

Heb. 12:22-29 (WCF (9:5) “Unshakable”

For the Children: If you felt an earthquake coming, where would you hide? Under a table, in a doorway? Would you run outside? There is an “earthquake” coming, bigger than anything the world has seen: the final judgement of the world. There is only one place safe to hide to be protected from God’s holy anger at our sin: in the Lord Jesus, by faith in Him. When we do find that safety in Him, we show we are thankful by trying to honour Him in all we do, with reverence and awe at His holy majesty and grace. **Questions:** What sort of things might the Lord want to shake out of your life? What does this passage teach us about God’s heavenly Kingdom? How has the Lord Jesus given us protection for the final judgement?

Introduction:

First Point: The Shakable World

- 1) Signs of Holiness: Sin has made all man does to be “shaky.” In addition, it has brought down judgement (temporal and eternal) from the holy God. Israel rightly saw the signs of God’s holiness on Sinai as a terrifying thing for sinners. See Ex. 19:18, Ps. 68:8. They knew what this implied if they would ignore His laws, given through Moses. Yet almost immediately, Israel refused to listen to the Lord. A whole generation perished in the wilderness as a result. This, too, is a warning to those who would ignore the Word of the Lord
- 2) The Shaking to Come: For an even greater shaking is coming at the End. It was foretold in the OT, for example in Is. 2:12-22 and Hag. 2:5-7, quoted in Heb. 12:26. This cosmic upheaval began with Christ’s first coming, resulting in literal earthquakes then (Mt. 27:51, 28:2). It will be completed when He returns to collapse the whole universe (Rev. 20:11f). Then the Lord will remove all in the created world that is temporary and affected by sin – leaving only that which is “unshakable” because it is built on Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-15. The unbeliever will be entirely lost, for he builds nothing on Christ. Even believers will be affected, with the loss of all works we have not built on Christ. For as Rom. 7 points out, we have a new and an old nature that constantly war with each other, and we do not always will that which is right
- 3) The Worst Refusal: The writer therefore warns us not to refuse God when He speaks to us. He does so through His Word and Spirit. We should always heed Him “Today,” rather than putting it off (Heb. 4:7). Not just because of what we may lose, but because we want to give glory to Christ. If it is bad to refuse His law given through Moses, how much worse the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Second Point: The Unshakable Kingdom

- 1) The Unshakable City: To prevent us from despairing, we are reminded that we have come to the heavenly city (“Zion,” the New Jerusalem”) that is unshakable – in contrast to the shaking implied by Mt. Sinai. See Rev. 21-22. “You have come” by means of conversion. The verb-tense implies we have come in the past and *remain*. We are already “receiving” it (v. 28) – though we will enter more fully when we leave this life
- 2) The Unshakable Multitude: All the citizens of this Kingdom are there to stay – the myriad angels, the assembly of those who are guaranteed their inheritance as “first-born” in Christ the First-born, and the spirits of departed saints made perfect in and by Christ. The tense implies that all these have been enrolled and perfected and remain so. This means that God’s people will not be able to sin again at that point
- 3) The Unshakable Basis: The reason this stability is guaranteed is because the Ruler of this City is God, the Judge of all, whose judgements re us will stand; and the Christ, who shed His blood for us. His blood speaks of cleansing, forgiveness, peace and freedom. In contrast, Abel’s blood spoke of vengeance and curse because of sin
- 4) Gratitude and Fear: These reminders of holiness and grace should lead to the inseparable responses of gratitude and awe. This, in turn, is manifested by works of service to God that are motivated by gratitude, but carried out with due regard for His holiness. These are works done according to His Word. Too many today seek to serve God in a casual, easy-going manner, according to man’s will

Conclusion: