

The Hebrews Initiative:
An Interesting Twist on Thanksgiving
Hebrews 12:25-29

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Text Introduction: We are concluding this week and next week a series that we have called the Hebrews Initiative. It has been an important journey. Originally written to a group of fairly new believers in Jesus who were experiencing difficulty in a difficult world, this anonymous writer is calling them to a life of endurance. He has used language like “not shrinking back from faith” and “hold fast to the confession” to encourage them to persevere in their Christian calling and walk with Jesus. He would say, “This is not the time to back up; instead, this is the time to press forward.”

His call to endurance hinges upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. The writer’s description of what Christ has done for us has been steeped in the rich heritage of the Old Testament or Old Covenant. He has compared Jesus to the angels, Moses, Joshua, the law, the Levitical priesthood, the sacrifices that the priests of the Old Testament system made, and now the covenant.

Today, our text is Hebrews 12:25-29. Many of the same themes already discovered come full circle.

Text: ²⁵ Make sure that you do not reject the One who speaks. For if they did not escape when they rejected Him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven. ²⁶ His voice shook the earth at that time, but now He has promised, Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven. ²⁷ This expression, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Introduction: This morning four very separate events are colliding on us—parent-child dedication, coming to the end of our series on Hebrews, the continued difficulty in our world related to terrorism, and thanksgiving. I guess we could even actually add a fifth with newly elected government officials from yesterday. Depending upon how you voted, you might be elated, devastated, or even raw in your emotion to the whole election process.

It is not possible that one text speak to all of these issues, right? Well, by God’s providence, actually, I think so.

Understanding the Context

- The writer again employs the literary device of moving from the “lesser to the greater.” The lesser in this case is the shaking of Mount Sinai during Moses’ day. The greater is the coming judgment of God upon all who reject the word of God.
- The writer affirms again that all things in this earth are passing away.
- These two things definitely put “a line in the sand.” Are you going to be for God or against God? Are you going to obey or reject? There is no place for neutrality.

Central Point

We will continue to get reminders of a shaken world, but we are recipients of a kingdom that can never be shaken.

Conclusion

Give Thanks and Worship

The phrase “let us hold on to grace” literally is “let us have grace.” Everyone who seeks to comment on this phrase indicates that this is an idiom for the giving of thanks. A lot of times we give thanks only through faith.

3 Promises to Help You Give Thanks Even when Shaken

- God’s Presence—13:5.
- God’s Power—13:6
- God’s Permanence—13:8

When I think about the children, when I think about the chaos and uncertainty of the world, I must go back to basics. I get those basics in a hymn.

Because He lives
I can face tomorrow
Because He lives
All fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living
Just because He lives

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy He gives,
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain day because He lives.