

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
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An Unshakeable Kingdom

Read Hebrews 12:18-29

Key verse: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that can’t be shaken, let’s continue to express our gratitude. With this gratitude, let’s serve in a way that is pleasing to God with respect and awe” (Hebrews 12:28).

Unshakeable Kingdom

Failing economies; dysfunctional political systems; troubles in the family, on the job, and in our churches—sometimes it seems our world is about to crumble. When the future is unsure, remember that all who follow Christ are part of God’s unshakeable kingdom: “...we are receiving a kingdom that can’t be shaken” (Hebrews 12:28).

Whether in our lifetimes or not, this old world will eventually crumble, and only God’s eternal kingdom will stand. In the meantime, the shaking and sifting all around us point to a kingdom that can never be destroyed: “*Still once more I will shake not only the earth but heaven also.* The words ‘still once more’ reveal the removal of what is shaken—the things that are part of this creation—so that what isn’t shaken will remain” (12:27).

When we feel anxious about the future, these promises offer great hope and assurance. No matter what the world’s future holds, our future in Christ is built on a foundation that cannot be destroyed. In Christ, we are part of a kingdom that cannot be shaken!

Better Covenant

Verses 18-24 describe the contrast between how the people approached God at Mount Sinai and the relationship we can have with God through Christ. At Mount Sinai the people approached God in fear and terror. In Christ, we can approach God with faith and assurance. Before Jesus came, God sometimes seemed distant, vengeful, and unapproachable. Because of Jesus, God welcomes us into His presence.

In Christ, we are citizens of heaven—“Mount Zion” (v. 22). We look forward to our heavenly home. Meanwhile, we can know God’s presence and power with us as we walk with Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Important Warnings

While this new covenant of grace and the love of God in Christ are wonderful, we must not presume on God's grace or turn back from following Jesus: "See to it that you don't resist the one who is speaking. If the people didn't escape when they refused to listen to the one who warned them on earth, how will we escape if we reject the one who is warning from heaven?" (v. 25)

God is loving and gracious. God is also holy and just.

I am reminded of what was reported about Hurricane Charley and its destruction in the state of Florida. Charley's 100-mile per hour winds left a path of destruction. Many billboards and signs were toppled, but one billboard that was left standing conveyed a powerful message. The hurricane peeled back this billboard's advertisement to reveal a previous message underneath. The billboard now read: "We need to talk. God."

"Since we are receiving a kingdom that can't be shaken...let's serve in a way that is pleasing to God with respect and awe, because our God really is a consuming fire" (12:28-29).

(Contact Michael at msigler@fumcfwb.com.)