

Text: Hebrews 12:25-27

Title: Do Not Refuse God's Message of Salvation

Truth: Do not reject God; rather, render grateful service to Him.

Date/Location: Sunday December 18, 2011 at FBC

Introduction

- In the preceding verses, there was a contrast between (first) the tangible and fearful encounter with God at Mt. Sinai versus (second) the spiritual and joyful assembly of believers with God and the angels and saints of previous ages.
- The first emphasizes the holiness of God while the second emphasizes the privilege of Christians.
- These facts are additional reasons to pursue peace and holiness in our lives and to shun worldliness. (The first reason? God said to do so!)
- These things also highlight our responsibility to give careful attention to God. More privilege results in more responsibility.

I. Do not refuse the message of salvation that God provides, v. 25-27

MAKE THE ABOVE A STATEMENT IN THE INTRO AND THEN MOVE ALL OUTLINE LEVELS UP ONE NOTCH, AS IN THE SECOND MESSAGE, BELOW.

A. What does it mean to "refuse Him"?

1. Question: how does this refusal compare to what is said in v. 19?

The refusal of v. 19 was a request to not hear God's voice because it was so terrifying and because His holiness would cause them to die (5:26). This attitude was commended by God in Deut. 5:28, and they were still asking for God's Word, just through Moses. So it is not precisely the same as the refusal of Heb. 11:25 even though the same word is used.

God wished that they always had a heard to fear Him and keep His commandments (some foreshadowing...).

The people's sensitivity to God's holiness did not remain.

2. The refusal of v. 25 is more severe than the initial request of the people. It means to reject God and His revelation. In their case, it also had to do with their refusal of His daily provisions of water and food.

Examples of the same verb: 1 Tim. 5:11 and Titus 3:10 show refusal or rejection of *people*; 1 Tim. 4:7 and 2 Tim. 2:23 of *things*.

Examples in Israelite history: The golden calf of Exodus 32; the profane fire of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10, the complaint of the people for meat in Numbers 11, Aaron and Miriam speaking against Moses in Numbers 12, the refusal of the people to enter the promised land in Numbers 14 (see v. 11 especially), the rebellion of Korah in Numbers 16, and the people going after women of Moab in Numbers 25.

B. Why: Those who refused God in Israel did not escape.

Escape means escaping judgment. Many people *died* because of their disobedience. Example: Numbers 21:4-6.

God is portrayed as speaking from a location on the earth (Mt. Sinai).

The upcoming contrast with His speaking from heaven raises a question as to the accuracy of the text, because Exodus 20:22 says “I have talked with you from heaven.”

I believe that we can hold both without too much tension. Exodus 19:3 portrays God as calling Moses from the mountain, as if God was there. 19:11 says God will come down on mount Sinai, and 19:18, 20 reiterates that He did. So, he came down to the geographical location *from heaven*. Heaven, after all, is where God resides, in a manner of speaking, so everything He does originates from there in a sense.

Besides, God’s words are authoritative from wherever they are given (heaven, Jesus, the prophets and apostles speech, or the Bible’s words).

C. Why: Much less will we escape if we refuse God.

The lesser to greater argument of verse 25 is that if the OT people did not escape judgment when they refused the *earthly* message, how can we escape who have been given a *heavenly* message?

God speaks now through Christ (Heb. 1:2); Christ is in heaven; the Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven. God is not calling to you from some mountain somewhere, but from His throne in Heaven, telling you of the need for salvation from sin, and the supply that He has made to provide such salvation.

See Hebrews 2:1-3 and 10:26-31. The point is that if we do not heed what God says, we will DIE. And I mean die physically, spiritually, and eternally, because to not “heed” means to not “believe,” and belief is the entrance into the salvation benefits of God. Our eternal future

would be only one of gloom and death rather than one of joy and life.

D. Why: There will be a final judgment.

God's voice shook the earth in Exodus, but it will do so again to the whole earth. The quote from Haggai 2:6 shows that this shaking will also include heaven. The picture is one of a destructive earthquake.

The character of that judgment will be a once-for-all, final judgment as indicated by the explanation of "yet once more" in the text.

Only what is unshakable will remain after that judgment. Temporal and material things will be eliminated (2 Peter 3:10-11), but Christ remains forever (Hebrews 1:10-12). The shaking will be like the action of a sieve, straining out those things which are not fit to remain eternally.

If you reject gospel of Christ, there is no escape from eternal judgment at the hand of the God who is a consuming fire (Heb. 2:3, 3:12, 4:1, 6:4-6, 10:26-31).

E. Think on the opposite of refusal of God from texts like Prov. 16:20 where we are told to heed the word and trust in the Lord.

Conclusion