

WARNING FIVE: THE DANGER OF REFUSING TO HEAR JESUS CHRIST — OF SHUTTING ONE’S EAR TO THE CRY OF HIS BLOOD HEBREWS 12:25–29

Introduction

This is the fifth and final warning in the Book of Hebrews. Note the statement of warning: see that you do not refuse him that speaks. This refers back to Jesus Christ the Mediator, the One whose blood was shed because of sinful men. The picture is that of Christ speaking and proclaiming the new covenant of mercy and grace upon man. He is proclaiming salvation to the world. Man must not close his ears: he must see to it that he does not refuse Jesus Christ who alone proclaims true salvation.

=> The word “see” (blepete) means to keep a watchful eye; to be alert and see that you do not refuse Jesus Christ.

=> The word “refuse” (paraitesesthe) means to reject, decline, turn down, deny, disavow (Kenneth Wuest. *Hebrews*, Vol. 2, p. 229).

There are three reasons why a person must not refuse Jesus Christ and His message.

- I. There shall be no escape whatsoever for the close-minded (v. 25).
- II. God warns about a great shaking and judgment of heaven and earth in the future (vv. 26-27).
- III. Think: an unshakable kingdom can be received (vv. 28-29).

I. Hebrews 12:25 Warning: No Escape for the Close-Minded

First, there shall be no escape whatsoever for the close-minded. Moses is the person who spoke on earth and gave the law of God to man, but Jesus Christ is the One who spoke and brought the Word of God down out of heaven.

=> Note that “warned them on earth” (chrematizonta) means transmitter or mouthpiece (William Barclay. *The Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 215). Moses was God’s earthly spokesman.

=> Note that Jesus Christ *warns us from heaven*. The word “warns” (lalounta) is different. It means the very voice of God. Jesus Christ spoke as God Himself. He was the heavenly voice of God Himself.

The point is critical for people today: we are held much more accountable and shall face much greater judgment. Just think for a moment. Moses, a mere man, spoke and gave the law of God to man. When the people broke the law given by Moses, not a single one

escaped the judgment and punishment. Every person bore the guilt and punishment when he broke the Word of God.

Now Jesus Christ, the very Son of God Himself, has spoken. His Word is the very message of heaven and of God Himself. How much more shall no person escape judgment and condemnation if he refuses to hear the Word of Jesus Christ, God's very own Son?

Thought 1. The point is clear. There shall be no escape whatsoever for the person who refuses to hear the word of mercy and grace that Christ proclaims. His blood cleanses us from sin. His sacrifice — His blood alone — is acceptable to God as a substitute for man's sins. To reject His word of salvation is to never escape. Man shall bear his own judgment and condemnation for violating the Word of God.

II. *Hebrews 12:26–27 Warning: A New Heavens and Earth*

Second, God warns about a great shaking and judgment of heaven and earth in the future. When God gave the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, God's voice shook the earth. There is to be another great shaking of the earth by the voice and Word of God. In fact, not only will the earth shake, but the heavens themselves will also shake. This is exactly what the prophet Haggai declared:

Hag 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.'*

Both the prophet and the writer to the Hebrews are declaring that a catastrophic judgment is coming upon the heavens and the earth. The whole universe, all the stars and planets of the natural world, are to undergo a cataclysmic change. All nature shall be destroyed by fire and remade into a new heavens and earth.

Note why: "so that what cannot be shaken may remain." God is after an eternal world, a universe in which all of heaven and earth are made alive and bustling with the activity...

- of worship — the worship of God and Christ.
- of communion and fellowship between Christ and believers.
- of fellowship among believers as the redeemed and eternal people of God.
- of service and labour for the Lord Jesus in overseeing the work that will be going on throughout the universe.

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

Rom 8:21 *That the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

Eccl 1:4 *Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.*

III. **Hebrews 12:28–29** *The Unshakable Kingdom of God*

Third, an unshakable kingdom can be received. How? Two ways are given.

1. “Let us be thankful”; that is, let us make sure that we have received the grace of God. We must make sure that we have received the indescribable gift and favour of God, even Jesus Christ Himself — that we have received Him into our hearts and lives.

Acts 15:11 *“No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”*

Rom 3:24 *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.*

Titus 3:5-7 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour; so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

2. We must serve God with reverence and awe.

=> The word “reverence” (*eulabeia*) means with caution, carefully, with discretion and circumspection (Kenneth Wuest. *Hebrews*, Vol. 2, p. 231).

=> The word “awe” means being apprehensive because some danger can lurk over the horizon.

Mat 10:28 *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

Luke 1:50 *His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.*

Acts 10:35 *But accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.*

1 Pet 1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

1 Pet 2:17 Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.

Deu 10:12 And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Psa 31:9 Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief.

Psa 33:8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him.

Psa 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

Eccl 12:13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

A person must do exactly what this verse says: *serve God acceptably* with reverence and awe. God must be feared, for He is Lord. A person must serve God and serve Him in an acceptable way. He must bear the fruit of the Spirit:

- love
- faithfulness
- patience
- peace
- kindness
- gentleness
- joy
- self-control
- goodness

A person must also bear the fruit of other lives; he must win people to the Lord Jesus Christ so that they too can receive the eternal kingdom of God.

John 4:36 "Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together."

John 21:16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

Mat 5:16 "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

1 Tim 6:18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Titus 2:7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness.

Heb 10:24 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

1 Pet 2:12 *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

Psa 40:8 *“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”*

Psa 126:5-6 *Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.*

Note why a person must serve God in an acceptable way: because God is a consuming fire. William Barclay makes an excellent exposition on this verse:

“If that be so there is a great obligation laid upon us. We must worship God with reverence; we must serve Him with fear; for nothing must be allowed to disturb that relationship which will be our salvation when the world passes away. So the writer to the Hebrews finishes with one of these threatening quotations which he so often flings like a thunderbolt at his hearers. It is a quotation from Dut. 4:24. There Moses is telling the people that they must never break their agreement with God; they must never relapse into idolatry and the worship of graven images; for God is a jealous God; they must worship Him and Him alone or they will find Him a consuming fire. It is as if the writer to the Hebrews said: There is a choice before you. Remain unshakably true to God, and in the day when the universe is shaken into destruction, your relationship with God will still stand safe and secure. Be false to God, and that very God who might have been your salvation, will be to you a consuming fire of destruction. It is a grim thought; but in it there is the eternal truth, which there is no altering, that, if a man is true to God, he gains everything; and if he is untrue to God, he loses everything. In time and in eternity nothing matters save only loyalty to God” (The Letter to the Hebrews, p. 216f).

Mat 25:41 *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”*

Mark 9:42-43, 45 *“And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.”*

Mark 9:48 *“Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”*

2 Th 1:7-9 *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power. ■*