

Hebrews 12 (Part 4) :18–29 • A Kingdom that cannot be shaken

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We're in Hebrews chapter 12 and we're going to finish the chapter today. So let's begin with prayer, just ask the Lord to bless our time, shall we?

Heavenly Father, as we dig into the scriptures today, as we kind of look at these verses and talk about them, think about them, we trust, Lord, that your Spirit is going to move upon our heart sufficiently to open our understanding to be able to apprehend the truths that are lying here and that you want us to see today. Nourish us today from Your Word, speak words of truth, words of hope, words of life. We're looking to you to do that, Lord, and we ask it in the name of Jesus our Savior, amen.

We have made the point many times through our study of Hebrews that this letter is being written to Jews, people who were raised as Jews, who understood the Old Testament and all that went with it, the law and so forth. So, it's understandable that the writer would be leaning heavily throughout the course of this letter on Old Testament information, history, and background. But sometimes that can present a challenge for some of us who have come to Christ and may not be as familiar with the Old Testament.

But knowing the Old Testament is absolutely critical to understanding what he's trying to convey in this letter and what he's going to do here in the latter part of Hebrews chapter 12, is he's going to once again go back to comparing the old covenant with the new covenant, but he's going to do it by using the illustration of what happened when God gave the law at Mount Sinai.

How many of you guys watched the movie: the 10 Commandments? Charlton Heston, right? Cecil B. DeMille? What a great, what a classic movie. I mean, nobody's made anything close to it, I don't think, since, but it was ahead of its time. I grew up thinking that Moses looked like Charlton Heston, that's all there was to it. And it was a, it was an awesome movie. They took liberty and Hollywood license in a few spots, but, you kind of expect that to happen. But overall it was, pretty amazing, pretty amazing thing. We're going to be actually looking at the passage in Exodus without you turning there.

We're going to put it up on the screen, we're going to read through it, and then we're going to come back to Hebrews. But we're going to go back and read that passage in Exodus where God gave the law to Israel during their time in the wilderness. So you follow along as I read this aloud here, beginning in chapter 19, it says,

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord. And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever."

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

When Moses told the words of the people to the Lord, the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.” So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”

Which is basically saying no physical relations between husband and wife leading up to this coming of the Lord.

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Exodus 19:1-25 (ESV)

And the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to look and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out against them.” And Moses said to the Lord, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, ‘Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.’” And the Lord said to him, “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest he break out against them.” So Moses went down to the people and told them.

And then from Exodus chapter 20.

Exodus 20:18-21 (ESV)

Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be

before you, that you may not sin.” The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Isn't that amazing? What a crazy passage, huh? The last passage that I read to you there from Exodus 20 was really the end of that chapter. In the interim there, the part I didn't read to you was of course all of the 10 Commandments. And God spoke the 10 Commandments to the people, they heard God's speaking the 10 Commandments. That's not the way it shows, I know in the Hollywood movie, I get it. But that's what happened and they were so freaked out from hearing the voice of God, you saw what happened there.

They begged Moses to make God stop speaking. They said, “if He talks anymore, we will die.” That's how awesome that was. It's so crazy sometimes, people say to me, “I'll believe in God if He just shows up in my bedroom, I just want God to show up in my bedroom, and then I'll believe in Him.”

Give me a break, show up in your bedroom? There wouldn't be a bedroom, there wouldn't be you either. This is just one of those incredible reminders. But now that we've read that section in Exodus and we know what the Jews who were receiving this letter of course knew, we're better able now to understand what the author is going to say to them in the latter part of chapter 12.

So we're going to begin looking at it in verse 18. So if you're in Hebrews chapter 12, beginning of verse 18, it goes like this, “*For you (speaking now to believers) have not come to what may be touched, (referring to a physical mountain) a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰ For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” ²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”*” (ESV)

Can I get you to stop there for a moment? I promise we'll get through the rest of the chapter, but I want to talk a little bit about what the author is doing as he's recounting the story that we just read from Exodus 19 and a little bit there from chapter 20. He's making a point and he's making a point that he's been making throughout really the course of this entire letter, and that is the contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant. And he begins by reminding them, that they as believers are not coming to the same sort of a situation that their forefathers came to.

They're not coming to this mountain that is literally shaking, that has a fire on top of it with smoke billowing out the top, they're not hearing a trumpet sound. And by the way, that must have been crazy. I mean, I've heard some pretty crazy trumpet sounds in my life, but eventually somebody has to take a breath, this one didn't stop.

Can you imagine a trumpet blast that didn't stop and it just kept getting louder, and louder, and louder, and louder? I'd have freaked out and they did too. But can, I mean, can you even imagine, and then you think about the language that is used here as he describes the scene where the old covenant, the law is being given.

He talks about a mountain on fire, he talks about the gloom and the darkness, and he talks about the trembling of the people, and even uses the word “tempest” which refers to a storm. So, there's some kind of a storm going on and all these things that are happening. And it's just it just kind of boggles the mind to the point where when God began to speak the 10 Commandments, the people just, they couldn't bear it. And they came to Moses and said “please, please, make God stop talking, tell him to stop, we can't take it. We can't listen anymore because if we hear another word, we're going to die.”

We're painting a picture here, people. And so what is the author of Hebrews trying to convey to the people to whom he is writing? Well, he's illustrating the nature of the law. Guys, this is the nature of the law. You want to talk law? We'll talk law, let's talk about the doom, let's talk about the gloom, let's talk about the fear, let's talk about the severity of it. That's the point of what he's doing. He's reminding them of the harshness and the severity of the law. That was the lesson for anybody that was paying attention and it bothers people.

I had a note just this week from a young man who was really troubled because he was reading through the Old Testament and he was reading through the law and not just the 10 Commandments, but he was going on to various other laws. And he learned that if people violated the law of Moses, in many cases, it involved the death penalty. Even something like not keeping the Sabbath, you guys know that, right? The Sabbath is all about resting. And he was really troubled. He wrote me and he said, “pastor, you got to explain this to me. So God tells him to rest on the Sabbath, and if somebody doesn't rest on the Sabbath, instead they work, they're to be put to death.” He said, “isn't that a little harsh?”

Yeah, that's a lot of harsh, and that's exactly the point. You see the harshness of the law is an illustration, it's more than an illustration. It is a declaration to you

and to me who are reading the Bible, of just how serious the issue of sin really is. We forget that because we're under the covenant of grace and we've been walking under the kind of, under grace for a long time.

We're like, yeah, this is great, and we forget, we forget the gravity of sin. Even though we read it in the Bible, "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) We see it, we know it, but we don't really have to deal with it, you see?

And we forget. And so now we go back and we read the Old Testament where we're reminded of the severity and the gravity of disobedience, and that death is the result. And we're kind of put off a little bit, we're like, well, no, what's the deal here? Isn't God being kind of harsh? Seems like it's a little over the top to me. No, no, no, no. The wages of sin is death and it always has been. And God wanted his people under the old covenant to understand that.

This is a serious issue, this is not, we're not blowing smoke here. We're not trying to make you feel good. This is a serious issue, we're going to tell you the way it is. Breaking the law is death and God wouldn't be doing us any favors by telling us otherwise. Because the law was never meant to give us a knowledge of salvation, the law is meant to give us a knowledge of sin. That's why it boggles my mind when people want to go back to the law or they want to add the law to Christianity. It's okay, believe in Jesus and all this stuff, but you got to keep the Sabbath or you got to abide by the food laws or any number of any other Old Testament things we throw in there for good measure.

It's like, really? You want to go back to the law? You want to go back to the harshness of the law? The law is all about sin and condemnation, and that's what it really ought to do. It raises our awareness of sin and that's a really easy thing to see in the word of God, especially in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Let me show you, let's start in Romans chapter 3, verse 19. He says,

Romans 3:19 (ESV)

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, (that's the mouth of excuse, "but God, you don't understand." No every excuse is put away, every mouth is stopped) and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Romans 7:7 (ESV)

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? (No) By no means! (that's not the law that's the problem) Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.

Romans 3:20 (ESV)

...through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Well, there he just says it straight out, there it's just easy. "*Through the law comes knowledge of sin.*" So what does that knowledge of sin produce in us? Our need of a Savior, right? And that's what he goes on to say in Galatians.

Galatians 3:24 (ESV)

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ.

In other words, when we are made aware of our sinful condition, we now know, we need a savior. And so we go to Jesus and we go, "I'm lost, I am lost, and I need you, I need your forgiveness." And that leads us to Christ. So that's the purpose you see of the law. But now in contrast to that, we now look at the covenant that we are under: the covenant of grace, the covenant of God's mercy, right? Well, there's no condemnation here under the new covenant.

The Bible, in fact, paints an entirely different picture, and he illustrates that not on Mount Sinai, but with a different mountain. Look here with me at verse 22 in your Bible. He goes on and he says, "*But (and I like that because that always means we're going to change course here) you have come to Mount Zion (not Sinai, Zion) and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,*" Festal means relating to a feast or a celebration, right? So whereas, there's all this doom and gloom and fear and condemnation and fire and smoke and all this other stuff under the old covenant, we've come to rejoicing to celebration with the angels who are celebrating, right? God's goodness and grace and so forth.

And he goes on to say in verse 23, "*and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,...*" That's you by the way. Hey, put up your hand if you're a firstborn in your family. If you're first born, first kid, put it up, let me see. Yeah, quite a few of you. I wasn't, so I had to, I should put my arm down. I was the last born, I was the last of four, which of course means my mother loved me best. But, we are all firstborn in God's sight, this passage, this verse is

talking about you, it's talking about me. Look what he says here again, “²³ *and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,...*”, that's us.

Why does God refer to us as the firstborn even if you're not a firstborn? Because remember again, everything relates back to the Old Testament, that's why it's so important to know the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, a firstborn is the one who inherits the father's property, right? The firstborn. Firstborn gets the inheritance.

Doesn't matter whether you were the last born in your family, you're the first born in God's kingdom because you have an inheritance in Christ Jesus. And we are all in that sense, inheriting, and therefore firstborn. So it's incredible, this is very different from the old covenant.

And notice what he goes on to say, what else we come to, we're kind of, we're still in verse 23, “*and (we come) to God, the judge of all, (of us)*” Now this is an important statement for us to see too. The writer reminds us here, that under the new covenant, we get to come to God. And this is again, something that we take for granted, but that's why we went back and we read Exodus.

What was the message under the old covenant? Stay away, stay back, don't get close. The Arc of the Covenant, only the priest can see that, only the high priest can actually go into the Holy of Holies, you can't, don't go in there, stay back, stay away. In fact, if you start to climb the mountain, you'll be killed. That's pretty severe.

What's the message of the new covenant? “Come to me, all you who are weary, heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) Come to the throne of grace, (Hebrews 4:16) anytime, anytime, you come.” Is that a contrast? I'd say that's a pretty huge contrast. One says, “stay away,” one says “come.” It's pretty amazing.

We're still at the very end of verse 23, “*... and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,* ²⁴ *and to Jesus, (we come also to Jesus) the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel*” Stop there, what's he talking about when he refers to the blood of Abel? He's not talking about the blood that Abel spilled when he was killed by his brother. The blood of Abel refers to the sacrifice Abel brought and this is the first recorded animal sacrifice in the Bible. And the word that Abel received when he gave that sacrifice was a word of acceptance.

Remember, it says that “God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but Cain’s sacrifice, He did not accept.” (Genesis 4:4-5) So the word Abel got was, acceptance. But we're under the new covenant, which speaks a better word. The sprinkled blood of the new covenant says a better word than the blood of Abel, or the sacrifice of Abel, if you will.

It's more than just acceptance now, it's forgiveness, it's no condemnation, it's free access to God. Those are all better words that go along with the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ. So, it's a wonderful thing, he's making these contrasts here.

Verse 25 is where he then changes gears a little bit to go into another warning. He says, “*See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. ...*” And, this is a message that is given directly to the people who are the recipients of this letter. Remember what was going on. They were being tempted to move away from their faith in Christ and to put their faith back in the law as a means of righteousness before God, righteous standing.

Even though Paul clearly says in the New Testament, “no one will be declared righteous in God's sight through the law,” no one. (Galatians 2:16) And yet they were being tempted to go back to do that very thing. This author says that's rejecting Him who spoke because He who spoke said, “I am the way and the truth and the life, and no man comes to the Father except by me.” (John 14:6)

I'm it, you cannot add to me or take away from me without rejecting me because I'm it. I am the only way for you to be saved. And so, this is the warning, see that you do not refuse. Anytime we bring some kind of legalistic requirement into the equation of our salvation, we are actually rejecting God. And I don't care what that thing may be, I don't care if it's confessing your sins to a priest or taking communion or being baptized in water or receiving, as some people think, the baptism of the spirit, which they think is required for salvation or those sorts of things. It doesn't matter what it is or keeping the Sabbath or food laws or anything. Anything you add to faith in Jesus Christ is rejecting the Lord.

Yeah it's a serious issue, we are saved by grace through faith alone. This is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God least any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

If there's anything you can say, “I did this”, that's not salvation. That's not the Bible salvation. It's what He did, that's salvation. It's what Jesus did that saves us, not what you did or didn't do.

What Jesus did is He paid your penalty on the cross. That's what He did and the question is, have you accepted it? That's what makes us forgiven and saved, and that's it, that's it. He goes on in verse 25, I'm kind of in the middle of the verse there. He says, “...*For if they* (and he’s reminding them about the Israelites in the wilderness, if they) *did not escape* (he says) *when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.*”

And then he goes on to say this in verse 26, “*At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”*” And by the way, again, he's quoting their Old Testament Hebrew scriptures.

This is a quote from Haggai and I'll show it to you in a moment, but he's telling them here that God shook the earth once, and he's talking about when He gave the law. The mountain shook and quaked, and the smoke and the lightning, and the thunder and all the things that went along with it. But he says, Haggai prophesied that God is going to shake again not just the earth, but also the heavens. (Haggai 2:6)

And there's a shaking that is coming. I want you to keep reading with me in verse 27. He says, “*This phrase, “Yet once more,” (from Haggai) indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made (or created if you will)—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.*”²⁸ *Therefore* (here’s the conclusion) *let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,*”²⁹ *for our God is a consuming fire.*”

Now let me go out, let's just a little bit further with this and show you that passage from Haggai and we can read it together and it goes like this,

Haggai 2:6-7 (ESV)

For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.

And once again, the writer of Hebrews here is connecting the first shaking, which was the giving of the law with this shaking that is to come. And he says, in this second shaking, God is going to shake loose everything that can be shaken. And what he's talking about is the old order of the old creation. Because you got to understand something here, and again, this requires an Old Testament

understanding, when man sinned in the garden, which we read about in Genesis chapter 3, it was more than just man that was affected, it was the whole creation. The whole creation was affected by sin because man had been given the position of caretaker over all that God had made, and so, the whole earth was shaken and changed and corrupted by the sin of man. We call that the old order, the old creation.

And God has promised in his word that there's coming a day when all things will be shaken so that the old order falls away and that which has been made new remains. By the way, I've got good news for you. You've been made new in Christ. The Bible says, you are a new creation in Christ, right? So this final shaking is coming.

And the book of Revelation actually makes reference to it. But of course in prophecy, things are spoken of as if they've already happened, even though this is yet to happen in our sort of sense of progression, but it's in the book of Revelation. Let me show it to you, chapter 21, it says here,

Revelation 21:4 (ESV)

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, (you can throw out your Advil for, this is great. I love this last statement) for the former things have passed away. (and that's talking about the old order)

“The former things..” There's coming a day when God is going to shake everything and only that which has been made new will remain. Have you been made new? Have you been made new? If you're in Christ, you've been made new. I got little news for you, the old, the body you're in right now, that part hasn't been made new. Jesus didn't come to save that body you're in right now.

He's got a new one prepared for you, so don't worry about it. But that old one is going to have to fall away, but it's going to be a good thing actually, because you're going to be set free from that which is old and corrupted and corruptible so that the new might be put on like a new garment. Let's read the very last verse, actually, 28 and 29, the last couple of verses.

Verse 28, “*Therefore (again) let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, ...*” Guys, in the last year and almost a half, the whole earth

has been shaken, and this is just a little shaking. I got news for you, this pandemic we just went through, this is just a little, it's a little shaking. This one didn't even probably register on the richter graph of God's sort of, understanding of what it means to be shaken.

But we've been shaken and a lot of people's lives have been shaken. We've seen people's lives upset, we've seen people's livelihoods be upset, we've seen people lose loved ones. We've seen a lot of things happened in this last year and almost a half.

I've got really good news for you, as believers in Jesus, we are inheriting a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an unshakeable kingdom. I like that idea because I don't particularly like being shaken. I mean, if I had my druthers, I'd say, yeah, let's turn off the shake machine. I like stability, I'm guessing you do too, I like security and we are receiving an unshakeable kingdom. And I think some of the shakings that we go through are just probably given to remind us that there's something better coming. Otherwise we get too attached, we get too attached to this world and the things that it presents for us.

And so, every once in a while, we just need a good shaking, and God isn't going to let a good shaking pass Him by that He can't use. And He's going to use it in our lives to, to awaken us. I feel like, the world is talking about being woke, dumbest thing I've ever heard in my life. Do you know what's really interesting though? I feel like the body of Christ is starting to wake up and that's exciting because there's never been probably a greater anticipation since the first coming of Messiah, concerning the second coming of Messiah. There is an increased anticipation in the body of Christ that is recognizing that this is close.

We're close. I mean, the stage is set. I've told you before how I enjoyed reading some books from years and years ago and some of the authors from 150 years ago would talk about end times prophecies, but they had absolutely no idea how they could come to pass, no idea.

How in the world are you going to have a global financial system? How's that even possible? Well, I'll tell you because in 2021, we got all the skinny on that particular thing, we know exactly how that can happen. Those people didn't even, they read all the passages about Israel 150 years ago and you know what they, do you know what they thought about that? I guess Israel is going to be regathered as a nation. It wasn't a nation at that time, there was no Israel, we take it for granted.

1948, Israel becomes a nation, no big deal to you and me. 150 years ago, they believed it by faith alone. For us, it's a done deal. It's all set you guys, the stage is all set for the Lord to return. So, and that's one of the reasons why he goes on here at the end or in the middle, kind of, I'm in the middle of verse 28 to say, "... *and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe*"

We know, by the way, what acceptable worship is. It's to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Do you know that's what God wants? He wants you, He wants you. We're trying to give up all these things outside of us. "Lord, I'm going to give up smoking and I'm going to give up this and that, I'm not going to watch tv." No, I want your heart, I want you, I want you on the altar. But you don't have to die in that real true sense of the word.

This will be a living sacrifice because once you give yourself to me, you'll be more alive than ever. So we offer ourselves, Paul says, as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, that is our spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1) That is our acceptable act of worship, and we do it with reverence and awe. Why? Last thing he says in verse 29 is, "*for our God is a consuming fire.*"

Your Bible, if you have a different translation, may say "a devouring fire." And that last remark is again a quote from the Old Testament. And again, the readers of this letter would've known that, they would've known this is a statement right out of Deuteronomy. Let me show you Deuteronomy chapter 4,

Deuteronomy 4:24 (ESV)

For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

And that is aimed pretty much directly at the Hebrew believers that were receiving this letter at the time, because again, they were being tempted to be drawn away from Christ back to the law. And he wanted to remind them, you go back to the law, you go back to a completely different relationship with God, completely different. "Our God is a consuming fire."

And it's a warning, it's a warning for anybody that would add to the gospel or take away from it. "Our God is a consuming fire," and we need to understand that this consuming fire is not something He does, it is something He is. Do you understand, the consuming fire is part of His nature, and I say that because it is an expression of his glorious presence. The fire of His holiness is all the judgment we ever need. God's holiness is a fire and it burns whatever is not eternal, whatever is temporal, it burns it up. Just His very presence does that. Our God is a consuming fire, He doesn't just kindle a fire once in a while, it's who He is.

And what that tells us is, God's holiness must consume sin. It must, it has to, it must consume sin. God cannot abide sin, He can't do it. It's impossible because He's holy, He's other, He's righteous and pure, and He cannot abide sin. The wages of sin is death and so what did God do? He sent His only Son to take your penalty and my penalty on Himself so that the wrath of God might be spent on Him instead of us.

And I got to tell you, that's the best offer I've had all day. How about you? I can't imagine why someone would reject the offer of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. I mean, it's so simple. It's like, all right, here's the deal, the wages of sin is death, right? We've all sinned, we're all subject, we're all condemned, we're dead.

But God has made a way so that you could live, and He did it by sending His Son to take your penalty, to bear it on the cross, to consume the wrath of God for you. Now, if you just embrace what He did for you on the cross and receive that, you can be saved. Good grief, why wouldn't you take that? What would cause someone to go, no, I don't think so. I think I would rather face the wrath of God on my own, thank you very much. I mean, what kind of a dork minded thought processes that, right? How dumb. No, I'll take the free gift, thank you very much. You're going to forgive me as I put my faith in you and your finished work on the cross. Yes, I'll take that. Why? Because my God is a consuming fire, right.

And that's how we know that when we stand before God on that day, after all else has been burned up, we know that we'll still be standing. We know that, because our sin has already been consumed for us in the person of His Son on the cross.

I love what Jesus said on the cross when He said, "it is finished." (John 19:30) Because He made a powerful declaration that what He came to do on the cross was done and done completely, and nothing more needs to be done. Nothing more needs to be done. It's finished, Amen? Let's stand together. I'm glad His work is finished because I wouldn't be any good at saving myself. I tried to be good in the past and I found out I couldn't.

We're going to have people up front here to pray with you as we're heading out, so if you need prayer, we invite you to come up. Maybe somebody here has never actually accepted the free gift of salvation through Christ. While I'm closing in prayer, I would just encourage you just to, just between you and the Lord, just say, "yes, I accept that, I receive that. I'll take that free offer of

forgiveness.” That's all it takes, put your faith in Him, your confidence in Him, not in yourself, we put no confidence in ourselves.

Thank you, Father. Thank you for your love. Thank you for Your Word. Thank you for the truth of Your Word. Thank you for declaring it to us in very clear terms. Thank you, Lord, for helping us to understand the beauty of this new covenant compared to the old covenant. Thank you, Lord, for loving us so much that you sent your Son to bear our penalty, literally the wrath of God for us, that if we would but put our faith in that finished work, we will be saved. Lord, we accept it.

We accept it today by faith and we look forward to that kingdom that cannot be shaken. In Jesus' name, we pray, and all God's people said, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.