

Hebrews 12:25-13:3 – An Unshakable Kingdom

Verses 12:18-21 were in contrast with verses 12:22-24. The author of Hebrews loved to compare and contrast things under the Mosaic law with things under Christ. The readers/hearers of Hebrews did not come to a terrifying scene like what Moses and the people of Israel experienced at Mount Sinai. At that time they were terrified by God's voice and his command that any person or animal that touched the mountain should be put to death. Instead their lot is in the heavenly Jerusalem where sinners made righteous by the blood of Christ will join angels, Christ and God, the judge of the earth. This comparison and contrast is continued in the remaining passage of chapter 12.

Read Hebrews 12:25-29.

In verse 25, what was the exhortation? What contrast was given between the scene at Mount Sinai compared to those whose lot is the heavenly Jerusalem? (12:25)

In verse 26, what event was referred to where God's voice shook the earth? What Old Testament passage was referenced in verse 26? See Haggai 2:6. This is one time where it appears that the author of Hebrews did not quote the passage word for word but paraphrased the passage to emphasize both earth and heaven as compared to just the earth. (12:26)

In verse 27, what does the future shaking of the earth and heavens accomplish? What is removed and what remains after the shaking? When will this event occur? (12:27)

In verse 28, what are we exhorted to do? ESV has "grateful". NKJV has "grace". NASB has "gratitude". NIV has "thankful". This word is often translated as "grace", as in "for by grace we have been saved" (Ephesians 2:8). It obviously can be translated other ways based on the context. BDAG says that in this context the word means "response to generosity or beneficence, thanks, gratitude". What are we to receive? What should our response be to our great inheritance? NASB has "service" for "worship". This word can have either meaning based on the context. (12:28)

Verse 29 may be a reference to Deuteronomy 4:24, "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire" (ESV). What does this verse mean in the context of chapter 12:18-28? (12:29)

Read Hebrews 13:1-3.

In verse 1, what is the exhortation? What is brotherly love? This is the word which Philadelphia (the city of brotherly love) was based on. Unfortunately Philadelphia does not have a good reputation for brotherly love. ESV, NKJV and NASB have “continue”. NIV has “keep on”. BDAG says that in this context, the word which is mostly translated as “remain” should be translated “continue”. This statement assumed that brotherly love among them already existed. (13:1)

In verse 2, what were they exhorted to do? This verse is in contrast to verse 1. In verse one the objects of love were brothers and sisters in Christ. In this verse the objects of affection were strangers. The English translations mostly mask this contrast. The word used in verse 1 is a compound word from “love” and “brother”. In verse 2, the word used is a compound word from “love” and “stranger”. ESV, NASB and NIV have “hospitality to strangers”. NKJV has “entertain strangers”. (13:2)

Based on verse 2, why should we show hospitality to strangers? Can you think of any examples of this? See Genesis 18:1-19:1, 19:1-22; Judges 13:8-24. ESV has “entertained” in the phrase “entertained angels unawares”. BDAG says the word means “to show hospitality, receive as a guest, entertain”. (13:2)

In verse 3, what two groups of people were they exhorted to remember? What attitude and perspective were they to have toward these two groups? (13:3)

At the end of verse 3, ESV has “since you also are in the body”. NKJV and NASB are similar to ESV. NIV has “as if you yourselves were suffering”. What do you think the point of this phrase is? (13:3)

Do you think they should have treated prisoners for Christ differently than people who were in prisoner for robbery? (13:3)