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v.19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words, concerning which sound those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them.

The little word "FOR" applies the LESSON OF ESAU to the readers.

From a NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVE:

"YOU HAVE NOT COME."

The author OUTLINES SEVEN STATEMENTS here.

"YOU HAVE NOT COME":

1. "TO A MOUNTAIN THAT MAY BE TOUCHED,"
2. "TO A BLAZING FIRE,"
3. "TO DARKNESS,"
4. "GLOOM,"
5. "WHIRLWIND,"
6. "TO THE BLAST OF A TRUMPET," and
7. "THE SOUND OF WORDS."

The writer is taking us back to MOUNT SINAI after the giving of the Law.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles this remaining section in chapter 12:18-29 as:

### THE FINAL WARNING ITSELF

12:18-21. Vividly the writer pictured the situation at Mount Sinai where the Old Covenant was given and its awesomeness and fearful nature were described (cf. Ex. 19:9-23; Deut. 9:8-19).

p. 811

Is this what they really want to go back to? This is what they are contemplating doing.

English says:

There is brought before us now an impressive contrast between the sternness of the Law and the benignity of God's grace. Here we see how far removed from God sinful man is in himself, and how very near man may be, through faith in Christ, in the majestic and gracious mercy of the Almighty. pp. 466-7

MacArthur says:

This passage gives a warning of something far more fear-inspiring than what any human persecution can inflict--God's judgment. Every man will be judged on one of two bases. He will either be judged by the law or by grace, by his own works or by Christ's work, by the provisions of Sinai or by the provisions of Zion. God has two sets of books. In one set are recorded the names of those who have rejected God, in the other the names of those who have accepted Him through His Son, Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:12). The saved are in the book of life, sometimes called the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 13:8). Those whose names are in this book will be judged by what Christ has done on their behalf. Because they have trusted Him in faith, they will be measured and judged by His righteousness instead of their own. Those who have not trusted Him will be measured and judged by their own righteousness, which is of no more value before God than a "filthy garment" (Isa. 64:6).

p. 410

Bruce titles verses 18-24:

THE EARTHLY SINAI AND THE HEAVENLY ZION (12:18-24)  
p. 352

Barclay titles the same section:

THE TERROR OF THE OLD AND THE GLORY OF THE NEW  
p. 211

What a SOBER REMINDER to these Jewish believers who are contemplating going back under the old and forsaking the new.

What a WARNING this provides for them as the author prepares to wrap up this wonderful epistle.

Westcott titles the section (verses 18-29):

The character and obligations of the New Covenant.

This section forms a solemn close to the main argument of the Epistle. It offers a striking picture of the characteristics of the two Covenants summed up in the words 'terror' and 'grace'; and at the same time, in harmony with the whole current of thought, it emphasises the truth that greater privileges bring greater responsibility.

12:18  
p. 409

Westcott says further:

The peril of disregarding the Christian privileges, which have been indicated in the last section, is proportioned to their greatness. Therefore the apostle says, 'Endure, advance, aim at the highest purity, cherish the loftiest view of divine things, *for ye are not come to a vision of outward awfulness, but ye are come to mount Zion*. You stand in view of heavenly glories immeasurably nobler than the terrors of Sinai. If then the people who were admitted to that revelation were charged to make very external preparation (Ex. xix. 14 f.), much more must you prepare yourselves spiritually.

p. 410

Lane says:

The arresting periodic sentence in vv 18-24 develops an extended comparison between Israel's experience at Mount Sinai and the new covenant encounter with God that takes place at Mount Zion, the city of the living God. The terrifying atmosphere that characterized the theophany at Sinai (vv 18-21) throws into bold relief the festive joy of Zion (vv 22-24).  
p. 459

Hewitt says:

The introductory *for* brings out the connection between the sanctification of Gods' people under the new covenant already mentioned in verse 14 and the sanctification of the people of Israel before they could even draw near to receive the law (Ex. xix. 10).  
p. 199

Lenski says:

In one grand sentence (v. 18-24) in which the writer draws a comparison with Judaism he presents to his readers to what they have come as Christians.  
p. 450

DeHaan says:

These Hebrew Christians were tempted to go back to the beggarly elements of the law, and place themselves under bondage to escape a little present discomfort, reproach and persecution. In order to urge them on, a contrast between the law and grace, Mount Sinai and Calvary, is now presented: . . .  
p. 180

Hughes says:

The writer addresses such thinking in verses 18-24 by contrasting where his people have come from with where they have come to and are indeed going. The contrast is between Mounts Sinai and Zion--the Old and New Covenants--terror and joy--distance and closeness.  
p. 188

Romans 3:19, 20

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Romans 8:3, 4

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

v.20 For they were not able to bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned."

THE REASON they:

"begged that no further word should be spoken to them" and

"THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO BEAR THE COMMAND"

is epitomized in the statement:

"IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED."

Exodus 19:12, 13

Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal, he shall not be permitted to live.' Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain."

James 2:10

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

Galatians 3:10

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."

v.21 And so terrible was the spectacle, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."

Pink says:

The scope and design of the whole of our passage should now be obvious to the reader. The purpose of the apostle was to show again how inferior Judaism was to Christianity. This he here does by taking us back to Sinai, where Judaism was formally instituted by the appearing of Jehovah at the giving of the law, and where the Mosaic economy was established by a covenant based thereon. All the circumstances connected with its institution were in most striking accord with the leading features and characteristics of that dispensation. At that time the nation of Israel was in a waste, howling wilderness, standing in speechless terror at the foot of the Mount. There Jehovah manifested Himself in His awful holiness and majesty, as Lawgiver and Judge; the people at a distance fenced off from Him. How profoundly thankful should Christians be that *they* belong to a much more mild and gracious order of things!  
pp. 134-5

MacArthur says:

The law is God's great mirror. When we look into it, we see ourselves as we really are--immeasurably short of God's standard of righteousness. There is not a single commandment that we have kept perfectly or can keep perfectly, in either act or attitude. The law makes no exceptions and no allowance for less than perfect obedience. The law overwhelms us, slays us. No sinner can endure Sinai. Every sinner who stands at the foot of Sinai is paralyzed with fear.  
p. 412



Kistemaker says:

The accounts recorded in Exodus 19-20 and Deuteronomy 4-5 are silent about the fear of Moses. And Moses' statement on being afraid ("I feared," Deut. 9:19) occurs partially in the context of God's anger expressed against the Israelites when they had worshiped the gold calf. Possibly the author of Hebrews had access to an oral tradition, much the same as Stephen had received the information that "Moses trembled with fear" at the sight of the burning bush (Acts 7:32). . . . So Moses trembled with fear at Mount Sinai when he saw God's majesty and glory in awesome display.  
pp. 390-91

v.22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

v.23 to a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection,

v.24 and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel.

Back in verse 18, from a NEGATIVE POINT OF VIEW, the writer says:

"For you have not come."

Now in verse 22 we have the CONTRAST, the POSITIVE:

"BUT YOU HAVE COME."

He then OUTLINES EIGHT STATEMENTS that characterize that to which we have come. "BUT YOU HAVE COME TO":

1. "MOUNT ZION,"
2. "THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM,"
3. "MYRIADS OF ANGELS,"
4. "A FESTAL GATHERING AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED IN HEAVEN,"
5. "GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL,"
6. "THE SPIRITS OF RIGHTEOUS MEN WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO PERFECTION,"
7. "JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT," and
8. "THE SPRINKLED BLOOD, WHICH IS SPEAKING BETTER THAN THE BLOOD OF ABEL."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The realities that pertain to New-Covenant people and to which they **have come** are even more impressive because they are **heavenly**. Not only is there the heavenly **city**, but there are also heaven-related beings, both **angels** and people, associated with it. The term **church of the firstborn** may mean the assembly of those whose inheritance rights are already won (since under the OT Law the "firstborn" was the primary heir; cf. v. 16). They have already gone on to the heavenly regions where the angels are. But above all, it is to **God, the Judge of all men**, that they have come--and there are some who indeed can stand His searching scrutiny of their lives . . .

p. 811

"TO THE SPIRITS OF RIGHTEOUS MEN WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO PERFECTION."

MacArthur says:

The mountain of the New Covenant is **Mount Zion**, representing the **heavenly Jerusalem**. The opposite of Sinai, it is not touchable, but it is approachable. Sinai symbolizes law and Zion symbolizes grace. No man can be saved by the law, but any man can be saved by grace. The law confronts us with commandments, judgment, and condemnation. Grace presents us with forgiveness, atonement, and salvation.  
p. 413

Kistemaker says:

What a difference between the description of Mount Sinai and that of Mount Zion! What a contrast! The first scene is one of doom and dread; the second scene portrays life and joy. In the first portion of the argument Mount Sinai is not even mentioned, for the Israelites were not to stay there. In the second part, Mount Zion is described as "the heavenly Jerusalem" and as "the city of the living God."  
p. 392

Wiersbe says:

What a relief it is to move from Mt. Sinai to Mt. Zion! Mt. Sinai represents the Old Covenant of Law, and Mt. Zion represents the New Covenant of grace in Jesus Christ (see Gal. 4:19-31). The heavenly city is God's Mt. Zion (see Ps. 110:1-2, 4 and Ps. 2). This is the city that the patriarchs were looking for by faith (Heb. 11:10, 14-17). The earthly Jerusalem was about to be destroyed by the Romans, but the heavenly Jerusalem would endure forever.

He described the "citizens" that make up the population of this city. Innumerable angels are there. The church is there, for believers have their citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20) and their names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20). "Firstborn" is a title of dignity and rank. Esau was actually Isaac's firstborn, but he rejected his privileges and lost his blessing and birthright.  
pp. 142-3

(Heaven Help Us! Truths About Eternity That Will Help You Live Today by  
Steven J. Lawson)

In the new Jerusalem, there will be *no* funeral homes, *no* hospitals, *no* abortion clinics, *no* divorce courts, *no* brothels, *no* bankruptcy courts, *no* psychiatric wards, and *no* treatment centers.

There will be *no* pornography, *no* dial-a-porn, *no* teen suicide, *no* AIDS, *no* cancer, *no* talk shows, *no* rape, *no* missing children, *no* gay rights marches, *no* drug problems, *no* drive-by shootings, *no* racial tension, and *no* prejudice.

There will be *no* misunderstandings, *no* injustice, *no* depression, *no* hurtful words, *no* gossip, *no* hurt feelings, *no* worry, *no* emptiness, and *no* child abuse.

There will be *no* wars, *no* financial worries, *no* emotional heartaches, *no* physical pain, *no* spiritual flatness, *no* relational divisions, *no* murders, and *no* casseroles.

There will be *no* tears, *no* suffering, *no* separations, *no* starvation, *no* arguments, *no* accidents, *no* emergency departments, *no* doctors, *no* nurses, *no* heart monitors, *no* rust, *no* perplexing questions, *no* false teachers, *no* financial shortages, *no* hurricanes, *no* bad habits, *no* decay, and *no* locks.  
pp. 148-9

A Philadelphia law firm sent flowers to an associate in Baltimore upon the opening of its new offices. Through some mix-up, the ribbon that bedecked the floral piece read "Deepest Sympathy."

When the florist was informed of his mistake, he let out a cry of alarm. "Good heavens," he exclaimed, "then the flowers that went to the funeral said, 'Congratulations on your new location!'"

Heaven will be a wonderful new location.  
p. 158

"BUT YOU HAVE COME TO":

1. "MOUNT ZION,"
2. "THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM,"  
and
3. "MYRIADS OF ANGELS."

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by Charles R. Swindoll)

Several years ago some high school fellas from the church I pastored in Southern California went on a mountain-climbing excursion, along with their youth leader. What began as a fun trip led to a frightening experience. Up at higher elevations the temperature can drop rapidly, covering everything in a blanket of sleet and snow in no time . . . and that's exactly what happened. The white peaks and slopes were beautiful scenes to behold. While taking in the breath-taking sights, however, the leader realized he had lost the trail. The heavy snowfall had completely covered the path, and he didn't have a clue where they were or how they could get back to the main camp. His fears weren't helped by the realization that sundown was not that far away and they were not equipped to spend the night on the craggy, windblown slopes where the temperature would soon drop even lower.

The boys became aware of their plight, which only intensified the leader's worries. In situations like that out in the wilderness, prayer flows freely. A dependence on God to rescue is not merely a convenient option; it's a foundational survival technique.

While trudging through the snow, entertaining thoughts just this side of panic, they suddenly heard someone on the slopes above them yell down: "Hey-the trail is up here!" They glanced up and to their relief saw another climber in the distance. He urged them to climb up to where he was if they wanted to get back on the trail. Without hesitation, they began to make their way up to the large boulder where the man was sitting. The climb was exhausting, but their relief in finding the way gave their adrenaline a rush.

Finally, they arrived . . . but to their surprise the man who had yelled at them was nowhere to be found. Furthermore, there were no traces in the snow that anyone had been sitting on the boulder, nor were there footprints around the rock. The trail, however, stretched out before them, leading them to safety. The boys not only learned a valuable lesson about the wilderness, but also firmed up their belief in encountering "angels without knowing it."

pp. 381-2

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by Charles R. Swindoll)

Many years ago one of my mentors told me a story I have never forgotten. A missionary was home on furlough, traveling by car from church to church. Late one rainy evening, facing a long and lonely all-night journey, he asked the Lord to help him stay awake and make it safely to the next place he could minister.

A few minutes later he came upon a man off to the side, thumbing a ride. Although he rarely picked up hitchhikers, he felt sorry for the man out in the rain and offered him a lift. As the two of them began to visit, the missionary was thrilled to discover that the stranger was a believer and that they also had many mutual friends engaged in the Lord's work.

Time passed rapidly as the two of them laughed and shared stories. The fellowship was so rich that the missionary hated to see the early light of dawn and hear his new-found friend say, "Well, here's where I get off." Before saying goodbye, the missionary invited him to have a cup of coffee at a roadside cafe. As they parted, they promised to pray for each other.

The rain had stopped by now, and a bright sun-drenched sky warmed the missionary's soul. Then, a couple of minutes down the road, he realized that he had failed to get the man's address and phone number, so quickly returned to the cafe. There was no sign of the man. When he asked the cook if he'd seen which way the other fella had gone, he was shocked to hear him respond, "What other fella? You came in here alone . . . I wondered why you ordered two cups of coffee."

The missionary glanced at the table where the two had sat and noticed that the other cup was still full to the brim . . . and the coffee was cold.

As he returned to his car, another surprising realization came to his mind. He remembered that when he had picked up the hitchhiker in the rain the night before, the man had gotten in the car but he wasn't wet!

p. 383

Hughes:

At other times, angels preside over the apparent earthly tragedy of God's people. Olive Fleming Liefeld in her book *Unfolding Destinies* tells how two young Auca Indians, Dawa and Kimo, heard singing after witnessing the martyrdom of the five missionaries in the jungles of Ecuador: "As they looked up over the tops of the trees they saw a large group of people. They were singing, and it looked as if there were a hundred flashlights."  
p. 192

v.23 to a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection,

As we continue in our LISTING of this new relationship we see:

4. "A FESTAL GATHERING AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED IN HEAVEN,"

Owen says:

. . . in my judgment it is most suitable unto his mind and his dealing in particular with the Hebrews, that the whole Church of elect believers then in the world, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, should be designed by him. The collection of the elect among Jews and Gentiles into one body, one general assembly, one Church, is that which he celebrates elsewhere as one of the greatest mysteries of divine wisdom, which was hid in God and not until then revealed. (See Eph. iii. 5-10.) So is this assembly described (Rev. v. 9, 10.), "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests,"--that is, one "*general assembly and Church of the First-born.*" This is that Church whereunto all the promises do belong, the Church "built on the Rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."  
p. 259

Hughes says:

Third, we come to *fellow-believers*--"to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven" (v. 23a). Jesus is the firstborn *par excellence*, and by virtue of our union with him we are firstborn. All the rights of inheritance go to the firstborn--to us who are "co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). Bishop Westcott says we are "a society of 'eldest sons' of God." there are no second or third or fourth sons and daughters in the church. We all get the big inheritance!

And there is more. As firstborn, our names are written in Heaven along with the firstborn who are already there. In other words, there is an amazing solidarity between the Church Triumphant in Heaven and the Church Militant here on earth. We are all the Body of Christ! The family is never broken. It simply keeps growing and going on and on--a bulging assembly of rich first sons and daughters.

p. 192

Draper also observes:

We at Mount Sion have come to the general assembly of the church of the firstborn.

Who are they? They are the ones whose names are written down in heaven. The word "written" (vs. 23) means "enrolled." We are enrolled; our reservations in heaven have been made. That's what salvation is. It is deliverance from judgment, and the reception of life everlasting.

p. 356

Westcott, speaking on the word "CHURCH" here, says:

The thought in each case is that of the people of God assembled to exercise their privileges and to enjoy their rights.

p. 415



Stedman says:

This is the Church, those who are born in Christ, part of the firstborn of God, sharing His life with their names written in heaven, *and to the universal judge, to God who is judge of all men*, whether they are Christians or not. All men are on the same basis because they stand alike before God.  
p. 223

MacArthur concurs by saying:

The **church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven** is the Body of Christ. The first-born are those who receive the inheritance. As believers, we are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ," who is "the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:17, 29).

Jesus tells us that we should not rejoice in the great works that God may do through us but that our "names are recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Our names are **enrolled in heaven** in "the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).  
p. 415

"TO A FESTAL GATHERING AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED IN HEAVEN."

THEY HAVE BEEN "REGISTERED" IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE.

#### Revelation 21:27

and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

At the time of one's new birth our names are recorded in the Lamb's book of life. At that time reservations for the marriage supper of the Lamb are made. At that time also, we have to have reservations for a place to stay in the New Jerusalem.

My reservations are at the Four Season's Resort on the Sea of Glass. I can see the throne room from there.

Seriously, the Lord is preparing a place for each of us as His children in His Father's house.

#### 5. "GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL"

##### Acts 17:31

because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

#### 6. "THE SPIRITS OF RIGHTEOUS MEN WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO PERFECTION"

They have been brought to this position by faith.

##### Hebrews 12:14

Be pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"And to the spirits of just men made perfect." "Perfect" does not mean complete or perfect as you and I think of it. It refers to Old Testament saints whose salvation has been made complete now that Christ has died as the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

p. 608

MacArthur says:

**The spirits of righteous men made perfect** are Old Testament saints, those who could only look forward to forgiveness, peace, and deliverance. When we come to heaven we will join Abel, Abraham, Moses, David, and all the others in one great household of God (cf. Matt. 8:11).

They had to wait a long time for the perfection that we received the instant we trusted in Christ. In fact, they had to wait for us (Heb. 11:40), in the sense that they had to wait for Christ's death and resurrection before they could be glorified. In heaven we will be one with them in Jesus Christ. We will not be inferior to Abraham or Moses or Elijah, because we will all be equal in righteousness, because our only righteousness will be our Savior's righteousness.

p. 416

Stedman says:

Who are these? They are the Old Testament saints we read about in chapter 11, men and women of God who lived in the days when the promise was given before the cross, who looked forward by faith and who are waiting now for us.

p. 223

(Faith Under Fire: Standing Strong When Satan Attacks by Steven J. Lawson)

In our glorified state in heaven, God will eradicate our sin nature the moment we enter His presence and behold His Son (1 John 3:2). Any capacity for sin will be forever removed when we stand before the throne (Revelation 21:27). In that day, all redeemed humanity will be *not able* to sin.

So it was with Christ during the days of His earthly life. As the Word made flesh, Jesus had no capacity to sin. As the God-man who was truly human, He was impeccable--just as glorified saints will be in heaven.

No matter how righteous, pure, and holy we will be in heaven in God's presence, we will never be any more righteous, pure, and holy than Jesus Christ during the days of His earthly life.

p. 214

(Our God Is Awesome by Tony Evans)

Sometimes we get upset because evil people seem to keep getting away with evil. No, their sin account keeps growing. Many people will never have much trouble in this life. But if you could only see the bill awaiting them in eternity! The psalmist pictured the wrath of God like a bow being drawn back (Psalm 7:12). The more sinners sin, the further God pulls back the bow.

You know the farther a bowman pulls back the arrow, the harder it will hit and the deeper it will penetrate. God says that when He lets His arrow go, it's going to penetrate the unrighteous with great agony. That's why the Bible cautions us not to become envious of the wicked. Never get all upset because bad folks have it good and good folks have it bad down here. God just hasn't let His arrow go yet.

p. 242

v.24 and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel.

## 7. "JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT," and

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Hebrews 8:6

But now He has attained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

He is a "Priest according to the order of Melchizedek."

He is a "MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT."

We have our attorney to represent us in court on that glorious day.

We have come into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator of a New Covenant.

Who wants to leave this position in Jesus Christ to go back to one of terror? Why leave the heavenly city to go back to the terror of Mount Sinai?

Hebrews 9:15

And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

DeHaan says:

Imagine these Hebrew Christians wanting to place themselves again under the law. Now notice the folly of such error when we contrast Israel under the law with the believer under grace.

p. 181

"AND TO JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT, AND":

8. "TO THE SPRINKLED BLOOD, WHICH IS SPEAKING BETTER THAN THE BLOOD OF ABEL."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary speaking of the "NEW COVENANT" says:

. . . of a **New Covenant** whose atoning **blood** does not cry for judgment as did Abel's but secures the acceptance of all New-Covenant persons.

If the readers would contemplate these things properly, they would be awed by them and more inclined to fulfill their call to the highest privileges that the New Covenant can provide.

p. 811

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

His blood **speaks better things than the blood of Abel** in as much as Abel's blood cried for vengeance while Jesus' blood speaks reconciliation.  
p. 233

Wiersbe says much the same thing:

Abel's blood spoke from the earth and cried for justice (Gen. 4:10), while Christ's blood speaks from heaven and announces mercy for sinners. Abel's blood made Cain feel guilty (and rightly so) and drove him away in despair (Gen. 4:13-15); but Christ's blood frees us from guilt and has opened the way into the presence of God. Were it not for the blood of the New Covenant, we could not enter this heavenly city!

p. 143

Stedman says:

When Abel's blood was shed it cried out for vengeance, as the book of Genesis tells us, but Jesus' blood does not speak of vengeance: it speaks of access, of invitation, of the fact there is no problem between man and God that is not settled by His blood. There is no longer any question of guilt. We can come completely accepted in the Beloved.

p. 224

MacArthur says it this way:

The sprinkled blood of Jesus far surpasses the sacrifice of Abel (Heb. 11:4) and **speaks better than the blood of Abel**. Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God because it was offered in faith, but it had no atoning power—not even for Abel, much less for anyone else. Jesus' blood, however, was sufficient to cleanse the sins of all men for all time, to make peace with God for whoever trusts in that blood sacrifice (Col. 1:20).

p. 416

Let us MEDITATE and REVIEW for a just a moment all that we have as a result of the relationship which is ours in Jesus Christ.

"BUT YOU HAVE COME TO":

1. "MOUNT ZION,"
2. "THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM,"
3. "MYRIADS OF ANGELS,"
4. "A FESTAL GATHERING AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED IN HEAVEN,"
5. "GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL,"
6. "THE SPIRITS OF RIGHTEOUS MEN WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO PERFECTION,"
7. "JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT," and
8. "THE SPRINKLED BLOOD, WHICH IS SPEAKING BETTER THAN THE BLOOD OF ABEL."

ALL I CAN SAY IS WOW!!

IF THAT DOESN'T LIGHT YOUR FIRE, YOU ARE USING WET WOOD!

v.25 Be seeing to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who was warning them on earth, much less shall we escape who are turning away from Him who is speaking from heaven,

We come now to COMMAND #3:

"BE SEEING TO IT THAT YOU DO NOT REFUSE HIM WHO IS SPEAKING."

COMMAND #1 was back in verse 14:

"Be pursuing peace with all men."

COMMAND #2 was in verse 15:

"Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Since those who refused the Old Covenant **did not escape**, how could those of the New Covenant who **turn away** expect to do so? (cf. 2:3) Here no doubt the author thought of the Speaker as none other than the Originator of the New Covenant who now sits "at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (1:3).  
p. 811

Hebrews 2:3

how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard,



The one "WHO IS SPEAKING" then is described for us in:

Hebrews 1:3

who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Stedman says:

This is the fifth and last great warning passage in this book, and it reminds us that these difficult times that we go through have a special purpose.

p. 225

Kistemaker says:

Throughout this epistle, the warning against turning a deaf ear to God has sounded clearly in the ears of the addresses. Think, for example, of the direct warning: "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God" (3:12). This admonition has been repeated in various forms in the letter, and every time it calls the readers to pay close attention.

p. 397

Hewitt says:

A final warning in verses 25-29 brings to a conclusion the writer's argument that greater privileges carry with them greater responsibilities. If the Israelites with a partial and limited revelation became liable to God's judgment because of disobedience, an incomparably severer punishment would fall upon the readers who rejected this new revelation of God and its accompanying blessings.

p. 202

Lane says:

The transition from exposition in vv 18-24 to exhortation in vv 25-29 is abrupt. It is achieved by the literary device of a "hook word." The participle, "speaking," in v 24*b* is repeated with only slight variation in v 25*a*, "the one speaking." There is a sharp change in tone as the writer resumes the expression of urgent concern that characterizes vv 14-17. In this instance, however, the sternness of the parenetic warning is justified by the detailing of the privileged status of Christians in the preceding paragraph.  
p. 474

Bruce titles this section:

**PAY HEED TO THE VOICE OF GOD! (12:25-29)**

p. 361

Thomas says much the same thing:

**THIS IS THE** fifth interjected warning and fitly closes the series (2:1-4), against drifting; 3:7-14, against disbelieving; 5:11 to 6:20, against degenerating; 10:26-39, against despising. The immediate context seems to suggest the occasion for it. The "blood that speaketh" (v. 24) is now shown to be equivalent to "Him that speaketh" (v. 25), and after the glowing description of the new Society (vv. 2-24) the readers are urged to abide therein and to show themselves worthy of it.  
p. 167

G. Campbell Morgan says:

THE words, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" reveal the ultimate purpose for which this letter was written.

The Hebrew Christians to whom it was addressed were in danger of falling away from faith, and the danger which thus threatened them was the result of intellectual wavering as to the full and final authority of Christ.  
p. 137

"BE SEEING TO IT THAT YOU DO NOT REFUSE HIM WHO IS SPEAKING."

The CHALLENGE is to:

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS.

Rather, be OBEDIENT to:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

The author then gives us the REASON for the command:

"FOR IF THOSE DID NOT ESCAPE."

We have already had that QUESTION raised in:

Hebrews 2:3.

how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, . . .

"WHEN THEY REFUSED HIM WHO WAS WARNING THEM ON EARTH, MUCH LESS SHALL WE ESCAPE WHO ARE TURNING AWAY FROM HIM WHO IS SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN."

v.26 whose voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying,  
 "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."

In the past His "VOICE SHOOK THE EARTH [in CONTRAST] BUT NOW HE HAS PROMISED, SAYING, 'YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE [NEGATIVELY] NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT [POSITIVELY] ALSO THE HEAVEN."

### Haggai 2:6

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.

Wiersbe says:

God is speaking to us today through His Word and His providential working in the world. We had better listen! If God shook things at Sinai and those who refused to hear were judged, how much more responsible are we today who have experienced the blessings of the New Covenant! God today *is* shaking things. (Have you read the newspapers lately?) He wants to tear down the "scaffolding" and reveal the unshakable realities that are eternal. Alas, too many people (including Christians) are building their lives on things that can shake.

p. 144

Kistemaker says:

It is Christ, therefore, who is at the center of this upheaval on earth and in heaven. He will cause heaven and earth to shake when he appears a second time (Matt. 24:29; II Peter 3:10).

p. 399

Matthew 24:29

"But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,

v.27 And this expression, "Yet once more," is indicating the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of things which have been made, in order that those things which are not being shaken might remain.

Jesus cannot be shaken and He remains forever!

What is:

SHAKABLE is TEMPORARY,

UNSHAKABLE is ETERNAL.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

What remains after this cataclysmic event will be eternal.

p. 811

Kistemaker says:

Next, in the original Greek he reminds the readers that he used the term *removing* earlier (7:12), where it is translated as "change." "For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law." An example, then, of temporary things is the Levitical priesthood that came to an end when it was replaced by the eternal priesthood of Christ. Also, the prophet Isaiah foresees the end of this present world when he transmits what the Sovereign Lord says: "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind" (65:17; also see 66:22). And last, the only things that survive this world are those that are unshakable and eternal. The kingdom of Jesus Christ cannot be shaken.

p. 399

G. Campbell Morgan says:

You will remember those lines of Martin Luther written in dark and difficult days. I think they are very applicable today. Let me end with them:

"We wait beneath the furnace blast  
The pangs of transformation,  
Not painlessly doth God recast  
And mould anew the nation

"Where wrongs aspire;  
Nor from the hand  
That from the land  
Uproots the ancient evil.

p. 191

The **KEY WORDS** in verse 27 are:

"REMOVING" and

"REMAIN."

The **SHAKING** is for the **PURPOSE** of:

"REMOVING THOSE THINGS WHICH CAN BE SHAKEN."

The **PURPOSE** behind all of this is:

"IN ORDER THAT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT BEING SHAKEN MIGHT REMAIN."

v.28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be having grace (showing gratitude), by means of which we may be serving God in an acceptable manner with reverence and awe;

Whereas the KEY WORDS in verse 27 were:

"removing" and

"remaining."

The KEY WORD in verse 28 is:

"RECEIVING."

"THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE RECEIVING A KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN."

We come now to COMMAND #4:

"LET US BE HAVING GRACE (SHOWING GRATITUDE), BY MEANS OF WHICH WE MAY BE SERVING GOD IN AN ACCEPTABLE MANNER WITH REVERENCE AND AWE."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[This is] likely a final reference to the resources of grace available from the great High Priest . . .

p. 811

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession. For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Kistemaker says:

What a statement! "We are receiving a kingdom." If there is a kingdom, there is also a king. And a king makes his rule known to his subjects, for they are part of the kingdom. We are receiving the governing rule, the administration, so to speak, of Jesus Christ.

p. 400

Because of the royal recognition we receive, we are exhorted to give thanks--"let us be thankful." The literal translation of this clause is, "let us have grace." However, usage indicates that the words have grace form an idiomatic expression that means "give thanks." Luke uses this idiom in relating the parable of the farmer and his servant (Luke 17:9), and Paul employs it in his pastoral Epistles (I Tim. 1:12; II Tim. 1:3).

Let us live a life of thankfulness, says the author of Hebrews, and by doing so let us worship God. Giving thanks in word and deed and worshipping God are two sides of the same coin. Worship is not limited to a formal worship service on Sunday. Horatius Bonar understood this when he wrote,

So shall no part of day or night  
From sacredness be free,  
But all my life, in every step,  
Be fellowship with Thee.

p. 401

Wiersbe raises the question:

What shall we do as we live in a shaking world? Listen to God speak, and obey Him. Receive grace day by day to serve Him "with reverence and godly fear." Do not be distracted or frightened by the tremendous changes going on around you. Keep running the race with endurance. Keep looking to Jesus Christ. Remember that your Father loves you. And draw on God's enabling grace.

While others are being frightened--you can be confident!

p. 144



Thomas says:

Based on the warning comes a fitting exhortation. They are "not to cling to what God is shaking to pieces, or they too will suffer shipwreck."  
p. 170

Lane says:

The severity of vv 25-27 is momentarily softened when the writer announces that Christians are in the process of receiving an unshakable kingdom. This gift, secured on the ground of the new covenant, calls for gratitude expressed in thankful worship of the God whose awesome and holy character was disclosed in the fiery epiphany of Sinai.  
p. 483

Someone has said:

"You are the prize of my dying! As my dying is the prize of your living . . ."

## DEATH BENEFITS

The 18th-century English pastor Rowland Hill lived to a ripe old age. In fact, he outlived most of his friends. Missing them very much and anxious to join them on the other side, he grew more homesick for heaven with each passing day. It seemed so long since some of them had gone to glory that he would often jokingly say with a wink, "Do you think they'll remember me?" It was not unusual for him to go to some other believer well along in years with this request: "If you should go before I do, give my love to everyone. Be sure to tell them that old Rowley, although staying behind a little while, is coming on as fast as he can."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Strength of Soul: The Sacred Use of Time by W. Phillip Keller)

Spontaneous, joyous gratitude really is the *elixir of life*.

There is nothing else which produces so much contentment.

The attitude of gratitude really makes us glow.

The reason for this is hidden from most of us. We wonder why thoughtfulness transforms us. There really is a secret to the glory that engulfs us.

It is this: instead of being preoccupied with our own problems, pain, protests over every petty complaint, we look out beyond ourselves to the goodness of God and others. Instead of seeing life through the narrow slot of our own self-centeredness we take the wider view of realizing all we have, all we are, all we enjoy, comes to us freely, generously from our Father's gracious heart and open hands.

p. 76





















(A Gentle Thunder: Hearing God Through the Storm by Max Lucado)

Suppose you gave me a gift. Let's say you presented me with a new tie. I take it out of the box and examine it. I say thank you and then reach for my wallet. "Now how much do I owe you?" I ask.

You think I am kidding. "It's a gift," you say. "You don't need to pay me."

"Oh, I understand," I respond, but then show I don't by asking, "Could I write you a check?"

You're stunned. "I don't want you to pay me. I want you to accept the gift."

"Oh, I see," I respond. "Perhaps I could do some work around your house in exchange for the tie?"

"You just don't get it, do you?" you state firmly. "I want to give this to you. It is a present. You can't buy a present."

"Oh, forgive me," I hasten. "Perhaps if I promised to purchase you a tie in return."

By this time you're insulted. In trying to buy your gift I have degraded your grace. I have robbed you of the joy of giving.

How often we rob God.

Have you ever considered what an insult it is to God when we try to pay him for his goodness? God loves a cheerful giver because he is a cheerful giver. If we, who are evil, enjoy giving gifts, how much more does he? If we, who are human, are offended when people want to turn our gift into a bribe, how much more is God?

p. 135

(Heaven Help Us! Truths About Eternity That Will Help You Live Today by Steven J. Lawson)

A prominent citizen in town was dying, surrounded at his bedside by his family and physician.

As he thought of his massive wealth he had worked all his life to amass, he whispered with a note of despair, "I'm *leaving* home, I'm *leaving* home."

Across town, a similar yet very different scene took place. There lay a solitary figure in meager, bare surroundings--a poor woman who had barely eked out a living for her children. Her modest home contained only the most basic of life's essentials. But in her heart dwelt the hope of Heaven.

Before she died, she was heard to say expectantly, "I'm *going* home, I'm *going* home."

What a different perspective for those who know God and who look to Heaven!

pp. 134-5