because of its holiness! Moses was especially close to God as the "called man of God" was set aside and assigned in the leadership position to hear from God from the heavenly. So, he represents "the living God" and the angels "thousands upon thousands" are references to the communion of saints, the church on earth and in heaven. This whole blessed gathering is meeting "God, the Judge of all". All of this is a spiritual understanding about the awesomeness of God's people who in the end will meet Jesus, seen here as "the mediator of a new covenant"—which came at a bloody cost. Jesus' blood speaks "a better word". His blood opens a way into the holiest for people, which is better than Abel's blood revenge! Wow, what language for us to see how awesome God is and waits for us to get it right today! We are privileged right here and now to take this interpretation and see the vision into heaven in awe! What a glimpse!

3. Verses 25-29: A KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN!

The aforementioned: “see to it that you do not refuse him who speaks”! You see earthly, material things (things that can be “shaken”) will not last forever! By contrast, God’s kingdom is unshakable, and this is an exhortation for right conduct. He is making it plain that God will not trifle with wrongdoing. The persistent person who refuses to turn around can only reckon with severe judgment. God will bring all things present to an end. Thus, we should serve him faithfully! Amen!

Hebrews chapters 1-11 gives us numerous contrasts between being Jewish and Christianity and here it contrasts the way God speaks with power! Israel of old “refused” him, which means their manner of life they rejected what God said and failed to live up to what he commanded. We have seen this time after time in the Old Testament. So, we as readers ought not to expect that we will escape far worse consequences if they/we “turn away” from him who warns us from heaven.”

Repeatedly, we are told how the earth shook (Ex. 19:18; Judg. 5:4-5; Ps. 68:8; 77:18; 114:4,7). In Haggai 2:6, the prophet foresaw a day when God would shake “not only the earth but also the heavens.” This will be a cosmic grandeur, a decisive intervention that God will make at the last time! My, oh, my, this physical creation can be shaken asunder...i.e., this shaking will separate the things that last forever from those that do not! It’s a differentiation to be made, only what cannot be shaken will remain. Earthly systems will be shaken in due time. Not so God’s kingdom! It will not be shaken in fact, but it cannot be shaken! “The kingdom” is something that Jesus talked about in his earthly ministry, this is something we “receive”. It is not earned or created by believers; it is God’s gift of grace-do not let it go, because it is by grace that we serve, that we worship, and it must be done “with reverence and awe” ...this is the greatness of God. God is not to be trifled with---he is opposed to evil-doing! Do not overlook the wrath of God, it is a consuming fire of inexorable divine love in relation to our sins...for “our God is a consuming fire!” Keep the faith, do not abandon the faith, be careful how you live, renew your spiritual vitality. Yes, be thankful, but worship, he going to rock heaven. Don’t turn your back on these heavenly warnings---that shaking means a thorough housecleaning in your soul, get rid of that junk and live holy.