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Sermon Notes

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Our God is a Consuming Fire—So Worship Him Acceptably

Hebrews 12:25-29

Opening comments: worship...

I. Warning: Do Not Refuse the God Who Is Speaking (vs. 25)

A. Context: Jewish Professors of Faith in Christ

1. Under intense pressure from fellow Jews
2. Tempted to turn away from Jesus, trample Him underfoot, and go back to a comfortable life in Old Covenant Judaism
3. The entire epistle has been a word of warning NOT TO DO THIS
 - a. Because of the superiority of Christ Himself
 - b. Because of the superiority of Christ's ministry as our High Priest
 - c. Because of the superiority of the New Covenant of which He is the mediator
 - d. ALL POSITIVE INDUCEMENTS
 - e. BUT also there are warnings if they DID drift away, turn away, fall away
 - f. This is a WARNING passage
4. Immediate context: author desires these Jewish Christians to continue running their race with endurance; to accept the loving discipline of their heavenly Father; to pursue the holiness that is essential to heaven; to understand that the New Covenant has the power to bring us not merely to Mt. Sinai where the law was given, but to the heavenly Mt. Zion—the New Jerusalem—where we will spend eternity worshiping God with the angels
5. So... the terrifying image of Mt. Sinai was in their minds

Hebrews 12:18-21 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

6. And it was contrasted with the heavenly Mt. Zion—where God dwells
7. In verses 25-29, the author brings their minds back to the terrifying experience on Mt. Sinai, where the Ten Commandments were given, and he uses the terror those Jews had at hearing His voice
8. And He uses a “how much more” argument: if they needed to obey THAT voice of God speaking the Old Covenant terms, HOW MUCH MORE do we need to listen to the voice of God speaking the New Covenant terms

B. Warning: Do Not Refuse the God who is Speaking

Hebrews 12:25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks.

1. “**See to it**”: be diligent in this matter... look after your own wayward heart here; shepherd your heart and MAKE SURE THAT YOU DON’T do this
2. “**that you do not REFUSE**”: means to reject His words, to turn away and say NO I WON’T... perhaps by making excuses. Or perhaps by outright rebellion

Luke 14:18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

Or perhaps we refuse by outright rebellion: “I WON’T OBEY YOU!!”

The danger for these people was that, having heard the glories of the New Covenant sealed with Christ’s perfect blood, having heard the doctrine of the New Covenant—that by the shed blood of Christ, the Son of God, all our sins may be forgiven and we reconciled to God—having heard and understood that, they then trample the Son of God underfoot and return to their old ways

3. “**him who is speaking**”: God is speaking this gospel message to us NOW... it is a fresh and living word, a living promise and a living warning
 - a. the words God is speaking are ALWAYS the issue...

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Hebrews 2:1 *We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.*

Hebrews 3:7-8 *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active.*

b. God is speaking these words of gospel promises and solemn threats
NOW... TODAY is the day of salvation

c. So see to it that you do not refuse HIM WHO IS SPEAKING to you

C. Warning from Israel's History

Hebrews 12:25 *If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?*

1. The author brings back again that generation of rebellious Jews, the ones who stood at Mount. Sinai
2. They were REBELLIOUS... they REFUSED the terms God spoke to them, the TEN COMMANDMENTS; God had spoken these words WITH HIS OWN VOICE

Exodus 20:2-5 *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³ ¶ "You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ ¶ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God*

3. They were terrified of that voice:

Deuteronomy 5:24-26 *And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. ²⁵ But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. ²⁶ For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived?*

4. BUT ultimately they refused to obey him; in their hearts they turned away and worshiped the golden calf and refused to enter the Promised Land
5. The author says they DID NOT ESCAPE when they refused him who warned them on earth
 - a. There is no escaping God!! He is everywhere!!

- b. Those rebels who would not submit to God died by His various judgments; and NOT ONE OF THEM entered the Promised Land
- c. Jonah thought he could run away from God
- d. But it is impossible to escape from an omnipresent God

Psalm 139:7-12 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Amos 9:1-6 Not one will get away, none will escape. ² Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. ³ Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. ⁴ Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good." ⁵ The Lord, the LORD Almighty, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn-- the whole land rises like the Nile, then sinks like the river of Egypt-- ⁶ he who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land-- the LORD is his name.

D. The "HOW MUCH MORE" Argument

1. If such and such is true, how much more will this be true
2. Heaven is greater than earth, so him who speaks from heaven is greater than him who speaks from earth

John 3:13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven-- the Son of Man.

3. Ultimately, God spoke BOTH the Old Covenant AND the New Covenant; but the focus here is on the heavenly nature of the New Covenant vs. the Old
4. This is a GREAT SALVATION, and if we refuse it, we will not escape
5. The blessings of obedience to the Old Covenant were EARTHLY—Palestine, the Promised Land
6. The blessings of obedience to the New Covenant are HEAVENLY—eternal life in heaven with God

7. So if God did not allow them to escape when He warned them on earth, how much less will he allow us to escape when He has warned us from heaven... through Christ, His heavenly messenger

II. God's Voice Will Shake Heaven and Earth (vs. 26-27)

Hebrews 12:26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."

A. Awesome!! God's Voice Shook the Earth

1. "At that time" = when Israel gathered around Mt. Sinai

Exodus 19:18 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently

2. There was a terrifying earthquake—the whole mountain trembled violently; but Hebrews 12 ascribes that trembling to the voice of the Lord
3. The voices of the seraphim shook the temple where Isaiah saw the Lord

Isaiah 6:4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

4. How much more God's voice shaking Mt. Sinai
5. Psalm 29 says the voice of the Lord breaks cedars and twists oaks:

Psalm 29:3-5 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. ⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. ⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

Psalm 29:7-9 The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. ⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh. ⁹ The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

6. Isn't it amazing that God's voice can also speak like a soothing gentle whisper, the "still small voice" that Elijah heard, and covered his face!!
7. At that time—at Mt. Sinai—God's voice made the ground beneath their feet TREMBLE!!!
8. The result was instant terror on the parts of the Israelites

B. But Now, He Has Promised ANOTHER SHAKING of the Earth

1. There is coming a day when the voice of the Lord will shake NOT ONLY the earth but also the heavens
2. We should not be amazed at this as though God cannot do it!! It was by His word that the heavens and earth exist to begin with, and it is by His word that they shall be shaken

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

3. God's word will shake ALL CREATION; every created thing will be shaken
4. Notice that the text says HE HAS PROMISED!!! Not “warned” or “threatened”, although that would be appropriate... for if you knew that the very ground beneath your feet were going to move, would you not seek to flee to safe ground, if any could be found
5. But this is a PROMISE... that means it is a GOOD THING for the people of God that God will once more shake, not only the earth, but also the heavens

C. “Once More” = “As It Was, So It Will Be”

1. The author zeroes in on the phrase “once more”
2. It is a direct quote from Haggai 2:6 which speaks of the future glory of the perfect temple in which the “desired of all nations” will come and sit and reign
3. It refers to the second coming of Christ, when He will come in heavenly glory to reign forever and ever
4. In connection with that coming, God will SHAKE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

Isaiah 13:13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Isaiah 24:18-23 The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. ¹⁹ The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. ²⁰ The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls-- never to rise again. ²¹ In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. ²² They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. ²³ The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.

D. The Present Heaven and Earth will Be Removed... and a New Heavens and New Earth Will Come

1. The author unfolds this even more clearly in verse 27:

Hebrews 12:27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken-- that is, created things-- so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

2. Already addressed at the beginning of this book

Hebrews 1:10-12 He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

3. Taught more fully and clearly in 2 Peter and Revelation

2 Peter 3:10 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.

2 Peter 3:12-13 That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Revelation 6:12-17 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴ The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Revelation 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.

So the author is saying that, at the time of the giving of the Old Covenant, his voice shook the earth and everyone was in terror... but once more He will shake all the universe – the Second Coming of Christ. Everything in all creation will be shaken and removed

So, what "will remain" after all that SHAKING?? The eternal Kingdom of Christ, the "New Heavens and New Earth"

III. We Are Receiving an Unshakeable Kingdom (vs. 28)

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe

A. Amazing Grace!! We Sinners Will Not Be Swept Away!!

1. We could have been swept out with the refuse
2. We could have been cast off and burned in unquenchable fire with the chaff
3. Instead, we are RECEIVING the coming Kingdom

B. The Shakeable Things Will All Be Removed

1. The Second Coming of Christ will remove all wickedness, everything that causes sin and all who do evil
2. But the Kingdom of Christ CANNOT be shaken
3. And NEITHER CAN WE!!!!

C. The Coming Kingdom

1. All those who have entered the Kingdom of Christ by faith will stand forever, unshaken by the coming convulsion of the universe
2. "We are receiving" this unshakable kingdom... it is feeding into our souls now, and we will be given it as our eternal inheritance
 - a. We enter NOW by faith in Christ, by being BORN AGAIN

John 3:3-5 Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." ⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" ⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

b. The Kingdom is also YET TO COME

Matthew 25:31-34 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

3. We enter the Kingdom NOW... by simple faith in Christ, and we immediately receive the Kingdom by faith like a little child; we continue to receive the unshakeable Kingdom moment by moment when, by faith, we take His Kingly yoke upon us

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

4. We will receive the Kingdom THEN, when He comes in glory and we come into our full inheritance... when we reign with Christ as a Kingdom of Priests, redeemed from every tribe on earth

D. This Coming Kingdom is our Hope, Our Joy, Our Reward... We Are Receiving a Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken

1. Why can't this kingdom be shaken? Every other kingdom is shaken and thrown down to the dust
2. Think of the Book of Daniel... the Statue that haunted Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2... it represented the flow of world history from one human empire to another
3. But the coming Kingdom would SHATTER IT COMPLETELY and fill the whole world

Daniel 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

4. Because Christ CANNOT DIE AGAIN, and because He is OMNIPOTENT, King of kings and Lord of lords, His kingdom will last forever and ever

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Daniel 4:34 His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

Luke 1:31-33 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

E. And WE WILL RECEIVE IT as our Eternal Inheritance

1. We will be welcomed in as redeemed guests, beloved sons and daughters
2. We will sit at the banquet table in the Kingdom of Heaven
3. We will reign with Christ over the New Heaven and New Earth
4. We will inherit the earth and it will be OUR POSSESSION forever... God will give us this coming Kingdom as our very own possession
5. We are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken!!!

IV. So Let Us Be Thankful and Worship God Acceptably (vs. 28)

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe

A. Only Proper Response: Grateful, humble, reverential worship!!!

B. Simply Put: Let Us Be Thankful

1. What else can we do but fall on our faces, dissolved into thankfulness
2. What does it mean to "be thankful"?
 - a. Demeanor of the heart... a sense of the lavishness of the gift
 - b. A sense of the face that we don't deserve it
 - c. A sense of gladness in the gift... and especially,
 - d. A sense of deep love for the giver...
 - e. Gratitude is always relational!!
 - f. We never "thank" inanimate objects

As soon as a costly gift is given, the recipient immediately looks from the gift up to the face of the giver... to study that face, to understand the intent of such a costly gift; when the recipient sees love and cheerfulness in giving, the heart melts into gratitude

- g. It has to do with a costly gift given to enrich a RELATIONSHIP

h. So thankfulness is a deep heart attitude of joy in the relationship with God the Father for the giving of the Son and the unshakeable kingdom that has become our inheritance

3. Thankfulness = a sense of the history + JOY + LOVE
4. Thankfulness cannot coexist with COMPLAINING or MURMURING or anger or bitterness or any other ugly disposition; people given to arguing and complaining aren't truly thankful

C. AND SO Worship God Acceptably

1. The author's logic: the essence of acceptable worship is THANKFULNESS
2. Without thankfulness, there is no true worship of Christ
3. Worship = to offer sacrifices... to serve God religiously
 - a. In the Old Testament era, it involved various prescribed duties and responsibilities by the Levitical priests
 - b. It was ACTIVE and it was COMMANDED in very specific ways
4. Acceptable vs, unacceptable worship
 - a. In the OT, you couldn't do whatever you wanted... make up the worship as you thought best

Deuteronomy 12:8 You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit

- b. You had to go to a specific place and specific people from a specific tribe had to offer specific sacrifices in the prescribed manner
- c. When Saul thought to offer some animals to God as a sacrifice that God had wanted destroyed, Samuel told him

1 Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

- d. Therefore, there is worship that God ACCEPTS and worship that He does not accept
- e. Here in this passage, worship that God ACCEPTS must be offered with a deep sense of gratitude to Jesus Christ for the Kingdom He is giving
- f. A great picture of the powerful motive of THANKFULNESS in worship is in the cleansing of the ten lepers

Luke 17:15-16 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-- and he was a Samaritan.

So, acceptable worship must begin with an overwhelming sense of gratitude to God for giving His only begotten Son, and to Jesus for dying in your place, and to the Spirit for redeeming you personally... and to God for giving you a Kingdom that can never be shaken

BUT there is more...

D. With Reverence and Awe

1. These two words round out the inner heart dispositions of true, acceptable worship in this passage
2. Thankfulness, yes... but also reverence and awe
3. The words have to do with a DEEP HUMILITY and a sense of lowliness toward God, that He is your King, and has the right to command you
4. The first word was used to describe Jesus in Gethsemane

Hebrews 5:7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

It is sometimes translated PIETY... ultimately shown in Christ's perfect submission in this statement:

Matthew 26:39 My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Matthew 26:42 "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

5. Acceptable worship must center on our DEEP AWARENESS of the infinite majesty of this thrice-holy God; what motivated the burning holy angels to COVER THEIR FACES AND COVER THEIR FEET... this is "reverent submission"
6. The second word relates to FEAR... the fear of the Lord as a consuming fire, which we will discuss in a moment
7. Fear as AWE... a sense of God's infinite majesty taking your breath away; He is holy, He is omnipotent, He is perfect, He dwells in UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT

8. As these two heart states combine—reverent submission and godly fear—they exclude all flippant, casual excursions into His holy presence
9. So also the heart disposition of GRATITUDE completes the picture, because it combines knowledge of the gift given with humility and joy and love... all these things part of ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

V. For Our God is a Consuming Fire (vs. 29)

Hebrews 12:29 for our "God is a consuming fire."

- A. This is an AWESOME Statement of the Holiness and Zeal of God
- B. One of the Few “God IS...” Statements in the Bible
 1. God is Love
 2. God is Light
 3. God is Spirit
 4. God is Fire
- C. In this Passage: Linked with “Reverence and Awe”
 1. Because God is a consuming fire, we should worship Him with reverence and awe
 2. God is not to be trifled with

Illus. the Sun... a raging inferno, 93 million miles away; surface of the sun is 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit; the center of the sun is estimated by physicists at 27 million degrees F!!

God dwells in “unapproachable light” like the sun exists in unapproachable heat!

Ancient Greek myth: Icarus, an arrogant human being, wanted to escape his imprisonment on Crete and built wings with wax and feathers; ignoring his father’s warning, he flew too close to the sun; the wax melted and Icarus plummeted to his death

Until recently, the closest a NASA probe has been able to get to the sun is 32 million miles; a recent probe can get 8 times closer – but still 4 million miles away! Even at 4 million miles away, the temperature is 2600 degrees F!

3. We can not come to God to worship Him acceptably without a sense of His perfect holiness...

- a. The “consuming fire” metaphor when applied to God relates to His desire to purify the universe of all evil
- b. First and foremost, to rid the universe of all idols... all competing “gods”

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the LORD your God has forbidden. ²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

- c. It also relates to God’s desire to purify His people of all sin

Malachi 3:2-4 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

- d. Finally it is a picture of God’s wrath against all evildoers in the universe

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"

- e. Hence hell is pictured as a place of endless burning

Matthew 25:41 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

D. This is the Final Warning

1. The author is warning the Hebrew Christians that God is holy and has finally revealed Himself to us in Christ
2. We must worship Him acceptably, with deep gratitude and with reverence and awe
3. To turn away from God’s Son is to make this God who is a consuming fire jealous and angry... what a terrifying prospect that God would be our enemy!!

VI. Applications

- A. Come to Christ!!

1. We must flee to Christ to escape the wrath of God; as we flee to Christ, we will find Him to be infinitely delightful, the source of all joy and pleasure in the universe
- B. Realize that God is Speaking to You Through the Bible... and Listen to Him!
- C. Do Not Harden Your Heart to Anything He Says
- D. Understand the Implications of the Fact that Everything on Earth is Temporary
1. This should kill materialism and earthly ambitions
 2. This should focus your efforts on the spread of the gospel and growth in personal holiness
 3. This should make you more generous to the poor and needy
 4. This should cause you to live an upright and godly life as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming
- E. Praise Christ for the Permanence of His Kingdom
1. Look at the present-day political scene through this lens: only Christ's kingdom is unshakable
 2. Do not fear the future... Christ will reign to the ends of the earth
 3. Praise Him for the security that this gives you!!
- F. Understand Your Inheritance in Christ
1. YOU are receiving this Kingdom that cannot be shaken... it is given as a gift to YOU
 2. So... receive it!! Submit to Christ's kingly yoke every day
 3. Learn to deal with Him in the same reverent submission with which He dealt with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane
 4. When He calls you to do something, do it!
 5. And rejoice that you are receiving a future Kingdom that can never be shaken
 6. BE THANKFUL!!! No I mean it... really... learn to express thankfulness to God for everything you face
 - a. Thank Him for earthly blessings as a foretaste of your future heavenly ones

- b. Thank Him for earthly trials as they prepare you for your future heavenly inheritance
 - c. Thank Him daily for other people's salvation
 - d. Thank Him for His power to answer prayer
7. Get rid of COMPLAINING!!! You can't be both thankful and complaining at the same time
- G. Meditate Often on the Perfect Holiness of God... He is a Consuming Fire! Let that thought purge you of sinful lusts