Hebrews 12:1-29

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

Wyn Laidig & Andrew Warner

January 2021

***Hebrews 12:1–29*** (ESV)  
**1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. **4** In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. **5** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. **6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” **7** It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **8** If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. **11** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. **12** Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, **13** and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. **14** Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. **15** See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; **16** that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. **17** For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. **18** For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest **19** and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. **20** For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” **21** Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” **22** 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. **25** 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.

1. The “**therefore**” in Heb 12:1 seems to refer to the past chapter’s discussion of those people who showed great faith. As you reflect on Chapter 11 what is the one theme common to all these people of great faith?

They all died without seeing the promise fulfilled. They lived by faith in the Promise, even though they never saw the Promise realized.

1. Heb 12:1 is a major turning point in the epistle to the Hebrews. In what way is Chapter 12 different from all previous chapter of Hebrews?

Chapters 1-10 were mainly arguments about the superiority of Yeshua, his life, his purpose, his message. The end of Chapter 10 talks about out need to draw near to God through Yeshua, and not shrink back, and hints at our need to live by faith. Then Chapter 11 presents many examples of those who lived by faith. Now, in Chapter 12, having laid the foundation for his exhortation, the author gives specific instructions on how the believers are to live.

1. What is the implied **kal v’chomer** (“light and heavy”) argument that the author is making, in chapters 11 and 12? Where do the “**great cloud of witnesses**” fit in this argument? Where do the readers (and us) fit into this argument?

**Kal v’chomer:** If they lived by faith, not seeing the Promise fulfilled, HOW MUCH MORE should we live by faith, having now seen the Promise fulfilled!

The focus of chapter 11 is on the first half of the **kal v’chomer** argument – the great cloud of witnesses are those who lived by faith even without seeing the Promise fulfilled.

1. Looking at Heb 12:1-2, there is one primary command. What single word summarizes that command? Are we obedient to this?

RUN! We are to run, not walk. We often talk about our “walk with God”. Maybe we should instead be talking about our “run with God”.

1. Looking further at that single primary command, what are the specific instructions on **how** we are to carry it out? List each, and consider how it applies to us.

* Run, laying aside every weight
* Run, laying aside every sin which clings so closely
* Run with endurance
* Run, looking to Yeshua

1. Why do you think the author uses the picture of a race? He says a race is set before us. In what way? What is the competition? See also 1 Cor 9:24-27, which was written by Paul at least 10 years earlier.

***1 Corinthians 9:24–27*** (ESV)  
**24** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. **25** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. **26** So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. **27** But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

It seems that life itself is pictured as a race, the finish line being death. The goal is the live our life entirely by faith. We want to reach the end of the race (our life) without stopping, without giving up. The competition is what we are fighting against – the weakness of our flesh, the temptation of sin, and Satan who seeks to devour and destroy.

1. The author seems to equate “**weight**” and “**sin**”. Why? And why does he further describe sin and “clinging closely to us”. What does that imply? What are the consequences for us?

Weight keeps a runner from running fast. Sin prevents us from running with God. It holds us back. Sin is not easily discarded. It “clings to us”. It doesn’t fall off on it’s own. We have to work to remove it. We must take positive action to remove our sins!

1. Yeshua is referred to as the “**founder**” and “**perfector**” of our faith. What do each of these words really mean, and why are they applied to Yeshua? Does this remind you of an expression that Yeshua used to describe himself?

Founder – GR *archēgos* “one who has a preeminent position, one who begins or originates”

Perfector – GR *teleiōtēs (*from *teleo) “one who completes, one who brings something to a successful conclusion”*

Our faith in God, that his Promise would be fulfilled, was all about the Messiah. From the very beginning God’s plan of salvation was Yeshua. He is the foundation of God’s plan. And through his sacrifice he will complete the plan. He is the beginning and the end of our salvation. The beginning and the end of the Promise. The beginning and the end of our faith. He brings it all to a successful completion!

***Revelation 22:13*** (ESV)  
**13** I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, the **first and the last**, the **beginning and the end**.”

1. Heb 12:2 states that Yeshua endured the cross for the “**joy that was set before him**”. This seems like an unusual thing to say. What do you think this means? What is the “**joy**”? Consider Isaiah 53:11.

***Isaiah 53:11*** (ESV)  
**11** Out of the anguish of his **soul he shall see and be satisfied**; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, **make many to be accounted righteous**, and he shall bear their iniquities.

The knowledge that Yeshua’s suffering would result in the eternal salvation of so many people brought true joy to Yeshua, enabling him to endure the suffering he would experience.

1. Hebrews 12:2 speaks of Yeshua “**seated at the right hand of the throne of God**”. Where else in Scripture is a similar phrase used? I think this phrase may also refer to the final words to James the Just (**Yaakov HaTzaddik*)*** the brother of Yeshua, spoken just before he was stoned at the temple in 62 AD. His proclamation is recorded by Eusebius (quoting Hegessipus). See if you can find out what Yaakov said. Why might this be especially relevant to the readers of Hebrews?

***Hebrews 1:3*** (ESV)  
**3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high**,

***Luke 22:67–69*** (ESV)  
**67** “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, **68** and if I ask you, you will not answer. **69** But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”

XXIII. [1] When Paul appealed to Caesar and was sent over to Rome by Festus the Jews were disappointed of the hope in which they had laid their plot against him and turned against James, the brother of the Lord, to whom the throne of the bishopric in Jerusalem had been allotted by the Apostles. The crime which they committed was as follows. [2] They brought him into the midst and demanded a denial of the faith in Christ before all the people, but when he, contrary to the expectation of all of them, with a loud voice and with more courage than they had expected, confessed before all the people that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the son of God, they could no longer endure his testimony, since he was by all men believed to be most righteous because of the height which he had reached in a life of philosophy and religion, and killed him, using anarchy as an opportunity for power since at that moment Festus had died in Judaea, leaving the district without government or procurator. [3] The manner of James’s death has been shown by the words of Clement already quoted, narrating that he was thrown from the battlement and beaten to death with a club, but **Hegesippus, who belongs to the generation after the Apostles, gives the most accurate account of him speaking as follows in his fifth book:**

“The charge of the Church passed to James the brother of the Lord, together with the Apostles. [4] He was called the ‘Just’ by all men from the Lord’s time to ours, since many are called James, but he was holy from his mother’s womb. [5] He drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat flesh; no razor went upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not go to the baths.\*\* [6] He alone was allowed to enter into the sanctuary, for he did not wear wool but linen, and he used to enter alone into the temple and be found kneeling and praying for forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel’s because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness for the people. [7] So from his excessive righteousness he was called the Just and Oblias, that is in Greek, ‘Rampart of the people and righteousness,’ as the prophets declare concerning him. [8] Thus some of the seven sects among the people, who were described before by me (in the Commentaries), inquired of him what was the ‘gate of Jesus,’ and he said that he was the Saviour. [9] Owing to this some believed that Jesus was the Christ. The sects mentioned above did not believe either in resurrection or in one who shall come to reward each according to his deeds, but as many as believed did so because of James. [10] Now, since many even of the rulers believed, there was a tumult of the Jews and the Scribes and Pharisees saying that the whole people was in danger of looking for Jesus as the Christ. So they assembled and said to James, ‘We beseech you to restrain the people since they are straying after Jesus as though he were the Messiah. We beseech you to persuade concerning Jesus all who come for the day of the Passover, for all obey you. For we and the whole people testify to you that you are righteous and do not respect persons. So do you persuade the crowd not to err concerning Jesus, for the whole people and we all obey you. [11] Therefore stand on the battlement of the temple that you may be clearly visible on high, and that your words may be audible to all the people, for because of the Passover all the tribes, with the Gentiles also, have come together.’ [12] So the Scribes and Pharisees mentioned before made James stand on the battlement of the temple, and they cried out to him and said, ‘Oh, just one, to whom we all owe obedience, since the people are straying after Jesus who was crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus?1’ [13] And he answered with a loud voice, **‘Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven.’** [14] And many were convinced and confessed at the testimony of James and said, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David.’ Then again the same Scribes and Pharisees said to one another, ‘We did wrong to provide Jesus with such testimony, but let us go up and throw him down that they may be afraid and not believe him.’ [15] And they cried out saying, ‘Oh, oh, even the just one erred.’ And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah, ‘Let us take the just man for he is unprofitable to us. Yet they shall eat the fruit of their works.’ [16] **So they went up and threw down the Just**, and they said to one another, ‘Let us stone James the Just,’ **and they began to stone him since the fall had not killed him,** but he turned and knelt saying, ‘I beseech thee, O Lord, God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ [17] And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of Rechabim,2 to whom Jeremiah the prophet bore witness, cried out saying, ‘Stop! what are you doing? The Just is praying for you.’ And a certain man among them, one of the laundrymen, **took the club with which he used to beat out the clothes, and hit the Just on the head, and so he suffered martyrdom. [18] And they buried him on the spot by the temple**, and his gravestone still remains by the temple. He became a true witness both to Jews and to Greeks that Jesus is the Christ, and at once Vespasian began to besiege them.” **(Eusebius 260-339 CE** in *History of the Church* **2.23.4, 10-18**; **quoting from Hegesippus, 110-180 CE)**.

This would have taken place in very recent history to the original readers of Hebrews, so it would be fresh in their minds. This persecution of Yaakov (and others at the same time, according to Josephus) may be what is causing the great pressure on the readers of Hebrews to leave their faith in Yeshua. Therefor these references, linking Yaacov’s final statement with other Scripture would be important reminders.

1. Heb 12:3 says to “**consider Yeshua**”. Why? How did Yeshua face hostility?

Yeshua faced suffering with joy, knowing it was God’s will -- knowing the outcome! We are to face it in the same way. Yeshua is our example. We must always keep the outcome in mind! It is not suffering without purpose. It will indeed be worth it all!

1. What is the literal translation of “**weary and fainthearted**”, especially the phrase translated as “**fainthearted**”? How does the more literal translation add depth to what is being communicated?

Literally; “weary and **give up in your life**”.

Life can be totally draining, so much so that sometimes you truly want to give up. But (again) we must consider Yeshua and the joy he was able to have because he fixed his eyes on the outcome.

1. Consider Hebrews 1:4. What is our struggle against? And why does the author say they haven’t resisted to the point of shedding blood? What is the implied **kal v’chomer** argument here?

Our struggle is against sin (and other things that weight us down, such as tiredness, weakness, busy-ness). This is our competition in the race. It clings to us. Weighting us down. Hindering us from running with God.

Yeshua faced bloodshed and death, yet did so with joy. We haven’t yet experienced that level of hostility.

**Kal v’chomer** - If Yeshua was able to endure bloodshed and even death with joy (**because He knew the outcome)**, how much more should we be able to endure significantly less hostility with joy (**since we also know the outcome!**).

1. Hebrew 12:5-6 quotes Proverbs 3:11-12. What is the point of this quote?

***Proverbs 3:11–12*** (ESV)  
**11** My son, do not despise YHWH’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, **12** for YHWH reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

There are two points – 1) we are treated by God as sons (and daughters)  
 2) God disciplines his sons because he loves them

1. Considering Hebrews 12:7-11, what do learn about discipline? How is God’s discipline different from an earthly father’s discipline?

Everyone is disciplined by his father (heavenly and earthly) – it is part of being a true son.

God **knows** what is best for us, but our earthly father can only do what his **thinks** is best for us.

v. 9 kal v’chomer – if you are willing to receive the discipline from your earthly father, how much more so should you be willing to receive the discipline from your heavenly father.

That we may share in his holiness – a father disciplines to make his child more like him.

Discipline is always painful at the time – but it bears good fruit.

1. Hebrew 12:12-13 quotes Isaiah 35:3 and Prov 3:6-8. Notice the reference to “**healing**” in Heb 12:13. How does an understanding of the context he is quoting from help show us how this healing is to be obtained?

***Isaiah 35:3–4*** (ESV)  
**3** **Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees**. **4** Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

***Proverbs 3:6–8*** (ESV)  
**6** In all your ways acknowledge him, and **he will make straight your paths.** **7** Be not wise in your own eyes; fear YHWH, and turn away from evil. **8** It will be **healing to your flesh** and **refreshment to your bones.**

1. Encourage others to be strong – God will save! (Is 35:4)  
2. Acknowledge God as the one to provide your straight path (Prov 3:6)  
3. Respect God as the one with true wisdom -- seek His wisdom rather than yours (Prov 3:7)  
4. Turn away from evil (Prov 3:7)

**We are lame! We need healing to run the race!**

1. The author was talking about “**enduring hostility from sinners**” (v.3) and “**struggling again sin**” (v.4), and now about receiving “**discipline from God**”. The discussion seems to flow together seamlessly, suggesting that he may be equating these things, or at least linking them together. Is that the case, or are we really talking about entirely different things here?

It could be the same... they can definitely be linked together in some cases. God can use hostility from others to discipline his children. And people can certainly react to hostility with sin rather than with faith. So they can at least sometimes be tied together.

But also, these can all be seen as separate reasons why people don’t continue to live by faith. The point of the chapter is how to live by faith, and also how not to live (so people don’t end up walking away from faith!).

**Point – we should accept discipline from God.**  Question for discussion – How do we know if events are around us are “discipline”?

1. How does Heb 12:14-15 instruct us to live? What is the danger if we don’t live that way? Can you give examples of a root of bitterness that you or someone you know experienced?

Strive for peace with everyone.

Without holiness no one see God – this section seems to be about holiness and what that looks like (as well as what it doesn’t look like)

We have an obligation to others, not just ourselves. “See to it that **no one** fails….

A root of bitterness – causes **many** to be defiled!

1. Why is “sexually immoral” brought up here? See Gen 26:34.

***Genesis 26:34–35*** (ESV)  
**34** When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, **35** and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

Esau took two Hittite wives. This was immoral.

1. It is interesting that Esau is used as an example in Heb 12:16-17. With what you know about the situation the Hebrew believers were facing at the time, why is the example of Esau particularly relevant? See Gen 27:34, Gen 27:42, Mal 1:2.

***Genesis 27:34*** (ESV)  
**34** As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!”

***Genesis 27:41*** (ESV)  
**41** Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

***Malachi 1:2-3*** (ESV)  
**2** “I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares YHWH. “**Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I hated**.”

Esau didn’t value the blessing. He rejected it, then when it was too late he sought it with tears. After that point, Esau bore a grudge. A root of bitterness took hold. In the end, God says He loves Jacob but hates Esau. Esau could have had the blessings, but he didn’t value it, and because of that he lost everything, including God’s love!

The author seem to be drawing an analogy between Esau and the Hebrews, who are being tempted to "sell out" and forfeit the blessing of the Messiah which is supposed to be theirs. If they give in, as stated previously, there is no other way for them to inherit the blessing of salvation. There is no other foundation!

1. The next verses (Hebrews 12:18-24) do not begin a completely new thought, but rather are linked to the prior passage with the word “**for**”. These verses seem to tie back to the main point of the prior passage: “**strive for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord**” (Heb 12:14). What is the event being referenced in these verses (Heb 12:18-24)? Review Ex 19:10-19.

***Exodus 19:10–20*** (ESV)  
**10** YHWH said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments **11** and be ready for the third day. For on the third day YHWH will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **12** And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. **13** No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.” **14** So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. **15** And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.” **16** On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. **17** Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. **18** Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because YHWH had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. **19** And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

The author is encouraging the readers to strive for holiness – being set apart exclusively for God’s purposes. Don’t be like Esau who didn’t want the blessing until it was too late. **Don’t be like the people during Moses time who were too afraid to hear from God directly, and then were unwilling to follow the instructions of God given through Moses.**

How much more should you, having heard the words of Yeshua himself, be in AWE and FEAR of not following God’s instructions? You are in danger of rejecting even more than your forefathers!

1. What is the contrast between what Moses and the people faced and what the readers of Hebrews are facing? Why does the author say the mountain can be touched when God specifically told them it couldn’t be?

The contrast is between approaching the earthy mountain (Sinai) where God spoke through Moses, vs the heavenly Mt Zion -- the true heavenly throne of God where God himself lives. Mt Sinai is a physical mountain, of this world, that be physically touched by people on this earth. The heavenly Mt Zion is not of this world. It cannot be touched by people on this earth.

1. Are “**the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven**” and “**the spirits of the righteous made perfect**” two different groups? Who is being referred to?

Maybe assembly of the firstborn refers the present-day believers (readers of Hebrews included) who will gather in heaven,

Spirits of the righteous made perfect most likely refers to those who died in the past and already there in Spirit waiting for their resurrected bodies. If so, this implies that the spirits of believers who die do in fact reside with YHWH awaiting the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom.

1. What is the connection with the blood of Abel (see Gen 4:6-13), which seems to be contrasted with the sprinkled blood of Yeshua and new covenant? What does the “**sprinkled blood**” refer to? Recall our discussion of Heb 10:22.

***Genesis 4:6–13*** (ESV)  
**6** YHWH said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? **7** If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.” **8** Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. **9** Then YHWH said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” **10** And YHWH said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. **11** And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. **12** When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” **13** Cain said to YHWH, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.

**Abel is the recorded death, and that death is a murder!** Abel’s blood was not freely given. It was taken by murder. Abel’s blood cries out for justice. In contrast Yeshua’s blood was freely given. It provided satisfaction to the justice God requires of the sinner.

***Hebrews 10:22*** (ESV)  
**22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, **with our hearts sprinkled clean** from an evil conscience and our bodies **washed with pure water.**

“Sprinkled blood” – refers the priest’s purification of the altar and tabernacle area, as we discussed with Heb 10:22. This is a picture of what we are now experiencing through Yeshua. **Abel’s blood shed on the ground cried out for justice. Yeshua’s blood also shed on the ground, cries out that justice has been fulfilled!**

1. Hebrews 12:25 says “**see that you do not refuse him who is speaking**.” What does this mean? Who or what is actually “speaking”? Consider Heb 12:19 as well Heb 1:1-2, as well as the context of the prior verses.

***Hebrews 12:19*** (ESV)  
**19** and the sound of a trumpet and **a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken** to them.

***Hebrews 1:1–2*** (ESV)  
**1** **Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets**, **2** ~~but~~ **in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

In the time of Moses, the people first of all didn’t want to hear God’s words directly. It was too scary for them. And then after God’s words were communicated via Moses, then didn’t obey and many died as a result. They refused him who was speaking. Now, the author encourages the people not to refuse the word of God spoken through the Messiah. Don’t make the same mistake again!

But also, referring to the prior verse, it is the sprinkled blood Yeshua that is speaking! Recall the first death / murder was Abel and his sprinkled blood was crying out for justice! Now we have the sprinkled blood of Messiah crying out that justice has been fulfilled. He is speaking… will we heed his voice?

1. What is the **kal v’chomer** argument in Hebrews 12:25?

If they did not escape when not heeding the warnings from Moses, how much more will they not escape when not heeding the warnings of the Messiah.

1. Heb 12:26-27 quotes Haggai 2:6 and Haggai 2:21. What does it mean to “**shake the earth and the heavens**”?

***Haggai 2:4–9*** (ESV)  
**4** Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares YHWH. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares YHWH. Work, for I am with you, declares YHWH Tsava’ot, **5** according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. **6** For thus says the YHWH Tsava’ot. **Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth** and the sea and the dry land. **7** And **I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in**, and I will fill this house with glory, says YHWH Tsava’ot. **8** The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares YHWH Tsava’ot. **9** The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says YHWH Tsava’ot. And in this place I will give peace, declares YHWH Tsava’ot.’ ”

***Haggai 2:21–22*** (ESV)  
**21** “Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, **I am about to shake the heavens and the earth**, **22** and **to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations**, and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother.

Shaking the earth and heavens **means total destruction of the nations**. *Maybe* shaking the heavens also adds spiritual dimension the destruction, hinting at the destruction of Satan and the conquering of sin.

1. What does it mean that “**the things that cannot be shaken may remain**” (Heb 12:26)?

The physical will be destroyed for those that refuse to heed the warnings from God. The things that cannot be shaken are those things that are based on the spiritual. Those that heed the warnings from God and are obedient to him by living lives of faith. For these there is eternal life rather than destruction. These are the things that cannot be shaken.

1. According to Heb 12:28-29, what should be our response, assuming we are of the group that is not shaken?

We should be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. It cannot be destroyed, thus it is eternal.

We should demonstrate our gratefulness by offering to God “acceptable worship with reverence and awe”.

1. What is “**acceptable worship**”? Who defines what is acceptable? Consider Rom 12:1-2, Ps 51:17, Micah 6-8,1 John 5:3-4.

***Romans 12:1–2*** (ESV)  
**1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, t**o present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.** **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

***Psalm 51:17*** (ESV)  
**17** The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart**, O God, you will not despise.

***Micah 6:8*** (ESV)  
**8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does YHWH require of you but to **do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly** with your God?

* justice = **mishpat** - keeping the commandments
* kindness = **chesed** - steadfast commitment to the covenant promises
* walk humble = **tsana'** - walk in purity / submission (to God)

In short, this verse says all that YHWH wants of his people is to submissively walk in covenant with Him, keeping our covenant promises to Him

***1 John 5:3–4*** (ESV)  
**3** For **this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome. **4** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Acceptable worship is worship that aligns with the God’s prescriptions (his commands). God is who defines what is acceptable and what is not. It is not measured or determined by man.

1. The last phrase of the chapter is “**for our God is a consuming fire**”. What is the author trying to accomplish by using this phrase? Consider also Lev 10:1-3.

***Leviticus 10:1–3*** (ESV)  
**1** Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before YHWH, which he had not commanded them. **2** **And fire came out from before YHWH and consumed them**, and they died before YHWH. **3** Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what YHWH has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’ ” And Aaron held his peace.

It is dangerous to worship our way and not God’s way! We should learn the lesson of Nadab and Abihu!

He wants to instill proper fear in the hearts of the readers. Our God can and will destroy all those who are not a part of his covenant community. That is what the “shaking of the earth and heavens” is all about. Utter destruction. Only when we realize the extent of his power and what we truly deserve, can we have the proper level of “reverence and awe”.

That being said, that God is a consuming fire does not motivate true worship out of fear of being consumed, but rather out the knowledge that God has by grace spared His people from this fate. This understanding produces an attitude of gratitude.