

WHEN GOD SHAKES HEAVEN AND EARTH

TEXT: HEBREWS 12:25-29

Introduction:

1. This is the last of five warning passages in the book of Hebrews (cf. 2:1-3; 3:7--4:7; 6:4-6; 10:26-39).
2. I have entitled my message, "When God Shakes Heaven and Earth" (Heb. 12:26).
3. Haggai 2:20-22 says, "And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother."
4. And Haggai 2:6, 7 says, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."
5. These words were first spoken to encourage the Jewish exiles upon their return from Babylon to their ruined temple and city. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews applied Haggai's prophecy to their day.
6. These Hebrew Christians were living in the midst of a great shaking. In a few short years, the temple would once again be demolished and the city of Jerusalem would once again be up in flames.
7. FB Meyer said, "It was a time of almost universal trial. God was shaking not earth only, but also heaven. The Jewish tenure of Palestine was being shaken by the Romans, who claimed it as their conquest. The interpretation given to the Word of God by the rabbis was being shaken by the fresh light introduced through the words and life and death of Jesus. The supremacy of the Temple and its ritual was being shaken by those who taught that the true Temple was the Christian Church, and that all the Levitical sacrifices had been realized in Christ. The observance of the Sabbath was being shaken by those who wished to substitute for it the first day of the week. The first symptoms of this shaking began when Jesus commenced to teach and preach in the crowded cities of Palestine, and all people flocked about him. The successive throes became more obvious when the Jewish leaders sought to silence the Apostles and stay the onward progress of the Church. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, are full of evidence of the intensity of that revolution which must have made many godly people

tremble for the Ark of God. And the climax of all came in the fearful siege of Jerusalem, when, once and forever, the Jewish system was shattered, the Temple burned, the remaining vessels sunk in the Tiber, and the Jews were driven from the city which was absolutely essential for the performance of their religious rites. The whole New Testament is witness to the throes of one of the mightiest spiritual revolutions that ever happened; as great in the spiritual sphere as the French Revolution was in the temporal" (*The Way into the Holiest*).

I. THE SHAKING IS IN RESPONSE TO MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE

1. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (12:25). This is the fifth, and last, warning in the epistle.
2. Hebrews 1:2 says God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." To refuse to listen to the Lord Jesus Christ is a terrible sin.
3. It is insulting to God (cf. 10:29).
4. The Israelites refused to listen to God and they suffered greatly for their disobedience.
5. The LORD said in Zechariah 7:11, "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear."
6. "Therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 7:12).
7. "But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not" (Zech. 7:14).
8. God is going to shake this world for its unbelief and disobedience. What we recently saw happen in Japan is nothing compared to what's in store for this wicked world (cf. Rev. 6:12-17).
9. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is quoting Haggai 2:6, 7. God is not only going to shake this world but heaven too (cf. II Peter 3:12-14; Rev. 21:1).

II. GOD'S KINGDOM CANNOT BE SHAKEN

1. The city of Jerusalem has been shaken and destroyed many times. It will be shaken again during the coming tribulation (cf. Rev. 11:13).
2. And all of the other great cities will also be shaken (cf. Rev. 6:14).
3. Only "those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:27b).
4. "Those things which cannot be shaken" refers to God, His Word, His kingdom, the new Jerusalem, etc.
5. There is a contrast here between stability and instability, permanent versus temporary, etc.

Only One Life by C.T. Studd, missionary

Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one, Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, And stand before His Judgment seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice, Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave, And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years, Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill, living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore, When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way, Then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn, And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say 'twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

III. WHEN WE SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY WE WILL NOT BE SHAKEN (12:28, 29).

1. "Let us have grace" (12:28), means let us appropriate God's grace, let us hold fast to God's grace.
2. Many of the Hebrew Christians were wavering. Some had gone back into Judaism. A true Christian would not go back (cf. 6:9; 10:38).

3. The writer of this epistle encourages his readers to "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28).
4. Why?
5. "For our God is a consuming fire." (12:29).
6. Fire speaks of God's holiness.
7. And fire speaks of God's judgment.
8. The author of this epistle often quotes the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 4:24 says, "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."
9. HA Ironside said, "Consuming fire is holiness manifested in judgment, and God, who is light and love, must consume everything that is contrary to His will. For the believer, of course, this will mean eventually absolute conformity to Christ, when the last vestige of the flesh has been destroyed" (*Hebrews*).

CONCLUSION:

A.W. Pink said, in view of God's awful wrath, "we may have a dread of displeasing Him; in view of His majesty our hearts may be humbled; and in view of His love, we may seek to honor, please and adore Him." (*An Exposition of Hebrews*).