

“Yet Once More (One More Time)” – Hebrews 12:25-29

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com]

Take a Bible and meet me in Hebrews 12...

[Renew: Week in the Word]

By now you have found our text I hope. I'd like to read once more the verses we have considered in the last couple sermons from Hebrews 12. I'll begin reading in verse 25 and I'll read to the end of the chapter. Follow along as I read. This is God's Word...

“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. ²⁶ 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.’ 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. ²⁸ 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, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:25-29)

So what lessons have we seen in this text so far? Well, there are three major lessons that we have considered and they each have to do with how believers are to respond to the blessings that Jesus has brought to us in the New Covenant, blessings that the author of Hebrews describes in the paragraph before the verses we just read. We've seen that we should respond with...

Uncanny Perseverance in Our Weariness Uncanny Priorities in Our World Uncanny Poise in Our Woe

Now today, our final week in Hebrews 12, I'd like to add one more item to our list that we can detect in this passage of Scripture. We should respond to the Christ and the covenant He mediates to us with an...

Uncanny Posture in Our Worship

Look at verse 28 again. *“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...”* Is that why you came this morning? I hope so.

Remember, our author has told us that Christians ought never to be those *“neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some...and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* (Heb. 10:25). What “Day”? The Day of the Lord's return. The Day of shaking. The Day He makes all things new. So, again, knowing what He is going to do in the future shapes how we live in the present. In this case, it puts more urgency on our gathering in worship. We don't neglect it because we know the “Day” is *“drawing near.”*

But here, at the end of chapter 12, we have a more positive reason to not neglect corporate worship, namely, that it involves us in the experience of Mount Zion. Back up to verses 22. After describing Israel's experience with God at Mt. Sinai in the Old Testament, he compares it to their new experience in Christ.

“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,²³ 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,²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24)

R. C. Sproul was clearly reflecting on Hebrews 12 when he wrote:

“The communion of saints includes us and the saints who have gone before us, who are now in glory. When we gather to worship, we are in a mystical situation where we enter the heavenly sanctuary, not only the earthly sanctuary. We enter the presence of the Lord, the angels, the archangels, and the spirits of [righteous] men made perfect (Heb. 12:22-24), and we are part of the corporate worship of the body of Christ everywhere. We are in a huge congregation, spiritually speaking, as we engage in worship.”¹

Again I say, why would we not want to come together and be a part of that? We can, because of Christ, draw near in this profound way when we worship. But *how* we draw near in worship matters. Here, again, Sproul proved insightful.

“We live in an egalitarian culture in which everyone is to be equally accessible to, and approachable by, everyone else. To be aloof is to commit a social sin. We are casual and familiar, not formal. We then project that onto God, as if we can come into His presence in a cavalier spirit of familiarity, the kind of familiarity that breeds contempt. It is true that we are given access to God by virtue of the work that Christ has accomplished for us, but our justification does not change God's character.”²

This seems like a fitting moment for me to remind you of verse 29—*“for our God is a consuming fire.”* It doesn't say that He *was* a consuming fire back in those Sinai days, but good thing He is not anymore. No, it's actually a verbless clause in Greek. But this present tense verb is implied because God's character doesn't change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, He *is* a consuming fire. And He is so *because* He is absolutely Holy. He is no less Holy at Zion than He was at Sinai. He has not changed, though our standing before Him has through faith in Christ. On this side of Calvary, God's wrath has been removed from His people. But that doesn't mean He should be taken lightly. It doesn't make Him tame.

I'm reminded of that famous scene in the *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, a book by C. S. Lewis. A beaver has been telling a young girl named Susan about Aslan, who proves to be the hero of the story and represents Christ. Susan is surprised to learn that Aslan is a lion because she assumed he was a man. So she turns to Mr. Beaver and says, “I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.” And then she asks if the lion is safe, to which the Beaver replies,

“Safe?...Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.”³

What a wonderful summation of biblical insight. Our Lord isn't safe. But He's good. And so we are invited to draw near. But, in doing so, we are never invited to ignore the nature of the One to Whom we draw near. So what does the author say in the final two verses?

“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,²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:28-29)

Here again the author is describing how we ought to respond to the message of this book, which has described the superiority of Christ to all others and the superiority of the New Covenant blessings He has secured for His people. In the immediate context, those blessings include the kingdom. We have seen that Christ brings His people into the kingdom of God and this kingdom that we have presently come to (which he has described in terms of Zion in verses 22 and following) should affect our lives. So we persevere in faith. We adopt new priorities. We find poise amid trials. This is what he has said. And now he adds, “*let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship...*” (12:28). An uncanny posture of worship.

This response of worship is reminiscent of what Paul describes at the beginning of Romans 12. After spending eleven chapters articulating the nuance and glory of the Gospel message, he pivots in chapter 12 with the word “Therefore” in order to begin to explain the Christian response to and application of this good news. And what is the first thing he says there? “*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God [or “in view of God’s mercy”], to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship*” (Rom. 12:1). Paul is basically bridging the gap between the theology of his epistle to the closing exhortations of his epistle in the same way we see at the end of Hebrews 12. Both are saying, “now, in view of what I have been saying about Christ, we should worship, and we should do so in a manner that God finds acceptable.”

The question is what does “*acceptable worship*” look like? Paul puts it in terms of laying down our lives completely for God’s purposes as “*living sacrifices.*” That’s acceptable worship. That’s how we should respond to what God has accomplished for us in Christ. The writer of Hebrews helps us understand what that looks like on the ground. How do we offer up our “*acceptable worship*”? He answers, with “*grateful*”²⁴ hearts and “*with reverence and awe*”. But before we get to that, let’s consider the word “*worship*” a bit.

The word for “*worship*” here is a word associated with priestly service. Indeed you could even translate it in terms of “service” (cf. KJV; NKJV; NASB; CSB). It is our service rendered to God in response to who He is and what He does. It includes, therefore, but is not limited to, what people usually mean when they say “worship,” which is the act of offering our praises to God through song. This is confirmed by the context. Notice in 13:15 he tells us to “*continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*” No doubt, our author would have included that under the umbrella of our “*acceptable worship*” (12:28). But he would have also included what he describes in 13:16, namely, doing good to others and sharing with those in need because, as he says, “*such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*” Indeed, you could make the case that all of the instructions in chapter 13 are examples of “*acceptable worship*” in God’s eyes.

But all of these presuppose certain things. In other words, we would not be able to offer “*acceptable worship*” to God unless certain things are true. So, for example, the author has labored to show us that only Christ’s work makes us right with God. “*For by a single offering*”, he writes, Christ “*has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified*” (10:14). And, in order for us to enjoy those New Covenant blessings connected with “*Mount Zion*”, the “*city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*” (12:22), we needed the work of “*Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant*” (12:24). “*Therefore*”, we read in chapter 9, “*he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant*” (9:15). So, in short, there could be no “*acceptable worship*” offered by us apart from the acceptable sacrifice that Jesus offered up in Himself.

But connected to that, the author also has shown that our worship can never be acceptable unless it is offered in faith. Christ alone makes us acceptable to God. But the Spirit of God applies this new standing to us “*by grace*” alone and “*through faith*” alone (Eph. 2:8). So, you will recall, the author said in the previous chapter, after referring to the “*acceptable sacrifice*” of Abel and the way that Enoch was “*commended as having pleased God*”, that pleasing God requires faith. He said, “*without faith it is impossible to please him*” (Heb. 11:4-6). So clearly, “*acceptable worship*” cannot exist apart from faith. It presupposes faith. It’s offered up in faith. And when it is offered in such a way, that presupposes the activity of God in us, because, as the writer will remind us

at the end of the book, God is the one “*working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*” (13:21).

So if our worship, if our Christian service, is counted as acceptable in His sight, then the author has shown us several things that this presupposes. It presupposes the High Priestly work of Christ on our behalf. Our participation in His New Covenant people. The faith that God works in His people. And so on.

But in our passage today, he adds to the mix some additional insights related to our faithful posture in worship. He says, in verse 28, that it is an expression of our gratitude “*for having received a kingdom that cannot be shaken*” and that it is offered to God “*with reverence and awe.*”⁵ The first is a response to *the accomplishment of God* in our salvation and the second is a response to *the nature of the God who accomplishes* that salvation. In other words, like all worship, it is a response to what God has done and who God is. That’s the response described here. We respond to what God has done with appreciation and we respond to who God is with awe. Appreciation and awe. Mingled together. These are two essential ingredients to all worship and service that God finds pleasing. If that’s not our posture, then it’s not acceptable.

Perhaps it is here, then, that the church of our age needs a corrective. We seem to have forgotten that our worship is not primarily *for* us. It’s *for* God. So when we gather, for example, to worship through song, we ought to be thinking about what pleases Him, not what makes us feel good. Do you prioritize His preferences or yours? Everyone in our day, when looking for a church, will give much thought to their own worship preferences, but how many of those same people, I wonder, will ever truly consider the preferences of God? If it is the view of God we are concerned with, we would soon realize that much that gets labeled as worship is not worthy of the name. If it’s worship at all, it’s worship offered to self, more than to God. It’s about how we feel, not about the Lord.

Does that mean we should not give any thought to the musical styles and preferences of the people around us in the world? No. I’m not saying that. Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 14 of how we ought to consider the unbeliever or outsider who might come among us and make sure certain expressions of our worship are accessible to them. He even speaks of the evangelistic effect of our worship and how our consideration of others may, by God’s grace, lead to their conversion. But even Paul’s instructions are given in the context of making sure our worship is orderly and in a manner pleasing to God. He never suggests that unbelievers (or believers for that matter) are the determining factor in our worship. They are not. God is.

And how could the unbeliever ever be? Paul’s most basic understanding of the condition of the lost is that they are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins. Can people who are spiritually dead ever really worship God? Not according to Paul. Not unless they are born again. So our worship, if it is true worship, will always, at least in some ways, be “incomprehensible to the unconverted.” Why? Because “Comprehension in worship requires the work of the Holy Spirit and long exposure.”⁶ And, brothers and sisters, that’s not always a bad thing. Indeed, instead of only ever laboring at “removing [all] the difficulties,” perhaps “we should see this principle as an opportunity to highlight the antithesis between the Church and the world and explain the gospel in its own terms.”⁷ In other words, some attempts to make worship more accessible to the lost may actually have the unintended consequence of obscuring the very message—the Gospel—that we want the lost to grasp and embrace. Worship that really does the lost world a favor is worship that takes seriously what God has prescribed in His Word, worship, in other words, that is more about God than it is about us.

“One implication of all of this”, according to David McWilliams,

“is that when an unbeliever walks into a worship service, he should sense that he has walked into a different universe, because that is what is happening. It should be [at least in some ways] disconcerting and uncomfortable to him. Worship should not resemble what can be received from other sources, such as television, clips or movies, etc. [i.e., it’s not about our entertainment and felt needs]. There should be

no gimmicks in worship. [And] Moreover, God's people are refreshed when the worship context is different from what they have experienced throughout the week."⁸

Of course, anytime we speak like this there is always a risk that some among us will think that what I am saying is that the "old" Christian hymns are better than the "new" praise songs. But that's not necessarily true and, depending on what "hymn" we are talking about, it may be demonstrably false. And, furthermore, what you consider the "oldies" are actually pretty new on the scene. The vast majority of Christians in the vast majority of Christian history would probably chuckle at what we consider the Christian "classics." It's all pretty new from a historical perspective. And the forms of worship that everyone in this room prefers—diverse as they are—are much more culturally formed than you realize. And that's not always bad. In fact, it can be a great. As long as it's not wed to the kind of chronological snobbery that seems to characterize the so-called "worship wars" of our day. So, perhaps we can discuss this more next time, jumping ahead to consider "*sacrifice of praise*" we read about in chapter 13. Lord willing we will, so hold this thought. But our text this morning is really more about the *manner* in which we offer up our worship than it is the *medium* of our worship. All acceptable worship is offered in faith and marked by appreciation and awe.

After having considered a dozen chapters explaining how much we needed Christ and His work and the wonderful inheritance that He has given to those saved by His grace, it is probably pretty obvious why appreciation is the appropriate response. The proper response to grace is always gratitude. And we probably don't need to belabor that point any longer today. But notice, it's not just appreciation that marks a fitting response to God's work for us in Christ. It's appreciation mingled with awe, "*reverence and awe*" (12:28). These things go together. We need both. Some people neglect both. But many also emphasize only one to the exclusion of the other and that's not right either. Both are needed so that different errors can be avoided. I like the way Dennis Johnson articulates the point: "Our secret motives and spoken words must blend gratitude (which keeps seriousness from drifting into dry duty) with reverent awe (which keeps joy from degenerating into flippancy)."⁹ We must maintain the theological balance of this text.¹⁰ Grateful hearts. Reverent fear. Appreciation united to Awe.

What a curious union this is. How counterintuitive. It means that Christians can be simultaneously among the most serious men and women in this world while also the most joyful. There is balance here. We are not to walk around in constant gloom and call it reverence. We should be marked by joy. We should be a joy to be around. We should have the best sense of humor on the planet. We should laugh. We should play. Our God is good and He is Love. But He is still King. He is still Holy. The God of Zion is the God of Sinai too. So He deserves our respect. He is worthy of reverence and awe. So have your fun as you experience His kindness, but don't let it devolve into flippancy before God.

In other words, don't forget about verse 29. Note the primary *why* of our reverent awe. Do you see it there, in that final verse? We offer up worship with "*reverence and awe, for* [i.e., because] *our God is a consuming fire.*"

Perhaps this description of God (and its implications) don't sit well with you. That doesn't seem like the deity you worship. Then is it possible that you don't worship the true God? You do realize that, if a God exists who created you and everything else, then He doesn't need to cater to your preferences and conform to what you are looking for in a god. He's not running for the office of God. He is God. So we must allow the Bible to shape our view of God, not our world. Not our fallen desires. Not our culture. You must accept Him on His terms, because He will not bow to yours.

Again, I am reminded of a C. S. Lewis reference, and, if you'll humor another children's book reference, I'll share it with you. It's a scene from a different Narnia book. It's called *The Silver Chair*. And, again, the scene concerns the glorious and majestic lion, King Aslan, who is meant to represent Christ. An adventurous girl by the name of Jill happens upon a refreshing stream of water. She is quite thirsty because she has been lost. But as she approaches the stream, she spots the lion reclining calmly between her and water she craves. She stops. She's filled with terror. But then the lion offers her an invitation. "If you are thirsty," he says, "come and

drink.” She’s frozen now, afraid to move forward into his range and afraid to retreat and invite his pursuit. And as her fear of the lion and intense longing for the water collide, he speaks to her again. “Are you not thirsty?” “I’m *dying* of thirst,” she answers desperately. “Then drink,” the lion invites. The intensity of the scene builds.

“May I—could I—would you mind going away while I do?” said Jill.

The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience.

‘Will you promise not to—do anything to me, if I do come?’ said Jill.

‘I make no promise,’ said the Lion.

Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer.

‘Do you eat girls?’ she said.”

Now, pause for a moment. What would you have expected the lion to say at this point? Knowing, as you do now, that the lion represents Christ, what do you think people in our world would expect the lion to say? Maybe something like, “Oh, dear child, have you not heard of me, gentile Aslan, meek and mild?” But that’s not how he answers. Instead, Lewis writes (and remember this is in response to the question about eating children):

“I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms,” said the Lion. It didn’t say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it.

‘I daren’t come and drink,’ said Jill.

‘Then you will die of thirst,’ said the Lion.

‘Oh dear!’ said Jill, coming another step nearer. ‘I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.’

‘There is no other stream,’ said the Lion.”¹¹

And there it is, brothers and sister. Do you want your thirsty soul to be filled and satisfied by the waters of eternal life? Then you must accept that there is no other stream. And, therefore,

“...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....[Even still, we must] 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.”¹²

So we’ve come full circle, haven’t we? Is He safe? No, He isn’t safe. But He’s good...

His character, as terrifying as it can be, is actually good news. Why? Because this is the kind of God we need—consuming fire and all—even if we don’t have eyes to see it yet. And His person and work doesn’t just fuel the flames of our reverence for Him, but can also ignite our gratitude.¹³

“Recognition of such potential judgment only heightens the awareness that God is good in providing not only a way of escape, but a way that his own can enjoy eternal fellowship with him.”¹⁴ We didn’t deserve any of it. What we deserved, Christ took upon Himself on the cross. He was consumed in the fires of God’s wrath, so that we could be spared, so that we could be clothed in the asbestos-like righteousness of Christ Himself. And now God’s fiery nature doesn’t have to destroy us. He can destroy those imperfections in us. He can purify and refine us. He can draw us close and take us in as children. And all of this freely—owing nothing to your work and all to Christ’s work for you—if we would but turn from our sin and self-sufficiency and trust in Christ alone. He lived the life we failed to live. He died the death we deserved to die. He rose from death and we can too. But only by God’s grace. And only through faith.

So will you trust Him? Will you accept that He is your only hope in life and death, realize there is no other stream, and draw near in faith. He has invited you. How do you know? His Word tells you. The true Lion has spoken. You can trust Him.

When the fictional Jill was told by Aslan that He stands between her and the stream of life, Lewis writes:

“It never occurred to Jill to disbelieve the Lion—no one who had seen his stern face could do that—and her mind suddenly made itself up. It was the worst thing she had ever had to do, but she went forward to the stream, knelt down, and began scooping up water in her hand. It was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted. You didn’t need to drink much of it, for it quenched your thirst at once. Before she tasted it she had been intending to make a dash away from the Lion the moment she had finished. Now, she realized that this would be on the whole the most dangerous thing of all. She got up and stood there with her lips still wet from drinking.

‘Come here,’ said the Lion. And she had to.”¹⁵

They have a brief conversation there by the river, in which Jill admits her fault. Aslan then appoints her to a task that involves going after someone who was lost, called Eustace Scrubb. He had called to them for this purpose. She was puzzled by the instruction and Aslan brings her confusion to the surface. Jill speaks up.

“‘I was wondering—I mean—could there be a mistake? Because no one called me and Scrubb, you know. It was we who asked to come here. Scrubb said we were to call to—to Somebody—it was a name I wouldn’t know—and perhaps the Somebody would let us in. And we did, and then we found the door open.’

‘You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you,’ said the Lion.

‘Then you are Somebody, sir?’ said Jill.

‘I am. And now hear your task...’¹⁶

Aslan gives her further instructions. And then we read, “As the Lion seemed to have finished, Jill thought she should say something. So she said, ‘Thank you very much. I see.’”¹⁷ And then the Lion goes on to tell her that she will see better, if she will remember what he has revealed to her.

I just love that scene. It reminds me of our text of Scripture. In Jill we see us who have been given access by Christ to living water. She is filled with reverence and awe. And in the midst of the task she doesn’t know what to say, but “Thank you very much.” Gratitude. Appreciation mixed with awe. She has not arrived. She doesn’t see as well as she thinks she does. But the King has called to her and so she came forward. She has tasted and seen that he is good. And he has called her to a task. And he will see her through. This is our story, brothers and sisters. And we too will see more clearly in the days ahead, if we would remember it.

“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, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:28-29)

May that, through faith, sound like good news to you this morning.

Let’s pray...

¹ R. C. Sproul, *Truths We Confess: A Systematic Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, Rev. Ed. (Orlando: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019), 486. Along these lines, John Owen once stated, in his sermon “The Nature and Beauty of Gospel Worship”: “[Worship] is performed in heaven. Though they who perform it are on earth, yet they do it, by faith, in heaven.” (drawn from David B. McWilliams, *Hebrews* [LCEC; Powder Springs, GA: Tolle Lege Press, 2015], 380).

² *Ibid.*, 42-43.

³ C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Illustrated in Color by Pauline Baynes; New York: HarperTrophy, 1998 (orig. 1950), 80.

⁴ “The HCSB translates the phrase, ‘Let us hold on to grace.’ The word for ‘thankful’...often means grace, but such meaning is doubtful here. The verb ‘have’ with the noun used here means ‘give thanks’ in other contexts (Luke 17:9; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 1:3; 2 Macc 3:33; cf. 1 Cor 10:30), and there is no clear example where the expression refers to God’s grace (but cf. 3 Macc 5:20).” Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (BTC; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 406-407.

⁵ Many have pointed out that the pairing of “reverence and awe” may be intended as a hendiadys (i.e., expressing a single idea with two words connected by “and”), in this case meaning “reverent awe.” See, e.g., David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (NAC; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 598.

⁶ McWilliams, 379.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 380.

⁹ Dennis L. Johnson, “Hebrews,” in *Hebrews-Revelation* (ESVEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 200.

¹⁰ “Believers are often in danger either of taking these great things for granted, or of trivializing them by flippant attitudes... The fire on Sinai is a thing of the past (12:18), but the blazing fire of God’s holy, jealous and righteous love will never be extinguished. The believer knows that in the presence of that bright light all his sins are exposed [Isa. 33:14]. He also rejoices that mercifully, in its refining flames, they can also be consumed.” Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews* (BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 246-247.

¹¹ C. S. Lewis, “The Silver Chair,” in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2010 edition), 557-558.

¹² Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing 2006), 583.

¹³ We should note that verse 29 alludes to Deuteronomy 4:24 (cf. Exod. 24:17), where Moses warns the grown sons and daughters of that Israelites who died in the wilderness because of unbelief, “Take care, 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.” ²⁴ For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” (Deut. 4:23-24). But the imagery of consuming fire also calls to mind Hebrews 10:27, which probably involves “an allusion to Deut. 9:3, where (more positively) fire consumes God’s opponents so that his promises to his people can be fulfilled” [Dana M. Harris, *Hebrews* (EGGNT; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 398]. Is that not what is being foreshadowed in the future “shaking” being considered in Hebrews 12? Our kingdom, he says, “cannot be shaken” (12:28) and He will “shake not only the earth but also the heavens” to remove them “in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain” (12:26-27). So the fact that “our God is a consuming fire” (12:29) proves to be bad news for those who reject Him in life, but very good news for those He receives through Christ.

¹⁴ Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 673.

¹⁵ Lewis, “The Silver Chair,” 558.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 558-559.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 559.