

# Hebrews 12:27-29 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST  
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 Swindoll's Chart, Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews, Another Chart

The Epistle to the Hebrews				
INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18			EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25	
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18		Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25	
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE

MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST	MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE		DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD		

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)  
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 12:27 **This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** [to de. Eti](#) hapax [deloi](#) (3SPA1) [\[ten\] ton saleuomenon](#) (PPPNPG) [metathesin os pepoiemenon.](#) (RPPNPG) [ina meine](#) (3SAAS) [ta me saleuomena.](#) (PPPNP)

**Amplified:** Now this expression, Yet once more, indicates the final removal and transformation of all [that can be] shaken—that is, of that which has been created—in order that what cannot be shaken may remain and continue. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** This means that the things on earth will be shaken, so that only eternal things will be left. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** And this word, Yet once more, makes evident the transferring to a new basis the things that are shaken as of things made, in order that the things that are not shaken might remain [the present universe under the curse of sin changed to the perfect universe of the eternal conditions]. (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** and this -- 'Yet once' -- doth make evident the removal of the things shaken, as of things having been made, that the things not shaken may remain;

**AND THIS [EXPRESSION], "YET ONCE MORE," DENOTES THE REMOVING OF THOSE THINGS WHICH CAN BE SHAKEN AS OF CREATED THINGS IN ORDER THAT THOSE THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN MAY REMAIN: to de eti hapax deloi (3SPA1) (ten) ton saleuomenon (PPPNPG) metathesin os pepoiemenon (RPPNPG) hina meine (3SAAS) ta me saleuomena (PPPNP):**

- Ps 102:26,27; Ezekiel 21:27; Matthew 24:35; 2Peter 3:10,11; Revelation 11:15; 21:1

**Yet once more** - Isaiah echoes this warning "Therefore I shall make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger. (Isaiah 13:13).

It is this greater shaking from which there is no escape. That shaking will culminate in the great judgments described in Daniel and Revelation. The earth and heaven will flee away and be replaced by the new heavens and the new earth.

**Isa 65:17** For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

**Isa 66:22** "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. (Comment: For those who think God is finished with Israel, this verse creates a huge problem. In fact God promises that like the eternal new heavens and new earth, Israel will endure forever!)

2 Peter 3:10-note But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

2 Peter 3:13-note But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which

righteousness dwells.

Rev 21:1- [note](#) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

**Vincent** comments that "Attention is called to this phrase (**yet once more**) as specially significant, because it indicates that the shaking prophesied by Haggai is to be final. It is to precede the new heaven and the new earth.

This cataclysmic event will explode the myth that what we can see and touch and handle is real and that unseen things are unreal. When God ends the sifting and shaking process, only that which is real will remain. Those who were occupied with the tangible, visible ritualism of Judaism were clinging to things that could and would be shaken.

**Spurgeon** - Material forces are not available in our warfare, for we do not wrestle with flesh and blood. The tyrant may burn our martyrs and cast our confessors into prison, but the pure truth of Jesus is neither consumed by fire nor bound with chains; it has within itself essential immortality and liberty. The doctrine that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is no more to be wounded by the sword of persecution than is the ocean to be scarred by the keels of navies. When winds may be manacled, when waves be fettered, and when clouds may be shut up in dungeons, then—no not even then—may the Word of God be bound.

**Denotes** ([1213](#)) (**deloo** from **delos** = manifest, evident) means to make plain by words and thus to declare. To make manifest to the mind. Deloo is used of indications which lead the mind to conclusions about the origin or character of things. It means to make some matter known that was unknown or not communicated previously. It means to show clearly, to signify, to make manifest, visible, clear, or plain and to make known. When spoken of things past it means to tell, relate or impart information (as in 1Cor 1:11; Colossians 1:18 [note]). Although **deloo** is used most often in reference to declarations through articulate language, it is also used often (as in the present verse) of any kind of indirect communication.

When spoken of things future or hidden, **deloo** means to reveal, show or bring to light.

**Deloo** is used 28 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Exod. 6:3; 33:12; Deut. 33:10; Jos. 4:7; 1 Sam. 3:21; 1 Ki. 8:36; 2Chr. 6:27; Est. 2:22; Ps. 25:14; 51:6; 147:20; Isa. 42:9; Jer. 16:21; Dan. 2:5f, 9, 11, 16, 23ff, 28ff, 47; 4:18; 7:16). Here are some uses in the **Septuagint (LXX)**

**Exodus 6:3** and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not **make** Myself **known** (deloo) to them.

**Exodus 33:12** Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, Thou dost say to me, 'Bring up this people!' But Thou Thyself hast not **let me know** (deloo) whom Thou wilt send with me. Moreover, Thou hast said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.'

**Esther 2:22** But the plot **became known** (deloo) to Mordecai, and he told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name.

**Psalms 25:14** The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know (deloo) His covenant.

**Psalms 51:6** Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt **make me know** (deloo) wisdom.

**Psalms 147:20** He has not dealt thus with any nation and as for His ordinances, they **have** not **known** (deloo) them. Praise the LORD!

**Isaiah 42:9** "Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I **proclaim** (Lxx = deloo = make them known) them to you."

**Daniel 2:25** Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can **make** the interpretation **known** (deloo) to the king!"

**Deloo** is used 7 times in the NT...

**1 Corinthians 1:11** For I **have been informed** concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

**1 Corinthians 3:13** each man's work **will become evident**; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

**Colossians 1:8** (note) and he also **informed** us of your love in the Spirit.

**Hebrews 9:8** (note) The Holy Spirit is **signifying** this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been

disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

**Hebrews 12:27** (note) And this expression, "Yet once more," **denotes** the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

**1 Peter 1:11** (note) seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was **indicating** as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

**2 Peter 1:14** (note) knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ **has made clear** (of something divinely communicated) to me.

**Removing** (3331) (**metathesis** from **metatithemi** = transfer from **meta** = implying change + **tithemi** = put) is literally, the act of transferring from one place to another and so the removal or taking up or away. Transliterated it gives us the English word **metathesis** which is defined as the transposition of a letter of a word. There are only 3 NT uses - Heb 7:12, 11:5, 12:27 and none in the Septuagint.

In addition the Greek noun **metathesis** can describe a transfer from one place to another, as for example the translation of a person to heaven

By faith Enoch was taken up (verb **metatithemi**) so that (always query this [term of purpose](#)) he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his **being taken up** he was pleasing to God." (Heb 11:5-note).

**Metathesis** can mean a change of things instituted or established, such as a changeover from the Levitical priesthood

For when the priesthood is **changed**, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. (Heb 7:12-note)

Heb 12:27 uses **metathesis** with the idea of removal. Figuratively, **metathesis** means to transpose or put one thing in the place of another.

**Wuest** - "The priesthood after the order of Melchizedek was put in the place of the priesthood after the order of Aaron. The blood of animals could not pay for sin, but the blood of Messiah could. Thus, the New Covenant was substituted for the Old Covenant, Jesus' blood, the reality, for animal blood, the type. But that could only be done by changing the law governing the priesthood. Thus, if a transfer to a new and different order of priesthood was to be effected, it must be by reason of a transfer to a new basis. The law governing the priesthood as found in the Mosaic economy must be abrogated in favor of another which would provide for an order of priesthood that would function successfully in the very thing in which the Aaronic priesthood failed.

**Vincent** comments on the meaning of **metathesis** in Heb 7:12-note writing that there it refers to "A change. A transfer to a new basis. Only in Hebrews. See Heb 11:5-note. The inferiority of the Levitical priesthood is inferred from the fact that another priesthood was promised. If perfection was possible at all under the Mosaic economy, it must come through the Levitical priesthood, since that priesthood was, in a sense, the basis of the law. The whole legal system centered in it. The fundamental idea of the law was that of a people united with God. Sin, the obstacle to this ideal union, was dealt with through the priesthood. If the law failed to effect complete fellowship with God, the priesthood was shown to be a failure, and must be abolished; and the change of the priesthood involved the abolition of the entire legal system.

**Wuest** explains the **removing** as used in Hebrews 12:27 - It refers to the act of God transferring to a new basis, this present universe which is under the curse of Adam's sin, that new basis being a new and perfect universe. John speaks of this in the words "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" Rev 21:1 ([note](#)). The universe was created by God, but will be made to pass away, and to be substituted by a new universe which will exist forever. Thus, transitory, perishable things must pass away, in order that the eternal things may appear in their abiding value. **The writer is pointing out that the passing away of perishable things only emphasizes the eternal.** One of these is mentioned in the next verse, an eternal kingdom, the kingdom of God's rule over the saved of the human race on a new earth all through eternity. The old earth will pass away and a new earth will be made so that the saints might have a fit place of habitation throughout the eternal ages.

**In order that** - This phrase introduces a purpose clause. **What is the purpose (or result)? What has to happen for the fulfillment of this purpose?**

**Those things which cannot be shaken may remain** - Our eternal abode (an eternal kingdom - Heb 12:28) with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Spurgeon** - All that is eternal must, of course, endure forever. The everlasting covenant, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1Ti 1:11), the purchase of the Savior's blood, the work of the Holy Spirit—all these shall stand fast forever; they can never be

**shaken.** The immutable Word spoken by the mouth of the unchanging God lives and abides forever! (cp 1Pe 1:23-25) I stood this week by the side of a church that once was a considerable distance inland, but now it stands by the ocean side. Almost every year a great mass of the clay cliff falls into the sea, and in a year or two this parish church must fall. It stands now in quiet and peace, but on a certain day it will all be swallowed up into the sea, as certainly as the elements still work according to their ordinary laws. I could not help thinking that the edifice was a type of certain ecclesiastical bodies, which stand upon the clay cliff of statecraft or superstition. The tide of public enlightenment, and above all the ocean tide of God's Spirit, is advancing and wearing away their foundation until at last down the whole fabric must go. What then? Will you hold up your hands and cry, "The church of God is gone"? Stop the foolish utterance; God's church is safe enough. Look, there stands the church of God upon a stormy promontory, where the sea always dashes and perpetually rages on all sides. She fears no undermining, because she is built on no clay cliff, but on a rock against which the waves of hell shall not prevail.

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and evening : Daily readings (June 22 PM)** - We have many things in our possession at the present moment which can be shaken, and it ill becomes a Christian man to set much store by them, for there is nothing stable beneath these rolling skies; change is written upon all things. Yet, we have certain "things which cannot be shaken," and I invite you this evening to think of them, that if the things which can be shaken should all be taken away, you may derive real comfort from the things that cannot be shaken, which will remain. Whatever your losses have been, or may be, you enjoy present salvation. You are standing at the foot of his cross, trusting alone in the merit of Jesus' precious blood, and no rise or fall of the markets can interfere with your salvation in him; no breaking of banks, no failures and bankruptcies can touch that. Then you are a child of God this evening. God is your Father. No change of circumstances can ever rob you of that. Although by losses brought to poverty, and stripped bare, you can say, "He is my Father still. In my Father's house are many mansions; therefore will I not be troubled." You have another permanent blessing, namely, the love of Jesus Christ. He who is God and Man loves you with all the strength of his affectionate nature—nothing can affect that. The fig tree may not blossom, and the flocks may cease from the field, it matters not to the man who can sing, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." Our best portion and richest heritage we cannot lose. Whatever troubles come, let us play the man; let us show that we are not such little children as to be cast down by what may happen in this poor fleeting state of time. Our country is Immanuel's land, our hope is above the sky, and therefore, calm as the summer's ocean; we will see the wreck of everything earthborn, and yet rejoice in the God of our salvation. (Spurgeon, C. H.).

**Hebrews 12:28** [Therefore](#), since we [receive](#) a [kingdom](#) which [cannot](#) be [shaken](#), let us [show gratitude](#), by [which](#) we may [offer](#) to [God](#) an [acceptable service](#) with [reverence](#) and awe ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Dio basileian asaleuton paralambanontes](#) (PAPMPN) [echomen](#) (1PPAS) [charin, di' es latreuomen](#) (1PPAS) [euarestos to theo meta eulabeias kai deous](#);

**Amplified:** Let us therefore, receiving a kingdom that is firm and stable and cannot be shaken, offer to God pleasing service and acceptable worship, with modesty and pious care and godly fear and awe ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshipping him with holy fear and awe. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** Wherefore, receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us be having grace, by means of which we might be serving God, well pleasing to Him, doing this with pious care and fear ([Eerdmans](#))

**Young's Literal:** wherefore, a kingdom that cannot be shaken receiving, may we have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly, with reverence and religious fear;

**THEREFORE SINCE WE RECEIVE A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN LET US SHOW GRATITUDE BY WHICH WE MAY OFFER TO GOD AN ACCEPTABLE SERVICE WITH REVERENCE AND AWE:** [Dio basileian asaleuton paralambanontes](#) (PAPMPN) [echomen](#) (1PPAS) [charin, di' es latreuomen](#) (1PPAS) [euarestos to theo meta eulabeias kai deous](#);

- Isa 9:7; Da 2:44; 7:14,27; Mt 25:34; Lk 1:33; 17:20,21; 1Pe 1:4,5; Rev 1:6; 5:10
- **we may** -Ps 19:14; Isa 56:7; Ro 12:1,2; Eph 1:6; 5:10; Php 4:18; 1Pe 2:5,20
- **reverence and awe** - Heb 4:16; 5:7; 10:19,22; Lev 10:3; Ps 2:11; 89:7; Pr 28:24; Ro 11:20; 1Pe 1:17; Rev 15:4)

**Wuest** on Hebrews 12:28-29 - The writer exhorts his readers to appropriate the enabling grace of God (4:16, 12:15) so that they

may serve Him so as to be well-pleasing (acceptable) in His sight.

Note the first words in the Greek - **Therefore a kingdom unshakeable!**

**THOUGHT** - How is your world today? If it's like mine, I'm sure you're experiencing various "minor" and a few "major" tremors emotionally, for all saints experience varying degrees of tribulation. But beloved, these words in Hebrews should be tattooed across our forehead (figuratively speaking of course) as a constant reminder - **therefore a kingdom unshakable!** Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of heaven (Acts 14:22b+), but enter we will, and we will be forever unshakable for we have taken refuge in the Rock of our salvation (Ps 62:2)! Thanks be to God. Praise the Name of Jesus our Great High Priest (Heb 4:14+) Who brings us into this great kingdom. Amen

**Therefore since we receive - (term of conclusion)** In this case it refers to the truth that follows. This truth should give us a motivation and should inspire worshipful service out of a heart filled with thanksgiving at the truth that what we have in Christ can never be moved or shaken no matter what we might be experiencing in the temporal by and by. We today like the original Jewish readers of this letter have a Solid Rock, Who was also a merciful and faithful High Priest, seated forever as our Advocate at the right hand of God.

**NKJV** is a somewhat more literal rendering than NAS "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace (instead of "let us show gratitude"), by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

**Receive** (3880)(**paralambano** from **para** = beside + **lambano** = appropriate, receive) means to receive from another, to receive alongside or to take to oneself (into close association). There are two basic ideas - to take or to receive. Here in Hebrews 12:28 the idea is to receive in the sense of an inheritance, a **kingdom which cannot be shaken!** Notice the verb **receive** is **present tense** which signifies an ongoing process.

**Spurgeon** - Is it not wonderful that it should be written, "We are receiving a kingdom"? What a gift to receive! This is a divine gift; we have received, not a pauper's pension, but a kingdom that cannot be moved. The old dispensation or kingdom has passed away; its ceremonial laws are abrogated, and its very spirit is superseded by a higher spirit. We have entered upon another kingdom, in which the ruling principle is not law, but love. We are not under the yoke of Moses, but we are the subjects of King Jesus, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. The kingdom of Jesus will never end while time shall last, for He is the King Eternal, and immortal; neither will His laws be changed, nor shall His subjects die. Other kingdoms go to pieces sooner or later. You and I who are in middle life can remember kingdoms that have been blown down by the wind, or toppled over at the blow of one brave man's sword. Empires that have rivaled Caesar's in apparent strength have been swept down like cobwebs. As houses made of a pack of cards, so have dynasties fallen never to rise again. There were two brothers, one of whom had been diligently attentive to his worldly business, to the neglect of true religion. He succeeded in accumulating considerable wealth. The other brother was diligent in the service of the Master, and had learned both to distribute to the poor and for conscience's sake to forego many an opportunity of gain, so that when he lay sick and dying he was in straitened circumstances. His brother somewhat upbraided him, remarking that if it had not been for his religion he would not have been dependent upon others. With great calmness the saintly man replied, "Quiet, quiet! I have a kingdom not begun upon, and an inheritance I have not yet seen." Speak of laying up for a rainy day: we have infinite goodness laid up for those who fear the Lord, and none can rob us of it.

**Kingdom** (932)(**basileia** from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion. Basileia can also refer to the territory or people over whom a king rules. There are three basic meanings: (1) The power exercised by a king, the act of ruling (2) Basileia can sometimes refer to the land, the realm or the territory over which a king rules. (3) Basileia can refer to the spiritual rule of God in the hearts of people now.

**Cannot be shaken** (761)(**asaleutos** from **a** = negates + **saleuo** = to agitate, shake, cast down, cause to waver or totter, unsettle, drive away) is an adjective which describes that which is unshaken, unshakable (of a boat - Acts 27:41), immovable and probably used metaphorically in Heb 12:28 meaning a kingdom which is firm and enduring (unchangeable, a fixed state).

**Hillyer** writes that **asaleutos** is used in Heb 12:28 "where the divine kingdom is described as unshakable and therefore eternal, in contrast to the fate of the material creation, however solid that has appeared in the past (Heb. 12:26, quoting Hag. 2:6). (TDNT)

**BDAG** - 1. lit., not being subject to movement, of part of a ship that has run aground 2. not subject to alteration of essential nature or being, unshakable, enduring, fig. ext.of 1

The only other use of **asaleutos** is by Luke in Acts 27:41 - "But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained **immovable**, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of the waves."

**Liddell-Scott** - not agitated, tranquil, of the sea:-metaphorically of the mind, Eur.

**Asaleutos** - 3x in the Septuagint - all three refer to phylacteries which translated the phrase "phylacteries (or frontals) on your forehead" which in the Greek is "*asaleuton pro ophthalmis suis*" which literally is "**fixed, immovable** before your eyes." (Dt 11:18, Ex 13:16, Dt 6:8). **Interesting!**

**Kingdom which cannot be shaken** - This **emphasis on stability permeates Hebrews**, the writer using a variety of Greek words that speak of stability...

Hebrews 2:2 For if the word spoken through angels proved **unalterable**, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense,

Hebrews 3:6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our **hope firm until the end**.

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance **firm until the end**;

Hebrews 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a **hope both sure and steadfast** and one which enters within the veil,

Hebrews 9:17 For a covenant is **valid (steadfast)** only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope **without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful;

**Let us show gratitude** (ESV = let us be grateful; NET = let us give thanks) - More literally the Greek says "Let us continually have grace." Notice that **let us have** is **present tense** which could be paraphrased "let us have a lifestyle of grace," a life lived continually in the indwelling Spirit's transforming power. Does that describe your life beloved? It can because the writer exhorts us to join him in this great life of grace. Furthermore, **grace** is the only way a believer can offer "**acceptable**" service to a holy God (deeds done in our own strength are like "filthy rags" Isaiah 64:6). **Grace** is also the only way to we can continually show affection to brethren (Heb 13:1-note) and the only way to not neglect demonstrating affection to strangers (Heb 13:2-note).

**Spurgeon** - We have the kingdom within us (see definition of basileus above): it is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God within a man is the earnest of heaven, and an earnest is of the same nature as that which it guarantees. We who are born unto God have the firstfruits of the kingdom of God in possessing the indwelling Spirit, and in the firstfruits we see the entire harvest. Rise to this, and under a sense of your immeasurable indebtedness go forth and serve your God with joyful thankfulness. This is the spirit in which to worship the Lord who has given us the kingdom.

**Gratitude** (5485) (**charis**) is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. J. H. Jowett defined grace as holy love on the move -- in context of this passage, charis manifests itself as gratitude! **Grace** is used 7x in Hebrews - Heb 2:9, Heb 4:16, Heb 10:29, Heb 12:15, Heb 12:28, Heb 13:9, Heb 13:25.

[Click](#) for all 12 "**let us**" exhortations in Hebrews (in the NASB).

**Why should we "show gratitude"?** Because we have a kingdom which cannot be shaken. This should inspire the most fervent worship and adoration. We should unceasingly praise Him with reverence and godly fear.

**Offer... service** (3000) (**latreuo** from **latris** = one hired or **latron** = reward, wages) was used in secular Greek to describe working for wages, then for serving without wages. Originally used predominantly of physical work, but then used more generally. At later stage it had cultic use, honoring of the gods or worship. In the NT the idea is to render service to God, to worship, to perform sacred services or to minister to God in a spirit of worship. **Latreuo** is a key word in Hebrews - 6 of 21 uses are in this book - Heb 8:5, 9:9, 9:14, 10:2, 12:28, 13:10.

**Spurgeon** - Whatever service we may render to God, we must begin by being receivers. Our first dealing with the most High must not be our bringing anything to Him, but our accepting of everything from Him. We receive; that is our first stage. And I trust it is our last, for if ever we are able to serve the Lord by our gifts, we shall have to confess, "From your hand we have given to you" (1Chr 29:14). When we are privileged to cast our crowns before Immanuel's throne, they will be crowns that He Himself bestowed upon us of His own sovereign grace. One of the early Saxon kings was rowed down the river Dee by Kenneth of Scotland, and seven other vassal kings, who each one tugged an oar while their lord reclined in state. The King of kings this day is served by kings. Each man, each woman among us is made royal by the very fact of holy service. Let us labor for God not as slaves, but as kings! I confess that sometimes I have not served the Lord as a king. I have put on the ragged robes of my unbelief, and I have come to church mourning and groaning when I ought to have arrayed myself in royal apparel and served my Lord with joy and gladness. I know sometimes you say, and say truly, "What a poor creature I am, how can I serve God? I do not have this or that gift." Do not attempt to serve Him

in the power of gift. Ask for grace, and then worship Him in the power of grace. It is wonderful how grace can make use of very slender gifts and turn them to abundant account. It is great grace that greatly honors God, and great grace is always to be had by the least among us. You may never be an orator, but you may have great grace. You may never be an organizer and take the lead among your fellow Christians, but you may have much grace. You may never attain to ample wealth so as to be able to distribute largely of your substance to the poor, but you may have great grace. Therefore, let us have grace that we may serve God acceptably.

**Acceptable** (2102) (**euarestos** from **euarestos** = pleasing, well-pleasing from **eu** = well + **arésko** = please) pertains to that which causes someone to be pleased. Pleasingly, acceptably. In an acceptable way, a manner well-pleasing to another. Only used here in the NT.

**How can our service be "acceptable" to God?** To help understand meaning see root **aresko** in Romans 8 where Paul writes that "and those who are in the flesh cannot please (aresko) God. (Ro 8:8-note)

**S Lewis Johnson** writes that Ro 8:8-note "is one of the clearest texts teaching that an unbelieving man cannot please God until a work of the Spirit has been performed on his inner man. In fact, it is a verse that plainly teaches that regeneration must precede faith. The reason is clear. Faith pleases God (He 11:6-note), but they that are in the flesh, the unsaved individuals, cannot please God. Thus, they cannot exercise faith as long as they are in the flesh. They exercise faith only after the Holy Spirit in efficacious grace takes them out of the flesh and puts them, in the Spirit by giving them new life. The first activity of the new life is to believe (cf. 1 John 5:1). The man dead in sins is given new life, which manifests itself in saving trust through the gospel. Could anything be plainer? To affirm that the unsaved man can believe is to deny the biblical teaching on total depravity and human inability; it is to lapse into Arminian error, as Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to call it. ([Romans 8:5-17](#))

Spurgeon - Let us not think that we are not to be reverent because we gather at the gospel's call. Let us not dream that God, who is a consuming fire on the top of Sinai, is less terrible under the gospel than under the law, for it is not so. The God who gave the law on Sinai has never changed: the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of Moses, who overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, and slew Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the multitudes of murmurers, idolaters, and fornicators in the wilderness—"this is God our God forever and ever. He will guide us until death" (Ps 48:14).

**Reverence** (piety) (2124)(**eulabeia** from **eulabes** = careful as to the realization of the presence and claims of God, reverencing God, pious, devout from **eu** = good, well, right + **lambano** = take hold ~ taking hold well) in the original Greek usage meant caution, circumspection, discretion and then reverence or veneration. The Lxx usage in Joshua (Josh 22:24 - "concern") conveys the idea of fear, anxiety or dread. The NT uses convey the idea of godly fear, reverence, reverent regard, reverent submission or reverent awe in the presence of God.

**Wuest** - The verb of the same root means "to act cautiously, to beware, to fear." The picture in the word is that of a cautious taking hold of and a careful and respectful handling. Hence, it speaks of a pious, devout, and circumspect character, who in his prayer, takes into account all things, not only his own desire, but the will of the Father. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

**A T Robertson** - The image in the word **eulabeia** is that of a cautious taking hold and careful and respectful handling: hence piety of a devout and circumspect character, as that of Christ, who in his prayer took account of all things, not only his own desire, but his Father's will... God was able to save him from death altogether. He did not do this. He was able to sustain him under the anguish of death, and to give him strength to suffer the Father's will: he was also able to deliver him from death by resurrection: both these he did. It is not impossible that both these may be combined in the statement he was heard.

**Vine** writes that **eulabeia** "signifies, first, "caution"; then, "reverence, godly fear," Heb. 5:7; 12:28... in general, "apprehension, but especially holy fear," "that mingled fear and love which, combined, constitute the piety of man toward God; the OT places its emphasis on the fear, the NT... on the love, though there was love in the fear of God's saints then, as there must be fear in their love now" (Trench, Synonyms)

**Awe** (127) (**deos**) from Homer down refers to fear or awe and then reverence. It is like an apprehension of danger as when alone in a deep, dark forest. Apprehension due to God's glory and majesty. It is that sense of profound respect and reverence for deity, in this case the living God, His majesty and holy presence.

**Wuest** - The words "godly fear" are the translation of **deos**, the fundamental idea of which is "timid apprehension of danger," as over against **phobos** which speaks of the terror which seizes one when danger appears. Here **deos** speaks, not of a slavish, cringing apprehension, but of a wholesome regard for a holy God and His standards and requirements, which if a person violates, he must suffer the consequences.

When the voice and tread of a wild beast are distinctly heard close at hand the **deos** becomes **phobos**.



But what is this reverence and awe? Is it not similar to the repeated OT concept of the "fear of the Lord"? It is that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and—because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations—a holy watchfulness and fear, "that he might not sin against him".

As **Ray Stedman** ([reference](#)) says "there are some things which cannot be shaken and which will remain forever. That which is shaken and removed is so done in order that what cannot be shaken may stand revealed. Such an unshakable thing is the kingdom of God into which those who trust in Jesus have entered. It is present wherever the King is honored, loved and obeyed. The present active participle ("are receiving") indicates a continuing process. We enter the kingdom at conversion, but we abide in it daily as we reckon upon the resources which come to us from our invisible but present King. Such unbroken supply should arouse a continuing sense of gratitude within us and lead to acceptable worship of God. What renders such worship acceptable is the sense of God as incredibly powerful and majestic in person, and yet loving and compassionate of heart. An old hymn puts it well:

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,**

In light inaccessible, hid from our eyes.  
How blessed, how glorious, the Ancient of Days  
Almighty, Victorious, thy great name we praise!

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**Richard Phillips - With Reverence and Awe**

So far we have been exhorted to see to our faith because of the consequence of rejecting the gospel and because of the fleeting nature of every worldly kingdom and treasure. Verses 28 and 29 conclude our passage with a third argument and an accompanying exhortation: "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."

While the gospel gives us a better revelation than that received at Mount Sinai, a salvation through God's grace in Jesus Christ, it is not a different God who speaks in this age. God is unchanging. He is now as he always has been, and that means that he is still holy and exalted, awesome in his glory. He is still "a consuming fire."

The gospel invites us to draw near to God, to live upon his mountain in the city he has prepared. Yet it is also true that God's holiness places an eternal distinction between the Creator and the creature. Verse 29 reminds us of Exodus 3, where Moses saw the fire burning within the bush. God called Moses to come near, but then said to him, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). The imagery of God as a raging fire speaks of his holiness and the reverent fear with which we must always treat him. God can never be taken lightly. Even when the threat of his wrath has been removed by the cross of Christ, he himself is not a tame God; he is always dangerous.

This truth is famously depicted by C. S. Lewis in his Narnia series of children's fantasies. Lewis uses the figure of Aslan, the giant and majestic lion, to depict the Lord. At one point, one of his heroines, the adventurous girl Jill, comes upon a stream of water. She has been lost and is dying of thirst. But as she comes forward, she spies the lion sitting calmly before the water. Terrified, she stops in her tracks. The lion invites her, "If you are thirsty, come and drink." Dying of thirst, and drawn by the rippling gurgle of the stream, the girl steps a bit forward. "Will you promise not to—do anything to me, if I do come?" she meekly asks. "I make no promise," said the lion. Drawn closer by the refreshing sounds of water, she wonders aloud, "Do you eat girls?" "I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," he replies. Jill recoils at this, concluding, "I daren't come and drink." "Then you will die of thirst," said the lion. "O dear!" cries Jill, drawn yet a step closer by her need of refreshment, "I suppose I must go and look for another stream, then." But the lion responds, "There is no other stream."

If you are going to have the thirst of your soul filled by the waters of eternal life, then you are going to have to deal with this kind of God. He will not move out of the way for you. He will not become a more palatable, a chummier kind of God. He will never be safe. But he is the Savior, the God of majesty and grace, the God who shakes the heavens and earth but gives to his own a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Hebrews 12:29 recalls the fires of Mount Sinai, citing a statement made by Moses in Deuteronomy 4:24. Moses was warning the tribes about apostasy and idolatry, a betrayal of the true God for the false gods of this world. "Take care " he said, "lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deut. 4:23-24). Never think that allegiance to God is a light matter, for he is jealous of the affections of his people. He is a consuming fire, who purifies all with whom he comes into contact.

God being the kind of God he is, the two essential ingredients to true spirituality are those found in verse 28, namely, gratitude and awe. "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." As creatures before the Creator, we must tremble with fear, we must reckon on his holiness with a godly awe that produces reverence in all our dealings with him. But to awe we must add thanksgiving. We are sinners redeemed by the hand of mercy, enemies who are reconciled by love, rebels who are made children and heirs of God's eternal kingdom. Realizing this must surely draw forth gratitude from our hearts for the gifts we have not deserved. These two attitudes are given in the Bible as the yardsticks by which we may assess all our worship, all our works, all our lives as they are offered up to him. "Let us be grateful," not wishing for the world and stirring his jealous anger; "let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe," not forgetting that this is the holy God of heaven, "a consuming fire." (Reformed Expository Commentary - Hebrews)

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**Temporary Or Eternal** - The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World were wonderful indeed! These impressive creations of human genius include the Tomb of Mausolos, built in 350 bc; the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus; the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; King Ptolemy's lighthouse near Alexandria; the 100-foot statue of Apollo called the Colossus of Rhodes; the 40-foot statue of Zeus in the city of Olympia; and the great pyramids of Egypt.

Six of these remarkable achievements have been destroyed--Ptolemy's lighthouse by an earthquake, and the other five demolished by plunderers. Only the pyramids remain to fill us with awe.

We may marvel over these Seven Wonders, but we must never forget that everything in our world is temporary. I remember looking at the skyline of New York City from the stern of a ferryboat and recalling the lines of a hymn: "These all shall perish, stone on stone; but not Thy kingdom nor Thy throne."

The writer of Hebrews said, "Since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us ... serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb 12:28). These words and the words of Psalm 102 help us to keep the temporary and the eternal in perspective. —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see--  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!  
-Lyte

**Hold tightly to what is eternal  
and loosely to what is temporal.**

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**Frozen Snowball** - Baseball pitcher Tug McGraw had a wonderful philosophy of pitching. He called it his "frozen snowball" theory. "If I come in to pitch with the bases loaded," Tug explained, "and heavy hitter Willie Stargell is at bat, there's no reason I want to throw the ball. But eventually I have to pitch. So I remind myself that in a few billion years the earth will become a frozen snowball hurtling through space, and nobody's going to care what Willie Stargell did with the bases loaded!"

The Bible tells us the earth will someday "melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2Peter 3:10). Yet McGraw's point is valid: We need to keep life in perspective. Most of the things we worry about have no eternal significance.

The writer of Hebrews was concerned about our perspective. Throughout the book, he keeps our eyes focused on heaven and away from earth. Unless our minds are on heaven, we will have little eternal influence on earth.

There will come a time when the earth will be shaken, and things that once seemed permanent will be gone (Hebrews 12:27). What you fear most today will be forgotten like yesterday's headlines. What really matters is what you do today that has a touch of eternity about it.—Haddon W. Robinson ([Ibid](#))

O for a heart that is willing to serve,  
    Laboring while it is day!  
Nothing is lost that is done for the Lord,  
    He will reward and repay.  
—Anon.

**The one who lives for this life only**

will have eternity to regret it

Hebrews 12:29 for our **God** is a **consuming fire** (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [kai gar o theos emon pur katanaliskon.](#) (PAPNSN)

**Amplified:** For our God [is indeed] a consuming fire. [Deut. 4:24.] [\(Amplified Bible - Lockman\)](#)

**NLT:** For our God is a consuming fire. [\(NLT - Tyndale House\)](#)

**Wuest:** for our God is a consuming fire. (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** for also our God is a consuming fire.

**FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE: kai gar o theos hemon pur katanaliskon.** (PAPNSN)

- Heb 10:27; Ex 24:17; Nu 11:1; 16:35; Deut 4:24; 9:3; Ps 50:3; 97:3; Isaiah 66:15; Daniel 7:9; 2Th 1:8

The writer quotes from Deuteronomy 4...

**"For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God"**

Deut 4:24

**For - term of explanation** - Explains why we should have reverence and awe!

**Stedman** sums up this fifth and final warning writing that "The proper attitude of Christians must be one of awe that a Being of such majesty and glory could find a way to dwell eternally with such sin controlled and sin-injured creatures as us. Since our "God is a consuming fire," we must cry with Isaiah, "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" (Isaiah 33:14). God's love is just such a fire, it destroys what it cannot purify, but purifies what it cannot destroy. In Jesus we have a relationship that cannot be destroyed (Ro 8:38, 39-note). Our great king is leading us through trials and difficulties in order that we may at last cry with Job, "He knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10KJV-note). [\(Hebrews 12:25-29 Fifth and Final Warning\)](#)

**Wuest** - Expositor's says: "The fire and smoke which manifested His presence at Sinai (Heb 12:18) were but symbols of that **consuming holiness** that destroys all persistent inexcusable evil. It is God Himself Who is the fire with which you have to do, not a mere physical, material, quenchable fire." The historical background of this last statement here is that of the apostate Jew who having left the temple sacrifices, and having made a profession of faith in Messiah as High Priest, now renounces that professed faith and returns to the Levitical system. To that person, God is a consuming fire.

**Spurgeon** - The Lord God who is to be served by us, even as our covenant God, is a "consuming fire." In love He is severely holy, sternly just. We hear people say, "God out of Christ is a consuming fire," but that is an unwarrantable alteration of the text. The text is "Our God"—that is, God in Christ—"is a consuming fire." "Our God" means God in covenant with us; it means our Father God, our God to whom we are reconciled. He, even our God, is still a "consuming fire." Under the New Testament, God is not an atom less severe than under the old; and under the covenant of grace the Lord is not a particle less righteous than under the law. We are so saved by mercy that no sin goes unpunished: the law is as much honored under the gospel as under the law. The substitution of Jesus as much displays the wrath of God against sin as even the flames of hell would do. While the Lord is merciful, infinitely so, and His name is love, yet still our God is a consuming fire, and sin shall not live in His sight.

**GOD "IS," NOT "WAS,"  
A CONSUMING FIRE**

**Is... consuming** (2654) (**katanalisko** from **katá** intensifies meaning of + **analisko** = consume) means to consume wholly or utterly as by fire and figuratively means to destroy completely.

This is the only NT use but there are 14 uses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Lev 6:10; Dt 4:24; 7:22; 9:3; 1Chr 21:26; Esther 8:12; Isa 59:14; Jer 3:24; 50:7; Da 11:26; Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Zech 9:4, 15

Note that **katanalisko** is in the **present tense** which speaks of continuous action. In other words the text says that "our 'God**IS** [not

was] a consuming fire.' The God of Zion is the same God as the God of Sinai. God has not changed. Granted, Christians ought to laugh and in fact in one sense they ought to have the best sense of humor on this planet. And Christians ought to enjoy life but they must also know and understand that God remains a "Consuming fire" and that acceptable worship takes place when there is authentic "reverence and awe." This is God's Word! And so when we come to worship, we must keep both mountains in view, the approachable Mt Zion with its consuming love, and the unapproachable Mt Sinai with its consuming fire and then come in reverent boldness.

**Consuming fire** - one of the more awesome pictures of the perfect holiness of God: See Ex 24:17, Dt 4:24, 9:3 (cp Isa 66:15, Da 7:9, Rev 1:14). See **note** on Isaiah 10:17ff which describes God acting as a consuming fire in His destruction of the Assyrian Empire.

God is a **consuming fire** as shown by His actions against sin: Nu 11:1,16:35, Ps 50:3, 97:3, 2Th 1:7-8 Zeph 3:8

One's interpretation of "**consuming fire**" depends on how one views God. If one sees Him with spiritual eyes of a blood bought, heaven bound believer this person will experience **awe and reverence** and there will be times when he (or she) is overwhelmed with God's majesty as our souls are engaged by the supremacy of God. If you are not a believer first note that you WILL ALSO SEE God, not with spiritual eyes, but with physical eyes (cp Rev 1:7-[note](#), Rev 20:11-15-[note](#)) and secondly you will be consumed by His righteous wrath. That does not mean you will be annihilated, which is wishful thinking by godless sinners! Paul gives us a preview of "coming attractions"

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (2 Thes 1:6-9)

**Comment:** The Consuming Fire will consign unbelievers away from His presence and in lake of fire where they will be tormented forever and ever but never actually consumed. This is a horrible thought to me, one I even have trouble writing, but it is the truth of every unbeliever who every lived. This immutable truth should serve to stir our hearts with a Spirit enabled power which so that we desire to speak the Gospel boldly as we ought to do (cp Eph 6:19-20-[note](#)) with our lost relatives, neighbors, friends and co-workers...while today is still called today!

**It is so easy to succumb to focusing on one mountain (Sinai or Zion) at the expense of the other.** O blessed tension of the truths taught on these two mounts - consuming fire on one and consuming love on the other. Glory! Theological balance is the key. Keep the paradox in view that our God is both unapproachable and approachable! The twin peaks of our spiritual life demand two things as we march toward Zion. The demand our obedience and our worship. Let us obey his Word implicitly, for it is effectual, never failing and ever final for it will one day (soon) shake the whole universe. Let us worship Him with reverence and awe and thanksgiving!

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**I'm Afraid Of God** - Many times I have talked to people about our need to fear God. I've heard them respond something like this: "You're not really afraid of God, are you? I'd never believe in that kind of God."

Yes, I am afraid of God, and I'm not afraid to admit it. I also fear water. That doesn't mean I don't love to fish and swim. But I never want to forget the life-taking power of a river, a lake, or an ocean.

In a more personal way, I remember as a boy fearing my dad. I loved him and knew he loved me and was concerned for my good. But I respected his authority as my father, and I was afraid of the corrective measures he would take if I did wrong.

The same is true in my relationship with God. I stand in awe of Him and His holiness. And because I do, I love Him and want to be close to Him. I desire to love what He loves and hate what He hates. I want to live with the awareness that He is to be feared more than anyone. Satan and people may destroy the body, but God is "a consuming fire" who can "destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28).

Only as we fear God do we truly love Him. And only as that love grows will it guarantee that our fear of God is the right kind of fear. —Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To fear the Lord means giving Him  
Our reverence, trust, and awe,  
Acknowledging His sovereignty,  
Submitting to His law. --Hess

Fear God and you will have nothing else to fear.

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**He Is A Fire** - On December 5, 2002, the headline announced: *Ring Of Fire Encircles Sydney - A firestorm was raging outside the Australian city. Many people feared that this bushfire would prove to be Sydney's worst in decades. Fanned by strong winds, high temperatures, and low humidity, the fire jumped across roads and rivers, consuming everything in its path.* When we think about the destructive power of that kind of inferno, we gain a better understanding of the startling words of Hebrews 12:29, "Our God is a consuming fire." Why did the author of Hebrews use such graphic imagery to describe the Lord? In his letter he was dealing with spiritual life-and-death issues—what his readers believed and the reality of their faith. Their response would reveal whether they were investing their lives in the kingdom that will last forever, or in the one destined for destruction. We too need to remember that this world and all we possess are only temporary. If our faith and hope are in Jesus Christ, we are part of a kingdom that cannot be destroyed (v.28). Knowing that our days on earth are numbered and that "our God is a consuming fire," let us serve Him and invest in things that are imperishable.—Albert Lee ([Ibid](#))

Our God is a consuming fire  
And will destroy earth's temporal things;  
He seeks to purify our lives  
For service to the King of kings.  
—D. De Haan

**Hold tightly to what is eternal  
and loosely to what is temporal.**

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**Revelation And Response** - I tried to tell Felix about my faith. He was polite, but he said he would rather not discuss religion. His goal in life was to be a decent person and to find as much enjoyment as he could. He had concluded that death ends everything. He said he was happy with his beliefs.

Apparently Felix refused to think seriously about God's revelation of Himself in nature (Job 38; Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20) and within his own conscience (Rom. 1:18-21; 2:14-16).

God has revealed Himself in the created world, in our inner nature, and in the Bible. All people are responsible for what they do with God's self-disclosure. We can rationalize away His revelation in the created world. We can refuse the inner witness of our conscience. We can reject the Bible. But those responses lead to hell.

The best and most appropriate response to God's revelation is awe, acknowledgment of sin, and confession. This leads to forgiveness, inner peace, and everlasting life.

If you've rejected God's revelation of Himself, repent and turn to Him before it's too late. If you've decided to open your heart to Jesus Christ, you can be sure you'll be welcomed into His presence for all eternity. --H V Lugt ([Ibid](#))

The Lord reveals Himself to you  
In many different ways;  
So don't reject and turn away;  
Instead, give Him your praise.  
-Sper

**Sooner or later you'll have to face God.**

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**Living In The Fire** - Just before darkness settled, the Israelites who stood on the walls of Jerusalem saw with dismay the mighty Assyrian army surrounding the city. But at dawn the enemy camp was deserted, and thousands of dead soldiers lay scattered on the ground. What awe and gratitude must have filled the hearts of godly Israelites—but the wicked were terrified!

The prophet Isaiah portrays trembling sinners asking how they can live with "the devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings" (Isaiah 33:14). These phrases do not refer to hell, but to our holy God. Those hypocrites were really asking, "Who can live with Him?" Isaiah's answer was simple: "He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly" (v.15). It wasn't enough just to participate in religious ritual; Isaiah was reminding them that to live in the presence of the consuming fire they had to obey God.

Hebrews 12:29 reminds us that "our God is a consuming fire." How is it possible, then, to have a close relationship with Him? Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23).

If we trust Jesus as our Savior and seek to please Him, we need not fear living in the fire of His holiness. —Herbert Vander Lugt ([ibid](#))

No sinner can endure God's fire,  
His holiness consumes all sin;  
But Jesus took our punishment—  
Now we can have His peace within. —D. De Haan

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**God's holiness reveals what is good by consuming what is evil.**

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**Harry Ironside's illustration** - One of the first gospel illustrations that ever made a real impression upon my young heart was a simple story which I heard a preacher tell when I was less than nine years old.

It was of pioneers who were making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They traveled in covered wagons drawn by oxen, and progress was necessarily slow. One day they were horrified to note a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely and coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames would be upon them. One man only seemed to have understanding as to what could be done. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon it.

As the flames roared on toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?" The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has been!"

What a picture of the believer, who is safe **in Christ!**

**On Him Almighty vengeance fell,  
Which would have sunk a world to hell.  
He bore it for a chosen race,  
And thus becomes our Hiding Place.**

The fires of God's judgment burned themselves out on Him, and all who are in Christ are safe forever, for they are now standing where the fire has been. (H. A. Ironside, *Illustrations of Bible Truth*, Moody Press, 1945, pp. 34-35)

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**James Smith (in Handfuls of Purpose) - OUR GOD A CONSUMING FIRE** Hebrews 12:29

Here are a few striking words used in Scripture to describe the essential character of God. (1) God is Spirit (R.V., margin). Herein is seen His indivisibility and greatness. (2) God is Love. This reveals His unfathomable and unchangeable goodness. What a privilege to dwell in such an abode (1 John 4:16). (3) God is Light. And this, because He is Love. In Him is no darkness at all. No uncertainty. No unrighteousness. (4) God is Fire. Not in figure, but in reality—a consuming fire. This solemn, dreadful, aspect of God's nature is frequently overlooked. Herein is the death of sin and self; herein is the life of holiness. This is the God with which we as Christians have to do. It was as fire God first appeared to His servant Moses; this made the place holy ground, and although the bush was not consumed, we may be assured that everything unclean within the bush would be burned up. We carry about with us daily the mystery of the burning bush "Know ye not that God dwelleth in you?" Yet the frail bush of our bodies is not consumed. We have this treasure in earthen vessels "that the excellency of the power may be of God.

**I. As a Fire our God Consumes.**

On the altar, the fire, as a symbol of God's presence, was ever burning. On the altar of our heart, as on the throne of our being, there still dwells the Spirit of burning. This holy fire cannot suffer the approach of that which is unclean. The Nadabs and Abihus of pride and self-conceit are instantly devoured (Num. 10). It was a self-crucifying revelation Paul received, when it pleased God to reveal His Son in him (Gal. 1:15, 16; 2. 20). The Holy of Holies was such, because the pillar of fire abode there. Hence there was no way of entrance

without blood. May the Blood of Jesus so guard the way of access into our inmost soul, where the Holy Spirit dwells, and may this holy fire consume all that would approach without the blood.

## **II. As a Fire our God Purifies.**

The presence of God was the purifying and the sanctifying of the Temple. It is true now, that when the Lord the Spirit suddenly comes into the temple of our body He is like a refiner's fire. "Who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. 1:3). There must be no other authority when He appeareth; every power of our being must become subject to Him, and in the submitting they are purified. As every vessel of the Tabernacle was given to God, and claimed and used by Him, so the members of our body are to be yielded to Him as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:13).

## **III. As a Fire our, God Empowers.**

What a real power fire is. Think of the fire-driven engines that push the mighty ironclads like ploughshares through the deep. Wherever fire is, its power is felt. "Our God is a consuming fire." Can He be in us without a Divine power being seen and felt? When the disciples were baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire it could not be hid. "These men," they said, "are full of new wine." When the live coal touched the lips of the prophet, how quickly the power was seen in him. "Here am I, send me" (Isa. 6). The indwelling fire is the remedy for all formality and coldness in the Lord's service. It is the eternal enemy of the chilly, freezing breath of unbelief. "He shall baptise you with fire." Are you willing to be baptised with this baptism?