

## I. Review

- A. The writer is speaking directly to the suffering and trials that the readers are currently experiencing as a result of their Christian faith. Though they are suffering from persecution in their current circumstances, the writer applies his exhortation to suffering and negative circumstances in general.
- B. The overall exhortation to the Hebrews in this section is that God in His perfect leadership uses all the circumstances, both positive and negative, to form love in us; thus, bringing us into the fullness of life and preparing us to inherit salvation.
  - 1. The specific application here in this section is an exhortation to respond rightly to the negative circumstances of suffering that they are experiencing.
- C. The writer lays out a framework in which to filter, understand, and respond to the suffering in such a way as to allow God to use it to bring us further into loving intimacy with Him and allowing Him to conform us into His image. A wrong understanding and response to suffering causes a diminishing of our faith, love, and hope in God.
  - 1. Hold fast to your confession in the process and promise of salvation.
  - 2. Look to the great cloud of witnesses.
  - 3. Lay aside all distractions and sin.
  - 4. Set your heart to endure the process and leadership of your perfect Father, who is bringing you into the fullness of love through chastening.
  - 5. Be intentional with your relationships to pursue peace and holiness.
  - 6. Press into grace and resist a legalistic heart.

## II. Verse-by-Verse

- A. For you have not come to Mt. Sinai - The writer will once again make it clear that a new covenant has been established by God which positions us to inherit the fullness of salvation and love through and in Jesus.
  - 1. The giving of the law experience at Sinai was very physical in the sense that you could physically touch, hear, and see the activity of God outwardly. I believe this is what the writer is saying when speaking of the mountain being “touched”. (Deut. 4-5; Ex. 19-20)

2. The Sinai covenant was given and received through the fear and dread of God with a clear message that God was unapproachable even though they had done everything He commanded through actions of cleansing and righteousness. The experience was marked by darkness, terror, and dread.
3. The words that God spoke were not received and the people begged that God would cease to speak as they could not endure it. They were commanded not to come near to God or they would be killed.
4. Even Moses, who is clearly the pinnacle character that Judaism looks to as the most righteous and nearest to God of all the patriarchs, was terrified and filled with fear when faced with the realities of relationship with God under the Sinai covenant. (Ex. 32:10-11; Deut. 9:8, 19)
5. Did not produce righteousness and holiness - Clearly this was written to a people who knew the story and details of the giving of the law and covenant at Sinai. By implication, they would also immediately recall the fact that while Moses was up on the mountain, the people who had just experienced the awe and terror of institution of the old covenant, built an idol and worshiped it as God within days. (Deut. 9:8-17)

B. You have come to Mt. Zion - Through the new covenant established upon the sacrificial body and blood of Jesus, you have been brought to a different mountain. You have been ushered back into the mountain city of God (Eden), into the very presence of God in the holiest place, His heavenly temple.

1. In contrast to the outward physical flesh experience of Sinai, this covenant was established in the inward spirit of your heart and has, by grace through faith, qualified you as righteous and holy in the very likeness of God.
2. Unlike the Sinai covenant, through which God was clearly unapproachable and you were commanded not to come near nor to even touch the mountain. You, in contrast, have the accessibility to God like the angels themselves, who were considered the holiest and worthiest creatures and credited as the ones who gave the Torah in its fullness to the people.
3. Unlike the Sinai covenant, you could not ascend the blackness and tempest of the mountain. You, along with all the new covenant believers, have

been brought up the mountain of God and into the light and glory of His presence.

4. Unlike the fear and dread that overwhelmed the people in the giving of the old covenant, in their inability to be justified through the keeping of it. You have been brought near to God, even in His identity and role as the Judge of righteousness and perfecter of righteousness in the spirits of all men, and stand justified in the process of perfection in His presence.
5. Unlike the sacrifices and washings of the old covenant, which still could not make you clean as you draw near. You have been brought near to Jesus through His identity as the mediator of the new covenant and have been made righteous, holy, and consecrated through the application of His blood through His priesthood.
6. Speaks a better word than the blood of Abel - The blood and death of the murder of the innocent Jesus cried out “better” things to the Lord. The blood of Jesus cries out mercy and forgiveness for the people under its sprinkling. Whereas the blood of innocent Abel cried out from the ground for the Lord to take vengeance upon Cain's sin. In its context, the word picture is the blood and sacrifices offered under the old covenant was like that of Abel's blood that did not forgive sin but rather cried out of the continual guilt of the individual offering it. The sacrifice of blood offered in the new covenant cries out continual forgiveness and mercy that is applied to our sin so that we can stand in God's presence with no fear of judgment.

C. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks - The writer reminds us of the “why” and “what” the Lord spoke to the people on Mt. Sinai. The “why” of the Mt. Sinai gathering was so the Lord could marry Himself to a unique consecrated people in loving intimate nearness and partnership forever. The words He spoke at Sinai were the commandments of righteousness and holiness that would position His people to walk in marriage relationship with Him. Jesus said those words spoken on Sinai could all be summed up in this, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then with the love of God in you; love one another.”

1. This is how we are to understand the jealous love of God. He loves us with all His heart and has held back nothing, He has never loved another nor given His strength to any other purpose other than relationship with us. The One who loves us with all longs with jealousy that we love Him

back with all. What bridegroom is there that abides a bride who keeps other lovers? What good Father allows His children to live in an impoverished state when He has the fullness of resources to give them the fullness of life?

2. Do not refuse Him who speaks - The writer warns that the jealous love of God will not accept anything less than wholehearted love and will not relent in His pursuit of it. The warning is given through the idea of severity that He will need to use to get through to the hardened heart. (Book of Revelation progressive Judgments)

D. He has promised to shake all things - As a wholehearted jealous Bridegroom who longs for all of His bride's heart, and as a good Father who desires to bring you into the fullness of life, He will—as a warrior—wage war to shake all things that hinder those realities. The writer references Haggai 2:5-7, 20-23 where the Lord speaks of His intention to shake all things as the warrior God in order to bring all into the reality of desiring and loving the one true desire of humanity.

1. Just as the Lord shook the mountain at the first revealing of His desire to consecrate and join Himself forever in whole-hearted love to His own special people, the Lord will shake everything in His pursuit of all of our hearts. This shaking will bring forth a suffering that reveals our other lovers and idols that we are more than likely unaware of without the experience of the shaking.

E. We are receiving an unshakable kingdom - What we must keep ever before us in the seasons of shaking, and especially in the great day of shaking that God prophesied will come before He returns, is that even though it causes us to momentarily suffer, it is meant to bring us into the fullness of love and life that He has predestined us to inherit eternally.

F. Let us have grace that we may serve God - The prayer is not that God would not bring shaking; on the contrary, the prayer is for the shaking to come and to be empowered by God to walk out our faith and love, allowing the shaking to produce its desired result.

G. For our God is a consuming fire - The fire of God biblically speaks of His jealous, powerful, lifegiving, all-consuming love that He has for us. Natural fire is meant to be understood as the constant prophetic witness of His love. Fire consumes all things and is jealous for all it can consume. Fire will melt all impurities and dross until all that remains is the purest of gold. Fire is the producer of our light, heat,

and that which gives the earth natural life. Let us all walk in the understanding, clarity, sobriety, hope, and bliss that God's love is an unrelenting consuming fiery love that will have all of us. (Ex. 24:17)