

Judgment Despite Our Motivation

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[0 : 00] Let's take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12 where we're at this morning and we have been for the last few weeks. There's really a lot in this passage and in this letter that I've been personally challenged by.

I've studied Hebrews before from an academic perspective. But to go through it verse by verse and to pray through it and to preach through it has been a completely different matter for me.

And brings Hebrews to a different light for myself. And so I've been blessed by this. I hope you have as well. The exposure, the extended exposure to this text of scripture, this book that I have not personally heard preached very often from the pulpit.

And I don't think it's that pastors avoid it. I think it's just pastors typically tend to lean on the other Pauline epistles, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and such.

[1 : 08] Every now and then they get roped into doing a series on the book of Revelation. Which I have had a few people say, Pastor you need to preach on Revelation and end times.

And I smiled and said, that sounds like a good idea. But with every intention of honestly maybe doing that possibly in the coming years.

So I'm still praying over that. If you pray for me on that, that would be great. And thank you Josh for encouraging me to go through Hebrews last year. When I told you I was thinking about it, you're like, do it.

And I'm glad I did. There's been a lot in this text as far as it relates to going through hardships and trials. And I just think about, I mean, I write down prayer requests every week, praises and such.

And during the week I'm confronted with opportunities to pray for people. And I try to keep you in the loop as seems beneficial.

[2 : 10] And there's one that I've overlooked unintentionally. And as I was thinking about getting into this text, I think of the conversation I've recently had after service with Nancy Wood.

She's a quiet person at times. And she shared with me after Bible study a couple weeks ago.

Well, I'll start by saying after a service a couple weeks ago, she just came through and she said, Pastor, that message was for me.

And I've had people make those statements before. And it's not that I don't believe them at all. And like I just, a lot of times I don't know what that means. I mean, does it mean like you were dealing with a thought issue or problem that, you know, God's worked it out or you're going through something that God used this for?

And it was related to here in Hebrews 12. And it deals, you know, dealing in the context that Hebrews 12 is that those who the author was writing to was going through trials.

[3 : 18] They're going through hardships. And so you keep that in mind as you're reading through Hebrews 11, Hebrews 12, and then to the end of 13. You keep in mind that he's writing to people who are being persecuted, being plundered and losing their lives and losing their livelihoods for identifying with Jesus.

And they're going through hardships. And I had mentioned, you know, that no matter what we're going through, you know, it's the discipline of the Lord in our lives.

You know, to bring us away from selfishness to selflessness. God is molding us into the image of his son.

And you look at Jesus, who was perfect and loving and righteous, and yet he suffered greatly. And so, you know, that's a teaching that's been in the church forever, right, ever since Jesus was here.

And it's not the first time that's been preached from this pulpit. But so when she shared that with me, I didn't, you know, make much of it. I'm like, oh, okay. She's going through. You know, there's something that's on her mind she's been going through or whatever that she was particularly challenged by.

[4 : 29] And then that Wednesday, she brought up at prayer meeting a prayer request she had. And then I just, I put two and two together. I'm like, God, you know, works out perfect timing in everything, right?

And I didn't know that three quarters of the way through the year I'd still be in the book of Hebrews. So thank you, Lord, that I'm long-winded, right? I can be a windbag at times, and it goes long.

So she shared with me. She said, she had mentioned, and I'm probably butchering the specifics, but I'm going to give you the gist of it. Her kidneys are failing.

And I didn't expect to get emotional up here. Sorry. And she'd been struggling with the reality of dialysis.

It was something that she said that she couldn't deal with. She didn't want to go through that. I guess I'd probably be accurate in saying that you were ready in your mind to just let that be it and to go see Jesus, right?

[5 : 35] And it was through the preaching of the word in Hebrews 12, of all places, that God worked in her life, and she had made the decision that she would actually pursue dialysis, go through that process, which is going to be very inconvenient.

And I don't know, painful, probably. I've never gone through it. I have no idea. I have no idea. And, you know, one of those disruptors to the convenience of our lives.

But I was just thinking about that as we were singing, praise him, praise him. And I'm thinking about, you know, the author of Hebrews is telling his readership to praise God in the midst of trials, to keep the focus on Jesus and to be selfless and not selfish.

And so, you know, I praise God for allowing me to go through this book with you. Praise God for what it's done in the lives, however it may have touched you, over the course of the last 28 sermons in the book of Hebrews.

And I'm thankful for the way that it's touched your life, Nancy. So I just wanted to share that and encourage you to pray for her and encourage her because it's not an easy place to be.

[6 : 59] You know, I wish I'd stop being so emotional and crying about it so I can be clearer in my words. But it's not an easy place to be, to be, you know, as you get older.

Nancy, I don't think you're old. Just set up. But as the, you know, as your body breaks down because of the effects of sin and you go through different trials, I think of Brett in your lung capacity at like 2.5%.

No, I mean, I know it's low. What's your lung capacity at? 25%. 24%. Do I have 23? No. But no, it's just like the trials you go through as your body breaks down, but your focus is on Jesus.

And it's just like, to me, that just means so much. And I think of Ruth Boothby. And she's in the hospital. And who knows?

I don't know if she'll come out of this COVID bout. We have no idea, right? Two years ago, we didn't know about Margaret. Three, four years ago, we didn't know about Carrie. No, it's just amazing, you know, what people go through. Trials.

[8 : 06] And each of those things, it's a discipline of God. It's God disciplining us. He's training us to be like his son. So I just want to say thank you to all of you.

And the testimony and encouragement you are to me. All right.

Eyes are drying out. Thank you. Thank you very much. I want to show this poem by Walter B. Knight.

Just kind of get us into the text here. He writes, Pressed out of measure, impressed to all length. Pressed so intensely, it seems beyond strength.

Pressed in the body and pressed in the soul. Pressed in the mind till the dark surges roll. Pressure by foes and pressure by friends. Pressure on pressure till life nearly ends.

[9 : 15] Pressed into loving the staff and the rod. Pressed into knowing no helper but God. Pressed into liberty where nothing clings. Pressed into faith for impossible things.

Pressed into living a life in the Lord. Pressed into living a Christ life outpoured. This poem, I think, is a good introductory reminder of what's taking place in the lives of the readers of Hebrews, both then and now.

The trials and persecution that they were experiencing were part of the discipline of the Lord to bring them to Christ-likeness. And in Hebrews 12, 7, he says, It is for discipline that you have to endure.

It is for training in righteousness. It is for being made and molded into the image of Christ that you have to endure what you're going through. And according to Hebrews 10, 32, they were facing public affliction.

They were facing imprisonment. They were plundering of their property. They were losing everything. And they were doing it joyfully with their eyes on the prize of Jesus, knowing there was something greater that would last.

[10 : 27] And since they were to endure these trials, the author instructs them to lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet. Basically, the author is saying, don't give up and stay focused.

Don't give up and keep running the course. Keep your eye on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, Hebrews 12, 1. The challenge can aptly be put to us.

Even though you are exhausted and you want to give up, don't. You may be mentally defeated, emotionally drained, and physically spent, but don't give in.

Rather, continue to run with endurance. Keep your eyes on Jesus who endured to the very end. Though you're worn out, keep running in faith.

Strive for peace with all people. Strive for the holiness that we are called to by our Savior. Don't let the lost person in the assembly be content without faith in Jesus.

[11 : 31] Don't let a malcontent stay in the church. Deal with sin specifically. Don't let it linger. Sexual immorality was prevalent in the church at the very beginning and still has a strong hold on God's people today, especially through the medium of pornography.

The race we run has many obstacles, but we need to keep pushing forward. And the reason why we are to continue to strive for holiness and live in righteousness is because we have a different motivation than those who received the old covenant.

Hebrews chapter 12, verses 18 through 21. For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg, that no further messages be spoken to them, for they could not endure the order that was given.

Quote, if even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned, end quote. Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear.

Father, please give us understanding and direction today, Lord, and guide us as your spirit leads and directs and is shaping us to be like Jesus.

[12 : 55] Amen. So looking at this text of scripture, looking at the introduction here, and judgment, that we're going to endure judgment despite our motivation, verses 18 through 21, we see that the covenant of Sinai had a motivation of fear.

So we look at how God has interacted with and revealed himself to mankind and to the Israelites specifically at Sinai, and you see what took place there as you're reading in Exodus 19 and following.

You know that the mountain was so charged with the holiness of God who manifested himself there that for man or beast even to touch the mountain meant certain death.

In fact, they said that if any man or beast came in and touched it, that they were to be put to death not by like hanging them or anything like that, but by stoning them. You know, it had to be something, you had to keep your distance from this individual and put them to death.

Exodus 19, 12, and 18, it says, and you shall set limits. So this is God speaking to Moses. You shall set limits for the people all around, saying, take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it.

[14 : 12] Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it and fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

As God was preparing to meet Moses and to give him the law and to establish this covenant with his people, he said, look, they need to keep their distance because he was descending on the mountain.

If anyone touches the mountain, they're to be put to death. Mountain was holy ground and not just anybody could go up there.

Moses was permitted but no one else. In Exodus 20, verse 18, it says, now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled and they stood far off.

I don't blame them. You're by a mountain. You're by this huge piece of earth and there you are.

[15 : 22] There's a camp, two million people camping out and you see the mountain starting to smoke and you're seeing this flash of lightning and the sounds of trumpets.

Like, man, what's going on up there? It was only Moses who went up and all this is taking place and certainly they were afraid for his own safety and we see that later on when he didn't come down when they expected him to and they told Aaron, make us a golden calf that we can go back to Egypt.

We don't know what happened to this Moses but here, make a God for us and we can continue on. So Moses went up. He had permission to be there but everyone else, there was to be limits. They were set a distance away and then the covenant was given and it's a covenant of law.

It was the law as we understand it in the Pentateuch of the Bible, the first five books there and it was a covenant of judgment and fear. Oftentimes, as you read through the Old Testament, it says, do not do this or do not do that or you will be judged and in some cases it says, do not do this or you will die.

Now this is a, it's a law and it's a fearful thing. You want, you don't want to break the law. If I do that and I'm going to die, if I do that, I don't want to do that. The motivation for obedience was fear.

[16 : 50] They were afraid of what would happen to them. They were afraid of breaking the rules. They were afraid of dying, of losing their life. Some of them were afraid to offend a holy God and some of them were afraid to be found out in their sin and the consequences brought upon them.

But the motivation ultimately was fear. I don't want something to happen to me so I'm going to do this. And you see that and so when your motivation factor is fear, you're afraid of what's going to happen to you if you don't do something or if you do something wrong, you're not really doing it for the right reasons.

And we see that in the Old Testament in Isaiah, Isaiah 1, when God says, who requires of you to come to my temple? The trampling of my courts, who requires you to bring these sacrifices and offerings?

And the answer is clearly, you did. Because you said if we didn't, this would happen. No, bad stuff would happen. So we bring this stuff. And the whole point that Isaiah is making, that God's making through Isaiah is that they were doing, going through the motions with their heart was far from God.

They were going through the motions because they were afraid of being put out and no longer being God's covenant people. here in verse 21 of Hebrews 12, got Moses' words, I tremble with fear.

[18 : 32] I was curious to where that took place. I don't remember him saying that. And I was like, I wonder where this took place. There is nowhere in the Old Testament that Moses says, I tremble with fear in relation to Mount Sinai, directly about himself.

The closest Old Testament parallels in Deuteronomy where Moses reminds the people of his prayer for them after the incident of the golden calf.

Right? So, you know, God's given Moses the law and then the people are down keeping their distance away from the mountain, making a golden calf, an image that they can worship.

And God is a just God and a jealous God as well and he's like, nope, this is it. I'm going to be done with this people and I'm going to make a great people out of you.

Remember when he, do you remember reading that or hearing about that anyway when he told Moses that? And he was ready to wipe them out. Like, two million people just turned away from the one who brought them out of Egypt.

[19 : 39] And then in Deuteronomy 9.19, Moses reminds the people before going into the promised land, for I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the Lord bore against you so that he was ready to destroy you but the Lord listened to me that time also.

He said, I was afraid. I was with him when he was getting angry. And I was afraid. I trembled. And I prayed for you. I said, Lord, please do not take out these people.

Right? And he didn't. He listened to Moses. But that's like the only parallel in the Old Testament related to Mount Sinai that I came across that it said, Moses said, I was afraid and trembling.

Another parallel could be in Stephen's speech in Acts 7 where in the face of the theophany at the burning bush. Again, that's Moses. And he says, Moses trembled and did not dare to look.

So whatever the case is, it has to do with the presence of the Lord. And there was fear there by Moses. And this reference to Moses trembling, it could be Jewish tradition.

[20 : 54] But whatever the case is, fear, it was fear factor that drove people's acceptance and obedience in the law. They recognized how powerful God is and they were afraid.

Now, Christians, we've not come to a sacred mountain which can be touched physically and, but we've come to a heavenly dwelling place. Right? We don't have, there is no fear of us getting too close to the mountain and touching it and dying.

Right? Hebrews 12, 22 through 24. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to innumerable angels in festal gathering and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and to God, the judge of all and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.

And to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. So we see here in verses 22 through 24, the covenant of Zion has a motivation of love.

Now, love does not appear in word in this passage. So I want to make that clear. Love does not appear in word in this passage.

[22 : 18] but love exists in this passage. See, we've not come to the sacred mountain.

We're going to be afraid to touch it or we're going to die. No, but we've come to the heavenly dwelling place of God. We do not have, as Spurgeon puts it, the impenetrable cloud of apprehension resting over us.

We don't have a fear of coming to God or getting too close. Rather, we have access to God in a way that was not permitted before.

In Hebrews 4, verse 16, we covered this nine years ago. Hebrews 4, 16, let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

See, Sinai symbolizes the law and Zion symbolizes grace. So no man can be saved by the law but anyone can be saved by grace.

[23 : 23] The law confronts us with commandments, judgment, and condemnation. But grace presents us with forgiveness, atonement, and salvation. That salvation was accomplished through a tremendous act of love.

Why we can come to Mount Zion, the city of God, to New Jerusalem, because of a great act of love. John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

God's love sent his son to die for us. An act of love provides salvation for us.

Romans 5, 8, but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. While we were still blaspheming the name of God, while we were still shaking our fist that God, while we were still disobedient to our creator, and willingly so, Jesus died for us.

Salvation through the son of God gives us the expectation of heaven. In Hebrews 12, 22 through 24, it's beautifully laid out. This is not an extensive, exhaustive list of what heaven is like and what's there, but when I was going through what's there, listen to this, what's in Hebrews 12, 22 through 24, this is what's in heaven that we can expect to see, right?

- [25 : 09] There's the heavenly Jerusalem. So there's the heavenly city Jerusalem, not the earthly city Jerusalem, different, and we'll get to that later. So you got heavenly Jerusalem.
- We'll get there, I promise. Yes, Revelation, but even before we go through Revelation, we'll get there, this servant. So heavenly Jerusalem with the heavenly temple, remember the heavenly temple we've talked about for like seven chapters in Hebrews?
- Numerous angels in festal garb, right? They're celebrating. They're dressed for a party, if I can put it that way. The assembly of the firstborn.
- That is, that's just a long way to say the church, right? The church, universal, not like just this church, but those who are in Christ.
- God, naturally, the judge of all will be there. Spirits of the righteous made perfect. It didn't take me long to figure out what this was talking about.
- [26 : 13] He's talking about Old Testament saints. He had just talked about Hebrews 11, all these people who lived and died in faith, believing in God's promises, but not yet receiving them.
- But yet when Jesus came, he fulfills them. And now they are the righteous, they're still righteous in God's sight because of their faith, are made perfect. Because now Jesus has finally come and sprinkled his blood on the altar of the heavenly temple.
- So the righteous made perfect. That's the Old Testament saints. Jesus, the mediator, is there. Hey, that's good news. And then, the last thing mentioned, the blood of Jesus.
- The blood of Jesus. Sounds like a cult. We're looking for blood, man. But it's not just any blood.
- The blood of Jesus, which is so precious and rightfully has a major presence in heaven.
- [27 : 22] So remember, he poured his blood on the altar, the heavenly altar, before God for the forgiveness of our sin. His sacrifice was acceptable and perfect.
- It's so precious. I mean, think about this. Ephesians 1, 7. It's the means of our redemption. In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.
- Ephesians 2, 13. It's how we are brought near to God. But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- It's the blood of Christ that brings us near to God. God. Colossians 1, 19 and 20. It's the source of peace that's made with God. For in him, that's in Jesus, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
- Sinner, we are transgressors of God's expectations. We have offended a holy God. But peace is made with that God through the blood of Jesus.
- [28 : 46] 1 John 1, 7. It's what cleanses us from sin. But if we walk in the light as he's in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin.
- This is the precious blood that is mentioned in heaven, that is in heaven, that we get to see firsthand when we're there. This is how important it is.
- Revelation 1, 5, it is what frees us from sin. And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of kings on earth to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.
- I missed that last time. If you notice, he loves us. Right? The motivation of Mount Zion is love.
- Jesus loves us. He died for us. He paid the penalty for us. His blood is so precious that it has a major presence in heaven. The covenant of Zion is a motivation of love.

- [29 : 57] And all this, everything that the blood of Jesus means and does for us because of God's love for us, shown through the offering of Jesus on the cross on our behalf.
- He's not just another man who died through crucifixion. Thousands of people died through crucifixion. One person's not unique from that.
- But what's unique about Jesus is that he died for a purpose. to reconcile us to God, to bring us close to God.
- And he didn't stay dead. Unlike the thousands of others, he rose again from the grave and has ascended into heaven.
- Is there a human body in heaven? Yep. One right now. Jesus. Jesus. And he's entered the heavenly temple and he's poured his blood on the altar and is acceptable to God as a sacrifice to forgive us of our sin.
- [31 : 01] And because of this love toward us, we can rightly love toward God and others. 1 John 4.19, we love because he first loved us. Man, you go up, this world is, I'm going to use an old phrase here, is a dog-eat-dog world, man.
- It's always looking out for number one above all else, right? It's all about me, my comfort, what makes me happy, and who cares about anybody else? But because God loves us, we love others.
- Even when they are putting us in prison, even when they are plundering our belongings, even when they are wiping out our livelihood.
- We love because God loves us first. The proper motivation in the life of a believer is not fear of judgment and disobeying God.
- Rather, it's the love of God that has filled our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus. All right, I hope you brought your Bible-flipping thumbs because we're going to be at a few passages. Philippians chapter 3.
- [32 : 14] So keep Hebrews 12 marked and go back to the left to Philippians chapter 3. It's page 1676 in my Bible, which doesn't mean anything for yours.
- Let's just jump to Revelation. We'll get there, I promise. Philippians chapter 3, verses 7 through 14. I would actually, you know what, let's just read it.
- Verse 1 to 14, sorry. Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs.
- Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.
- Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. Paul is saying, hey, if anyone can brag, it's me. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more.
- [33 : 22] Circumcised on the eighth day, perfect according to the law so far, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church.
- He admits it. He says, hey, I persecuted the church. People who were following the way, this guy Jesus, I put him in prison. I had him killed. I oversaw the stoning of Stephen.
- I approved it. I held the jackets while people were throwing their stones. Yeah, that was me. As to righteousness under the law, blameless.
- But, verse seven, whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him.

- [34 : 37] and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings. If you so dare and be bold, you can circle that, highlight it, underline it, whatever.

Paul wasn't, he saw, he experienced the love of God and he wanted the resurrection and he wanted the righteousness, but he wanted to share the suffering as well.

becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Verse 12, not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect.

No, not at all. I'm working on it. But I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own. You see that? He continues to walk in righteousness, focused on Jesus, because he belongs to him.

But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- [35 : 46] Paul, man, you can go to 2 Corinthians 11 and just read through one trial after another that he went through, that he endured, that would have left a mere mortal man. lesser man, weak and just trembling and saying, I'm done.

And Paul continued on, not because Paul was Superman, but because Paul loves Jesus because he first loved him.

Knowing Jesus goes far beyond any perceived advantage that this world can offer, and his love for us is what fuels our love for God and others. But it doesn't mean that our wrong response to God's love will go unpunished.

That's Hebrews 12 verses 25 through 29. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens. Verse 27, this phrase yet once more indicates the removal of things that are shaken, that is things that have been made, in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

- [37 : 04] Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

last point here is disobedience to God requires judgment. If men were held accountable for listening and obeying God when he warned them on earth from Mount Sinai, how much more will they be held accountable now that he warns from heaven from Mount Zion?

The unbelieving Israelites who did not heed the warnings of God on Mount Sinai did not enter the earthly promised land. In unbelievers today who did not heed the warning of God from Mount Zion will not enter the heavenly promised land.

And no matter where God speaks from, any man who refuses him will not escape judgment. And while the blessings of the new covenant are far greater than the old, so is the punishment. And I just need to direct you back to Hebrews 10, 28, and 29.

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the son of God and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he has sanctified and has outraged the spirit of grace?

- [38 : 27] how much more? I'll let you write these down. 2 Peter 3, 10-13, Revelation 6, 12-14.

I'm going to turn to Revelation 21. See, from Mount Sinai, God merely shook the ground.

From Mount Zion, God will shake heavens and earth and only the eternal things will last. You go to 2 Peter 3 and it talks about the world being dissolved and disappearing and being gone.

Revelation 6, the same. And while it can be a little scary to consider those things, like end times is a scary thing to think about and to study. You know, it gets people depressed and nervous and scared.

But there's hope beyond the judgment of God. Revelation 21, verses 1-4. The Apostle John writes, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more.

[39 : 34] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem. Jerusalem. Yeah, that's up, you know, the heavenly city, Jerusalem. That's new Jerusalem. Coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying. nor pain anymore.

For the former things have passed away. There will be a new heaven and a new earth and with new Jerusalem where we will dwell with God forever. These truths have been made known to us and we are responsible for what we do with what we've been given.

And it's not as simple as a you have your truth, I have mine type of philosophy and debate. This truth is truth. And anything else is a lie. So I point you back to the end of that section in Hebrews 12, the end of the chapter.

[40 : 42] Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. And thus, let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire.

For every man and woman, the choice is the same. To try to approach God by our works or what we believe is right is to come to Sinai and to discover that our best efforts fall short.

It cannot save us. To trust in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ is to come to Zion where our heavenly high priest will mediate for us and bring us to the Father and where we find reconciliation, peace, and eternal life.

An eternal kingdom that will not be shaken or consumed in judgment can only be entered through the blood of Jesus and faith in him. Let's pray.

Father God, thank you for your word. It's powerful. And Lord, I pray that it would impact and penetrate our hearts and minds today. Help us to meditate on your word, Lord.

[41 : 50] Help us to give you glory and honor in all things. In Jesus' name, amen.