

## 20 Hebrews 12c

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**Verse 25:** See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, <sup>26</sup> whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” <sup>27</sup> Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. <sup>29</sup> For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Here then is his final, stark warning to those in this congregation of Hebrews who have not yet decided to act on what they've heard, read and been taught: that salvation is only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross... that the Old Covenant, the Law given through Moses has been fulfilled completely by Jesus Christ and is now replaced by the New Covenant.

The old sacrificial system has been taken away because Jesus Christ was sacrificed as the Lamb of God, the perfect and complete sacrifice for sin... once for all, for all time. The blood of lambs and goats will no longer cover over sin; only the Blood of Jesus Christ is acceptable to God. The old priestly order is no longer necessary to bring man to God because the Lord Jesus Christ, Who removed any barrier that stood between God and His children, is now our Great High Priest Who sits in the presence of God the Father ever interceding for us and we, who are in Christ Jesus, we who have been born again by the Holy Spirit of God, are now seated with Him in Heavenly places, awaiting His return for us, in the clouds, at the Rapture.

When He comes, He will indeed shake the Heavens and the Earth; He will pour out His wrath on the unbelieving World of men who have disbelieved and rejected His free gift of salvation and forgiveness of sin.

He is speaking now, calling the lost to Himself... a call in which He is saying, 'Do not refuse, do not harden your hearts, do not be like those who disbelieved and died in the wilderness.' They rejected Jesus Christ when He spoke while on the Earth. Now He is speaking from Heaven, through His Word, which this writer is giving them, but also through His Holy Spirit in the hearts of every child of God. Some in this congregation will hear and obey; some will continue to close their ears and disobey; they are the ones who will go into apostasy and be lost forever.

When He returns seven years after the Rapture, at Armageddon, He will shake and destroy everything on the Earth, everything that has disbelieved and rejected His Lordship.

He is warning here again, for the last time to these Hebrews. The writer is saying, 'Come, come now, believe and put your whole faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.'

When He returns He will set up His Kingdom, a kingdom over which we too will rule and reign with Him for a thousand years. After the thousand years, God will destroy and consume by fire, everything physical and then restore everything to Godly perfection. Therefore, since we serve God Who is powerful and able to destroy and remake everything... let us serve Him and love Him with appropriate awe and reverence but never forgetting that He also loves us with Godly and Fatherly love which will never change or diminish in any way.

That's it; he has finished warning those who have heretofore refused to come all the way to faith in Jesus Christ. Now they are on their own. Five times he has warned them. They are:

1. **chapter 2:1:** 'We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away... how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?'

2. **chapter 4:12:** 'For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.'

3. **chapter 6:4:** 'It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup>who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, <sup>6</sup>if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.'

4. **chapter 10:26:** 'If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, <sup>27</sup>but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.'

5. **chapter 12:25:** 'See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. 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?'

These are the passages which cause some to mistakenly believe that God's Word teaches that those who have been born again can go into apostasy and lose their salvation. That is absolutely untrue. The Word of God is replete with overwhelming evidence of God's gift of Eternal Life, that whom He chose before the foundation of the World, He will call and draw to Himself and He will save with everlasting salvation.

Rather, these verses constitute a dire warning to so many who fill churches today who are not really born again; they say the right things and do the right actions; they look like Christians but they are headed to Hell.

Throughout this letter to Hebrews He has been warning those who have not yet come to true saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross. These are some of the very few parts of the New Testament which are actually written to nonbelievers. Almost everything of Paul's writings is written strictly to the Church, teaching true doctrine to believers. That's one of the reasons that some have fallen into the trap of believing that these areas are also to the Church, that believers could lose their salvation.

Now, as he moves on to Chapter 13, he returns to speaking to believers, teaching truth and doctrine. Paul and the writer of Hebrews have taught exhaustively that the Old Covenant, the Ten Commandments and all the other laws given through Moses have been completely fulfilled and set aside by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ through His life, death and resurrection. The Ten Commandments no longer have the same purpose. For unbelievers, trying to keep the Ten commandments is pointless; no one can be good enough to merit any favor with God... all are sinners and enemies of God and they have no purpose for the believer for the same reason, but also because the Lord Jesus Christ has completely kept all of God's commandments for us; His perfect obedience has been imputed to us. Now, God only sees the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ in us. As far as He is concerned, we have perfectly kept all the Law because we are IN Christ; His righteousness is now imputed to us.

After spending so much time teaching that the Old Covenant, the Law, the 10 Ten Commandments have been replaced by the New Covenant, he reiterates what the Lord Jesus gave as the Commandment which would supersede and encompass all of the others having to do with men's relationships to God and others. Instead of the Law, instead of the Ten Commandments, Jesus Christ gave just two commandments that would cover all of the 10 Commandments: 'Jesus said, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup>This is *the* first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup>***On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.***' Matt 22:37 If you can keep these two, you will have kept all of the Law and Prophets.

Also, He said, 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.' John 13:34

Think about it: the first one Jesus gave covered all of the first 4 Commandments: 1. I Am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before Me. 2. You shall not make any graven image. 3. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain. 4. You shall remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. If you love God

with all your heart, you won't have any other gods before Him, you won't make idols to worship, you won't take His Name in vain and you will set aside time to honor Him.

The second commandment Jesus gave covered the final 6 commandments: 5. Honor you father and mother. 6. You shall not kill. 7. Do not commit adultery. 8. Do not steal. 9. Do not lie or bear false witness. 10. Do not covet anything of your neighbor's. If you love your neighbor as yourself, and your parents, you will honor them. You will not kill them or commit adultery with them or steal from them or lie to or about them and you will not covet what they have.

Those two commandments from Jesus covered all 10 Commandments and they apply to all of our interactions with anyone and everyone, whether or not they are believers. What Jesus said in John, goes even further, pertaining to our relationships with all other believers, to **love one another as I have loved you**... to love each other sacrificially to even the laying down of our lives for each other. That was the love Paul was writing about in 1 Cor 13: love is patient, kind, longsuffering... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things... love never fails... that is what Jesus meant by His command of how we are to love each other.

These are the two commandments which encompass the New Covenant. These are the two Laws which God has written on our hearts and the Holy Spirit is ever present to remind us, when we need it, how everything regarding God's will fits into these two.

**Chapter 13:1** 'Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels. <sup>3</sup> Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

Brotherly love refers to Jesus' command that we love one another, that we purposefully love other **believers** but also, to be kind to unbelievers or those whom we don't know whether or not they are. They might even be angels. When he writes about remembering prisoners... he means imprisoned Christians and especially those imprisoned and persecuted for their faith. That is made obvious by his writing of the phrase, 'since you yourselves are **in the body also**'... in the body of Christ... fellow believers. In fact, these are the prisoners Jesus Christ was referring to when He said, 'When I was in prison you did (or did not) visit Me.

**Verse 4:** 'Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.'

Marriage was established by God and is to be honored; it is not a gift from, or owned by, the government. It was given as the foundation of the family which is the foundation of all society and civil government, beginning with one family, increasing to a larger community, a city, a state and a sovereign nation. That is why there is such a push, today, to destroy the framework of family life from every part of the world system. Only when families, cities and national sovereignty become fragmented, can the long prophesied one world government of the Antichrist finally come to fruition. We're watching that happen now.

God meant for marriage to be a representation of the relationship between God and Israel and especially the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church. That's why Paul, when he is instructing husbands on how to love their wives, his example is the Lord Jesus Christ; he says:

'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. <sup>30</sup> For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. <sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband.' Eph 5:25

In this one sentence, 'Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge,' in that sentence, God is saying, anything a husband and wife do in their own bed, together, is honorable in that it is a representation of their having become one through marriage, just as the true believer has become one with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is also saying, in this one short sentence, that every sexual act outside of a marriage between one man and one woman is fornication and adultery, both physically and spiritually and will be judged by God. Now, of course, if someone has done something that is fornication or is a married person who has committed adultery, there is always complete forgiveness and restoration available from God and it is His will that there also be complete forgiveness and restoration in a marriage. That's not an easy thing to accomplish, of course, but when he commands us how to love each other, if we choose to obey and love... it becomes something that is not only possible, but is, in reality, a thing that can actually result in a miraculously healed, strong and loving marriage relationship between a husband and wife.

**Verse 5:** *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.* For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

We see here that although the writer has been teaching his Hebrew readers that the Old Covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant, that we are no longer under the Law, that God has now written His laws on the hearts of His children, He still, throughout the New Testament, continues to remind us of the laws which He has written on our hearts, that sin is still sin, even though the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has covered it in His children. Don't commit fornication, don't commit adultery and don't covet what someone else has. But notice the difference here in the New Testament as opposed to the Old. Before, He simply said, thou shalt not. Do not murder, do not steal, do not covet, etc. Now, He gives the guidance for **not** doing those things. 'Love your wife, love one another, be content with what you have, instead of stealing... give, etc.' and why can we, with confidence, do those things? Because He has promised, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you... I am your helper, do not fear.'

**Verse 7:** Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct. <sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. <sup>9</sup> Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines.

His meaning here is, those within the Church who lead... pastors and elders. God means for them to be men who are above reproach who are good examples for every other man to follow, in their faith, in their actions and in their own families. God intends for pastors and elders to be men... not women. His Word is very clear on that and they are to be not divorced or divorced and remarried. Again, God's Word is very clear. Let's see: 'A bishop then must be blameless, the **husband of one wife**...' 1 Tim 3:2

'...appoint elders in every city as I commanded you, if a **man** is blameless, the **husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For **a bishop must be blameless**, as a steward of God...' Titus 1:5

Now... how do I know that when Paul says, '**the husband of one wife**,' he means that a pastor or elder should be undivorced and unremarried, and that he doesn't simply mean, a man who has just one wife at a time, instead of a harem of wives, since in those times, some men had multiple wives at once... like Jacob did centuries before.

Here's the proof of that: A little later in his letter to Timothy, Paul uses the exact phrase, but applied to widows: 'Honor widows **who are really widows**. <sup>4</sup> But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God... Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, **and not unless** she has been **the wife of one man**...' 1Tim 5:4 I don't think anyone could make the mistake of believing that what Paul meant was a woman who had only one husband instead of several at the same time, a harem of husbands. He obviously

meant a widow who had been married only once and he obviously meant a pastor or elder who has been married only once.

God means for pastors and elders to be men above reproach who are good examples of Christian faith. Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes, nor does His Word or His Will ever change. He says to not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. The first opening to strange, destructive false doctrines in a church is through the pastor or elder; the first step to allowing destructive heresies into a church is a pastor or elder living in disobedience to God's Word. As soon as people see the pastor being disobedient in even a seemingly small thing, they think, 'If he can do it... then I can too.'

Although God's Word is clear on the qualifications of pastors and elders as men, that doesn't mean women are less important or unnecessary in the life of a church. He is not saying that they are restricted from being teachers or leaders in various areas. But God's Word specifies that only men who meet certain, strict qualifications are to be pastors or elders.

Jesus Christ never changes and even though human customs and ideas do change, He, His Word and His Will for our lives and for the Church never does. Various and strange doctrines are allowed into a church because the regular people in the church don't know their Bible well enough or have spiritual courage enough to stand against what is contrary to God's Word or to even recognize when it comes in, or they think, 'Who am I to contradict the pastor?' If a pastor or elder or anyone else espouses anything that is clearly contrary to God's Word, they must be confronted... first, one on one... then with another witness... and finally before the whole church. If we don't do that, then we, too, are guilty of enabling false doctrine to creep into the church.

**Verse 9b:** 'For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.'

We are established in Christ as members of His body, one with His Holy Spirit by God's grace. We are saved by God's grace through faith in His Word but it is only by God's grace. We are not saved by any dietary restrictions or lack thereof. He is again referring to the Old Covenant. We aren't saved by keeping the Law regarding eating or not eating: shellfish, pork, vegetables or meat. Many people, many church groups are occupied with rules and restrictions about food in order to set themselves apart as being the '*true church*.'

The most obvious example is, of course, the SDA's who demand a vegetarian diet to be pleasing to God. The writer says that they are not profited at all by their many restrictions. In fact, to stand on such rules and regulations can actually be what keeps them from salvation by God's grace because of believing that their own 'works' are what will make them acceptable to God.

**Verse 10:** 'We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. <sup>11</sup> For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.'

Our altar is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and it is He Who was placed upon the altar as the only acceptable sacrifice for our sin. Those who were continuing to offer sacrifices on the altar of the Temple which was still standing when this letter was written, were cut off from our altar, the Lord Jesus Christ, because they continued to place their faith in the blood of bulls and goats and not in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. They continued to have faith *in the shadows* which were abolished when the *substance*, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to die. They rejected the Truth when He came to them.

Also, we were placed on that same altar with Him. We were crucified with Him and that is the same altar upon which we are beseeched, by Paul, to present our bodies as living sacrifices. And just as the Old Covenant priests had to offer sacrifices day after day after day we, too, must be willing to day after day after day present our own bodies on that altar... a constant, never ending sacrifice of submission and obedience. The bodies of the animals, which we saw the High Priest sacrifice on the altar and then take their blood into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, they were not eaten by the priests like the bodies of other animals, they were burned outside the camp and then later, after the Temple was built, outside the walls of Jerusalem. So

then, Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God was also sacrificed outside the city on the hill, Golgotha. We were chosen by God before the foundation of the World. We were sanctified, set apart and made holy when He was sacrificed in our place on the Cross; we were crucified with Him.

**Verse 13:** 'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. <sup>14</sup> For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.'

Jesus is hated by the world, as an outcast. He said that we, if we identify with Him, would be hated by the world also. We are called to identify with Him, to go outside the city gate, to reject the world system that rejects Him, knowing that it will hate us too.

Everything we see here, in the world, will end; it will all be destroyed by fire. We are to set our hearts and minds on the things above, seeking the eternal city God has prepared for us, His children, the New Jerusalem.

If our hearts are set on anything of the Earth, it will only result in loss for us. If we set our hearts and minds on the things of God, the things above and on the New Jerusalem, it will always result in great gain for us.

Many supposed Christians are not hated by the World. They love the world and they love the things that are in the world, and the world, in turn, loves or at least tolerates them. The world does not tolerate, at all, the true children of God.

When we identify with Jesus Christ, when we acknowledge Him, when we confess Him before the world, we are bearing His reproach because when we do, the world will hate us. He was reproached and we will be also, that is, unless we are ashamed of Him and choose to deny Him in which case, we will have chosen to become a friend of the world and so, to become an enemy of God.