

"See That Ye Refuse Not ..."

"... him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from him that warneth from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth; but now hath he promised saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this word, yet once more signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace ..." (Heb. 12:5-28).

Some commentaries consider the contrast between the first and second covenant to be the thing discussed here, theorizing that the things on earth and heaven which are shaken were idolatry and the Old Law. I do not believe that is what this writer had in mind. There is a declaration of things which are future, not past, events which will occur at the world's end.

These brethren are warned of something future, not past; warned of judgment that will be suffered by those who *"refuse him who speaketh,"* which speaker is Christ. The epistle began with the thought that God in times past spake to the fathers in the prophets, in these last days He has spoken unto us in His son (1:1f). They were warned to give more earnest heed to the things spoken lest haply they drift away from them (Heb. 2:1ff). God warns that at some future time He is going to speak from heaven and shake both heaven and earth: a clear reference (at least to me) of the final day when God shall speak and the heavens and earth shall pass away.

When God gave the law, the mountain from whence that law was given, quivered and shook. It was a frightening experience for ancient Israel. Being terrified, they besought Moses to speak to God that God convey His message to Moses, then that Moses give them that message, that God no longer speak to them as He had been doing (Ex. 20:19). Moses was himself fearful and said, *"I exceedingly fear and quake"* (Deut. 9:19). However, just a small portion of the world was affected by God's speaking the law. But at some future time God's voice will shake earth and heaven. How much more fearful will be that day? When God speaks in that day every thing which can be, will be shaken and removed out of its place.

There is one thing which *"cannot be shaken"* -- the kingdom for the writer describes it as a *"kingdom which cannot be shaken"* (Heb. 12:28). And we have received such a kingdom, which kingdom he described in earlier verses as the church (vss. 22-24). There it is shown in language which is clean, the

importance of being in God's kingdom for it shall stand and those who are part of it shall stand, when the world and all things there are just a memory!

Jesus' parable of the builders shows the gravity of the time when God's voice will sound from heaven. *"Everyone therefore that heareth these words of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof"* (Matt. 7:24-27). Those who build upon the rock -- those who believe and do His words -- will stand when the rain and floods come. Those who build upon the sand --- those who hear but not believe nor do His word -- will not stand when rain and floods come. They will be shaken.

The kingdom of Christ, the church of Christ, provides a sure, safe refuge to men against the time of the end of the world. How foolish we are to ignore the inevitable; to make no preparation against the day whose coming is certain and sure. *"See that he refuse not him that speaketh."*

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