

**1. We are responsible for responding to God's voice**

We must not refuse God's voice, says our writer<sup>□1</sup>, for soon everything will be shaken and consumed except that which is obedient to God<sup>□2</sup>.

□1 12:25

□2 12:26-29

1. **We are responsible for responding to God's voice.**<sup>25</sup> See to it that you do not reject or avoid the one who is speaking. The writer puts the responsibility on us. This is something we have to do. 'See to it!' he says.

**2. The new covenant has greater responsibility in it than the old covenant**

2. **The new covenant has greater responsibility in it than the old covenant.** Refusing God's word has severe consequences. He continues: *For if they did not escape when they rejected him who warned them on earth, how much less we will escape if we turn away from the one who speaks from heaven?* This is the last word of warning in the letter; it resembles 2:1-4<sup>□1</sup>. The old covenant was largely earthly; it dealt very much with Israel, with national morality, with earthly punishments and penalties, with exclusion from the land of Israel or enjoyment of the land of Israel, with a physical tabernacle. The warnings of God that came from Sinai brought a minor earthquake in the ground. The blessings and the warnings of the gospel are altogether greater. In Israel it was possible to lose earthly blessings without losing spiritual blessings (Moses lost the privilege of walking around in the territory of Canaan, but he did not lose heavenly glory). But sinning against the gospel brings eternal consequences, not merely earthly consequences. In this world it is possible to lose the privilege of hearing God's voice; in the world to come it is possible to lose inheritance. If believers (and our writer is **only** speaking to his believing Hebrew friends) turn away from God their loss will be great, and will persist beyond the grave.

□1 see also 3:6b-4:13; 6:3-8; 10:26-31; 10:38-39; 12:15-17

• The old was largely earthly

• Sinning against the gospel brings eternal consequences

**3. Soon everything that is unworthy will be destroyed**

3. **Soon everything that is unworthy will be destroyed.** On Mount Sinai the ground shook at the presence of God. *At that time his voice shook the earth...* But that was a pale shadow of something much greater that is yet to come. When Jesus comes in glory the entire universe will be shaking at the glory of his presence.<sup>26</sup> *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 heaven.'* The law shook the earth; the gospel shakes heaven as well! Satan was thrown down from any kind of authority in the spiritual realm. God was satisfied with the blood of his Son. Through Jesus, God reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven. The entire universe is put under the protection of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The very cosmos was shaken into a new position when Jesus died.

• The entire universe is put under the protection of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ

• It is being constantly shaken

The shaking has been going on ever since. For those who have eyes to see it is very clear that our world can never settle down. It is constantly being shaken. Just when it thinks that all is well, another shake comes! A political leader is killed. Some long-established tradition is exposed as corrupt. A bomb-blast shatters national security. Something which we think will last for ever does

not last more than a few hours! The economy collapses and fortunes are lost. The shaking is continuing!

• *When Jesus comes the shaking will grow more intense than ever!*

• *The question is: Are our lives part of what can be shaken or part of what cannot be shaken?*

**Let us hold on to grace!**

*The blood of Jesus*

1. *Protects our eternal redemption*
2. *Cleanses our conscience*
3. *Brings us to eternal reward*

• *Everything that is not of God's grace is destined to perish*

• *True Christian love cannot be shaken*

When Jesus comes the shaking will grow more intense than ever! <sup>27</sup>*Now this expression 'Yet once more' refers to the removing of what may be shaken – that is, created things – in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain firm.* Everything that is not of God will be smashed and ruined. Nature itself will come to an end and will have to be re-created in a new heavens and new earth. The question is: are our lives part of what can be shaken or part of what cannot be shaken? He who does the will of God will abide for ever. Our letter-writer knows his people are discouraged but he believes they belong to the kingdom that cannot be shaken. <sup>28</sup>*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace, through which we are worshipping God acceptably with reverence and fear.* <sup>29</sup>*For our God is a consuming fire.* <sup>1</sup>*Let brotherly love remain.*

This is his central message: **Let us hold on to grace!** (The Greek word often translated 'have' is stronger than the English word; it often means 'hold'). Let us come to the throne of grace and find more grace! When we live on grace, trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ to (i) protect our eternal redemption, (ii) cleanse our conscience and (iii) bring us to eternal reward – then we are acceptable to God. We have blemishes and imperfections still – but we are acceptable right now, in the blood of Christ! So – he says – let us hold on to grace and continue to worship God in all that we do.

The alternative is fearful. God will exterminate everything that is evil. Let us hold on to grace <sup>29</sup>*For our God is a consuming fire.* Everything that is not of God's grace is destined to perish.

It is worth reading from Hebrews 12:29 to 13:1 ignoring the chapter division! <sup>29</sup>*Our God is a consuming fire.* <sup>1</sup>*Let brotherly love remain.* Our writer has just said in 12:27 that some things 'remain' even when God is shaking the cosmos. Three verses later he says, 'Let brotherly love remain'. One of the things that cannot be shaken is true Christian love. It will stand up in the day of judgement when everything else is collapsing.



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