

A Final Shaking

and **Deliverance in a Day of Judgment**

by T. Austin-Sparks



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Table of Contents

A Final Shaking

The Deceitfulness of Sin

The Shakeable and the Unshakeable—the Ultimate Thing Is the Measure of Christ

Be Utterly Committed to the Increase of Christ

Deliverance in a Day of Judgment

A Final Shaking

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Lord Jesus Christ, we seek Thy Face. It is written, "The Light of the Glory of God is in the Face of Jesus Christ." Oh, Thou, Who didst forfeit, for that one terrible moment, the Countenance of Thy Father in order that we might never come there, that we might be received and abide in the Light of the Countenance of God, do this morning bring us into that very blessed inheritance through Thy Cross. The Face, the Countenance, the Towardness, the Unforsakingness of God. May this indeed be a time within the Veil when we dwell in the Light of the Countenance, the Face of the Lord. Lord Jesus Christ, in all that great and wonderful meaning, we now seek Thy Face. As we wait on Thee, show us Thy Face, Lord. For Thy Name's Sake, Amen.

In this final hour of this particular ministry, it is necessary to seek special grace to gather up and concentrate all that has been said throughout this week. But I think, perhaps I should say I feel, that the leading of the Lord is to gather up and concentrate all with one part of this letter to the Hebrews before us. As the letter is drawing to a close, we reach that part of it which is marked as chapter twelve; and it is in verses 25 to 28 that it says: "See that ye refuse not Him That speaketh." —Remember, the beginning is: "God hath spoken in His Son."

See that ye refuse not Him That speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused Him That warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him That warneth from heaven: Whose Voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, "Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven." And this word, "Yet once more," signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of

things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe.

The significance then is a kingdom which cannot be shaken, as we have been trying to see and show. The significance of this letter for the present time is the "yet once more"; that is, in this dispensation which has come in with Christ, the shaking firstly of the earth side of things and then the shaking of the heaven side of things.

The earth side, I think, had a special reference to what was just about to happen in old, traditional, historic Judaism. This letter was probably written in the year 69. I cannot be positive about it because all the expositors and scholars are divided about who wrote it and when it was written. To whom it was written exactly, you need not worry about that; but I am fairly sure that it was related to what the Holy Spirit knew was about to take place in the historic Judaism and earthly Israel. The probability is that this letter was written in the year 69, and you know what happened in the year 70. If that is true, it was a very short distance from the writing of this letter to the destruction of Jerusalem which was so utter, so terrible. Some of you, you pastors especially, will have read Josephus; and if you have, the section on the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem is one of the most terrible things you can read in history. It took place in the year 70, when everything in that Jerusalem was devastated and desolated and the Jews scattered, as Peter says, "throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" and everywhere else. The earth side was certainly shaken, not only shaken but brought down and devastated; and from that, it has not yet recovered. There is no temple. There is no integrated Israel on the earth. That is the earth side, and this is the prophecy, as you know, taken out of the Old Testament that this would happen.

It is interesting, very interesting, significant, and instructive, to go back to the setting of that prophecy (which we are not going to do) to see the setting of it in the history of Israel, to see the conditions that were arising in the time of Haggai. The prophecy is taken up, brought right over here so many, many years later, and applied to the situation which is reached in this letter to the Hebrews at that crisis time: the shaking of the earth. Of course, it applies particularly to the shaking of the earthly Jerusalem, the earthly Israel. We say that and leave it, but that is only half of the statement: "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth (and the earth side), but also the heaven."

So in the light of what the Lord has been saying this week and in the light of this letter in its full content, we are surely right in saying that Christianity, which is the other side; if you like, the heaven side, is going to be subjected also to such a shaking. Maybe we will not be far wrong if we say it has begun. It is on, it is proceeding, it is spreading. However, you may feel it has not reached your country yet. Well, if you are talking of merely material things, of outward economies, there may be few symptoms of it as yet; but spiritually, it is world-wide. It is the shaking of Christianity, the shaking of what we may call the heaven side of things, as different from the historic, earthly Israel.

But the point is that there is a universal shaking to take place in the economy of God; in the sovereign ordering of God, a universal shaking. What for? Here it says in order that there shall be nothing left but what God Himself has established. Note the little phrase: "As of things that have been made." Who made them? Who made them? Things made. The things that God made, has made and established, are the things and the only things which will ultimately remain, and the shaking is for that.

Now this letter is a comprehensive comparison and contrast (or discrimination) between the

passing and the permanent, between the temporal and the spiritual, between the earthly and the heavenly. That is the Letter to the Hebrews. That is what we have been emphasizing all the way through—the “not” any longer. A comprehensive “not”: “*Ye are not come.*” And the “But”: “*But ye are come.*” Two great comprehensive orders, economies, sovereignties, whatever you may call them, this whole letter has to do on the one side with the things which are transient and not abiding; and on the other side, with the things which are permanent and which remain “*that (in order that) the things which cannot be shaken...* [here is your “that” again] *...in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.*” This is the comparison and contrast, or discrimination, that is made by this letter as a whole.

Here, as a kind of parenthesis, let me put this. It is important for us to remember that this letter was written to a people who for a long period had held the position of a people whom God had taken out of the world to Himself, showing that it is possible for such a people to miss the way. It is possible for such a people to make their position an earthly one, just an earthly one, or make that position earthbound. And that is the pulse of this letter, not to Israel only but to Christians. This is the “on-high calling” letter. This is the heavenly side. This is the New Israel which God has taken out of the world to Himself and for Himself; but through and through this letter runs this reminder that a people who were like that for so long, taken out for God to God, did in the end miss the object, miss the way, did not arrive. Chapter three is all on that. “*They did not enter in, they perished in the wilderness.*”

Oh, dismiss your chapter divisions and see chapter three. There you have the people who failed to enter in, who perished in the wilderness. “*They could not enter in*” is the word, “*because of unbelief.*” That is chapter three, but chapter four opens, and you are not far into chapter four before you have this: “*the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.*” I am not going to launch out on that; but the point is, that in the wilderness where they perished, it was because they did not discriminate between soul and spirit. They did not understand the doctrine, of course; and, in effect, they lived in their souls.—That is, they lived in the self-life, the self-direction of everything: how this affects us, what we are going to get out of this, what this means in our interests. The self-life is the soul-life. The spirit is not that. The spirit is unto God, is the God-life.

However, this cleavage was not made in the wilderness; and although they had come out by such a mighty work of God, and become God’s people, and were separated unto Him, yet because they persisted in what we now call in the New Testament terms “soul-life,” because as the people of God there was no discrimination between the soul-life and the spirit, because there was no clear-cut between the two as of a “*two-edged sword,*” cutting both ways, up and down, because there was no clear-cut between the self-life and the life of the spirit, they perished in the wilderness. And do you tell me that that is not a possibility for Christians? That is the point of the letter, you see. Dismiss the division of chapter three and four as simply mechanical divisions, and pass right on and say, “Why did they perish in the wilderness? Why did they not enter in?” Why? Because there was not this clean-cut between self and the Lord, between soul and spirit.

Soul and spirit, this is a large matter about which we have heard too much. I think there is too much talk about that just now. It has become a very fascinating subject. You will never capture people more quickly and mentally than when you begin to talk about soul and spirit. It is a very interesting, mental subject; it is most fascinating. I am coming to the place where I want to talk about the things and not the names, the meaning and not the language or the terminology; however, that is by the way.

Now, you see, what I am saying is this letter was addressed to a people who for a long time had held the position of a people separated unto God, but who eventually missed the way and lost the inheritance, lost the meaning of their separation, because of the earthbound. Judaism—earthbound, and God says, *"I will shake"* that, *"I will shake"* that earthboundness, and *"I will shake"* it so devastatingly that there will be no temple and no Jerusalem and no headquarters for the nation at all, the whole thing will be smashed. *"I will shake"* that earth side, and He did, and has done that, and it has gone on all these centuries.

But He does not stop there. Then He goes over to the other side: "I am going to shake this other thing, too—this Christianity." It came in from heaven, the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, but what have men done with Christianity?—brought it down to earth, made it earthbound, made it something. The Lord, foreseeing that, prophesies: *"I will shake"* that also, *"I will shake"* that also, and Christianity as a merely earthly system, will go into the melting pot, it will go into the fire, and only that which is really and truly heavenly, of the Spirit of God, will survive and come out.

You see the force of this letter?! Hence, if you go through this letter, you will find that it is divided along two lines: the line of precaution, of warning; and the line of resolution. Now here is a little Bible study for you. You go through and mark the nine times in which the word *"lest"* occurs. *"Lest..."* First, *"Let us... fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short...."* *"Lest..."* Nine times that word *"lest"* is used through the letter. Trace it and see its context. *"Lest, for this reason...; lest, for that reason..."* Nine times *"lest"* gives precaution and warning. And then, ten times you have *"let us"*; and connected with that phrase, *"let us"* is an admonition to resolution, to be resolved. No use, you cannot take anything for granted about this. You are not going to get there by drift, and that is the first *"lest."* *"We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we... let them slip."*—*"Lest by any means you drift away, drift past."* That is the real language. You drift, and the picture behind this language is a picture which is a very simple one but very, very clear in its implication.

I used to be a yachtsman in Scotland, and we would go out on our day's sail; but the most anxious moment, the most tense moment, was when we came back to pick up our moorings. If the tide of the current was flowing strongly, and if the wind was high, there would be a chance of missing our moorings. You have got to take off your power, take down your sails, get your head toward the mooring; and then everybody would look toward the one with the boat hook-up in the bow, someone lying down flat on the deck with outstretched hands to take hold of that mooring and to grab it and hold it, because the tide or the current flowing would even pull you into the sea if you did not hold tight. Here was tenseness. The peril was that you would miss it and drift past it; and there were rocks over there. You could drift past. You could miss and drift, carried by the tide or the current or the wind. Oh, it was a tense moment. You got it and held on and were able to pull the boat up on the moorings and make fast. Then the tension is gone. "We have reached home. It is all right now. Everything is all right." Now that is the picture here which is actually used. *"Lest we drift past..."* *Drift... drift... drift.* *"Lest..."* Here is caution, warning!

All this is presented (and, oh, what an all it is!), this fulness and finality in Christ brought in with verses one and two of chapter one. And all that fulness and finality is in this letter, the great inheritance, a tremendous "all"; and the first warning is—"You could drift, you could drift; you could be carried past and carried away by the current, by the present breeze." Now Paul puts it in another way: *"carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,..."* That is the same thing. That is an illustration of the "lests," and there are nine of them. *"Lest we drift,"* (etc.), and over and alongside of that is the exhortation *"Let us"*—*"let us hold fast, let us lay hold, let us go on."* And I am just going

to put another fragment in because I think it is illuminating, it may have a point of application, "lest," because of the deceitfulness of sin, we are subverted.

The Deceitfulness of Sin

The deceitfulness of sin.—Have you ever thought about that? What is the deceitfulness of sin, if the word "sin" is a comprehensive word? Now do not narrow it down to one of its meanings. Sin has many aspects. It works in many ways. You can call this sin and that sin and something else and a thousand things sin. Yes, but they are only aspects of the one thing. What is the meaning of the word "sin" in the Bible? Missing the mark, missing the mark. You may miss it because of this or that or of many things, but in the end it amounts to this: you have missed the mark. Sin, comprehensively, is "missing the mark." It is the deceitfulness of sin to subvert you from the mark, from what Paul calls "*the mark for the prize of the high calling—on-high calling.*"

"Missing the mark," the deceitfulness to subvert. You may ask, "What do you mean by that deceitfulness?" Well, for me, at the moment, for this purpose this morning, it is policy in the place of principle. There is nothing more subverting, more spiritually injurious, than policy—being politic. Oh, how I have seen tragedies in the life of godly men, servants of the Lord, on this thing. I know men brought face to face with God's full purpose, but they had a position in the Christian world; and this full purpose requires a lot of adjustment as to position, adjustment as to relationships. "If I do that, my large door of opportunity for the Lord will be closed; if I do that, I will lose my influence for the Lord; if I take that way, maybe I shall be involved in much that will mean loss for the Lord, I am someone responsible for an organization that somehow or other has got to get support, and now, if I take such and such a line as has been indicated, I will lose my clientele. I will lose my financial support." That is policy, politic, alongside of what God has indicated; and the issue is, "Will I trust the Lord to look after what is of Him. I am no longer interested in anything that is not of the Lord, but if it is, can I trust the Lord to look after that while I obey Him, go His indicated way, or shall I hold on to my place of opportunity, open doors, and influences for the Lord and take this other course?"

Do you see what I mean?—The deceitfulness of missing the mark, and I have seen more than one tragedy, that after years (it is so manifest to everybody) that man has missed the way. That man was meant for something more, something other. The Lord meant something for that man, but policy came in and he argued for his policy that it was in the interests of the Lord. The deceitfulness of sin, and this letter says, "You can be subverted by the deceitfulness of sin: policy instead of principle." Does that fit in anywhere? Yes, it is necessary, you see, to pinpoint all this teaching.

The Shakeable and the Unshakeable—the Ultimate Thing Is the Measure of Christ

So here we come back. Hebrews, the Letter to the Hebrews, is a statement of what is abiding and permanent as over against what is passing and transient; and does not that matter? Surely it does supremely matter! The shakeable and the unshakeable. The New Testament is comprised of twenty-seven books, and most of them were written to combat some form of a universality of effort to destroy what had come in with Jesus Christ. Would you like me to repeat that? Most of the New Testament was written to combat some form of a universal effort to destroy what had come in with Jesus Christ. That is a statement which is very comprehensive, and you have got to break it up and apply it to each book of the New Testament. "Oh," you say, "what then? Were Matthew and Mark and Luke and John and Acts and on written to combat something?" Yes, and when you take that as the key, my word, are we not in a combat in Matthew? Is not the Lord Jesus in a combat in Matthew and Mark and Luke and John? It is an atmosphere of combativeness, of conflict, of antagonisms.

In Acts, is that true? And so you go on with the letters. Here is some form in each one, some form of this universality of effort, to destroy what had come in with Jesus Christ. The New Testament is a comprehensive countering of a many-sided attempt to subvert the Church and pervert the meaning of God's Son. In that statement, you have got your New Testament in its real meaning; and do try to get hold of it, dear friends, in that way.

Now, the chief point of attack in this comprehensive or universal effort has always been, and still is, the measure of Jesus Christ, the measure of Christ. The enemy forces say: "We must, in the first place, keep Him out altogether, give Him no foothold." That is the battle of the ages and of the nations. As soon as you bring Jesus Christ into a vicinity, trouble arises, conflict begins. You must keep Him out. Oh, look how it was with Paul as he went from city to city. He is hardly there, hardly said anything, and look what happens. I do not know how much he had said in Philippi—what he had said he said to just a little handful; we do not know exactly how many were by the riverside, outside the city—and he went into the city, not preaching as far as we know, not raising issues as far as we know, but the devil knew. The devil had possession of that damsel, that priesthood, the priest-woman of the temple; and how subtle are the words spoken: "*These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.*" Why, the devil is preaching the Gospel; it looks as though the very devil himself is glorifying the Lord Jesus! Ah, there is something very subtle here, as the issue shows. But the point is, from the unseen world where the real intelligence of the significance of Christ is recognized, is possessed, there is this combativeness coming in wherever that which is representative of Christ, or that which is Christ in effect, arrives. There trouble arises at once. The thought is, "Keep Him out, keep Him out; and if He has got in, drive Him out. Do everything to drive out what is of Jesus Christ if He has got anywhere at all."

But then, that is not all. The plan is not only to drive Him out, but to subvert those who are His embodiment there. The plan is to subvert, to deceive, to turn aside, to bring in false teaching, false Christian ideologies, that which is "other" in its essence, that which is not essentially Christ, something put on to Christ, Christ plus, Christ plus, something put on. There are many things which are being imposed upon Christianity with all good meaning, but they are not the essence of Christ. That is the point of attack. The attack is in some way either to prevent, to force out, or to limit the measure of Christ. And do you know, dear friends, that it is the measure of Christ which is the governing thing. Not only that Christ has got in, but the measure of Christ. That is Ephesians. The ultimate thing is the measure of Christ.

The measure of Christ, and if you were to use that word "*measure*," you are always transported to Ezekiel. The end of Ezekiel, what is it? It is the temple. Now I am not putting any interpretation on that, whether that is going to be literal and the Old Testament sacrifices restored. You can have your own interpretation about that, I am not touching that; but what I have there is that when the temple does come into view, it is a Heavenly Temple, and the Heavenly Messenger has His measuring line and taking the prophet round about—"he took me around, he took me in; round, about, in and up"—how detailed, how meticulously detailed that is with every point, every fragment, every iota, given a measurement. It is according to this measure, this Heavenly measuring reed or line. It is measured by that. Its place is only by reason of its having that measure; and I believe that stands right at the heart of the Letter to the Ephesians and the New Testament and to this Letter to the Hebrews.

Spiritually, we have come to a New Jerusalem, we have come to the dwelling of the Most High God. We are come to Zion. We are come to that which Ezekiel spiritually saw—a Spiritual Temple. We have come now to that which in every detail is measured "*according to*

Christ. Let us ask ourselves: "Is this Christ? How much of Christ is here?" "According to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"; that is the beginning of Hebrews, as well as Ephesians. And so, the chief point of the attack is always to take something of Christ away, divert from Christ, put something in the place of the very essence, the very essential, of Christ. Anyhow, anything, so long as the end of it is less of Christ, not so much of Christ, not more of Christ. It has to do then with the Lordship of Christ in everything.

The Lordship of Christ? We used to open our gathering with singing: "Crown Him, crown Him Lord of all." Lovely idea, beautiful thought, wonderful thing! But do you see what it means? Not only the thing as a whole, this wonderful Temple, House, Sanctuary; but to the last detail in the whole heavenly order, to the last detail:—Christ. Christ in your life, in mine, He is the decision! He is the controlling principle! This is the Kingdom!

Oh, how Christian phraseology does need redeeming and revising. We talk about the kingdom, the kingdom. "We are out in the work of the kingdom, for the spread of the kingdom." I say these words, "kingdom," "church," and all the others, need redeeming. They need revision. What is the kingdom? Well, in the original language it is quite clear, but we have missed it by some other mentality. The Kingdom of God is the sovereign rule of God. The sovereign rule of God, that is the meaning of it; and that here is brought down to a detail. It is not just some comprehensive conception of a king. No, it is where I go today, what I do today, what the Lord would have about me today. That is the Kingdom of God. A Kingdom which cannot be shaken is of that kind, where it is all Christ; hence, the necessity for making known the ground upon which security rests, the ground which cannot be shaken.

Security is a very debated thing today, a very lively concern in this world. Security, security. In every realm, this word, "security," is governing. There is nothing secure, eternally secure, but what is established by God; and that is concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

That is the positive side to the New Testament always, and so I am going to conclude by reminding you of the nine and the ten. Why nine precautions? Why nine times does it say, beware, "*lest*"; beware, "*lest*"?! How precautionary the Lord is, even with His best servants, His most used servants. If they are really under His Sovereign Government, what precautions He takes. Do you remember the Apostle Paul? Had the Lord ever a greater servant than the Apostle Paul? Was there ever a servant more used of God than he? I venture to say in the annals of eternity that man stands very high in preciousness to the Lord. And what did that servant say? He said, "*Lest, lest by reason of the... greatness of the revelations, I should... be exalted above measure, ...there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me... I besought the Lord three times that it might depart. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient.*" The Lord is always positive. He did not say "no"—instead He said, "*My grace is sufficient.*" But the precaution of the Lord is to keep a most used and valuable servant from deviating, to keep from the awful snare of pride, even in holy things, the things of God and heaven (for spiritual pride is the worst kind of pride); and so God moves to keep from pride, from the devastation of pride: "*Lest I should be exalted.*" God's precaution is "*Lest, lest*"; and here you have these nine "*lest*s." Look at them, friends. Go through them not just as Bible study which is interesting, but note the peril that is associated with each "*lest*." Be on your guard. Watch! Is this that kind that abides forever, indestructible and unshakeable? Is this Christ?

Be Utterly Committed to the Increase of Christ

Then you have: "Be utterly committed." And that is where the other side comes in: the "*let us, let us, let us*" is ten times, and if you sum it all up, it amounts to this: "Be unreservedly and utterly committed." "Committed": I think that means something more than becoming a Christian, for many, many who are children of God, yes, genuinely born-again, are not utterly committed. Not utterly committed?—No, there are some other interests. They have got one foot, or even a toe, in the world—still something where there are alternatives to utterness. But the exhortation, "*let us,*" is mentioned ten times. "*Let us, let us, etc.*" Why? Because of this peril. Let us go on, do not drift, do not leave yourself to the mercy of the present current, the tide, the wind. There is nothing that will keep us safer than being positive.

I like that Moffatt translation of the phrase, "*fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*" I think it is Moffatt who has translated it: "*maintain the spiritual glow!*" Oh, it is a safeguard. There is nothing more safeguarding than being positive. Remember David on the housetop?! The tragedy, catastrophe, calamity of David's life, which left its scar on him, was being on the housetop when he ought to have been in the battle, reclining when he ought to have been going. Israel dilly-dallied in the wilderness for forty years instead of getting on with it, instead of going. "*Let us go on to full growth; not laying again the foundations... but, let us go on, go on.*" This is the great "*let us*" of chapter 6:1.

So often we are in weariness, tiredness, discouragement, despondency, perplexity, disappointment. The enemy's plan is to make us sad, make us sad, take the initiative out of us, and we are inclined to sink down; and then again and again in our spiritual history, we have to gird up the loins of our mind and say: "No, this will not do! This will not do. This is a cul-de-sac. If I get down here, there is no way through, and the only way is to come out of it and go on." Beware of your cul-de-sacs, your backwaters, your no thoroughfares. Keep on the high road, the main thoroughfare. In this sense, if you like, in this sense you can be marching to Zion; whether the doctrine is right or not, have the spirit of it. And you will sing again in that hymn, "I'll walk the golden streets." How often we carried on with that tune, and the Bible says there are no streets in the New Jerusalem, there is only one—a street of gold—all of God is in the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, only one, only one thing, a golden street. You are not going to choose your locality there. You are going to be put on to the Lord's highway. You see figurativeness? It is just that—all of God as represented by a golden street, and only one. We will have to learn how to live together someday.

Do you see the point? The integrating, uniting thing is: "*Let us go on to full growth.*" If we are all of that mind, we will not be caught by these subverting things, these alternatives, these impositions. We will not be caught. No! The question for us is: "Is this going to mean, really and truly mean, an increase of Christ, a greater fulness of Christ; or is it some interesting thing, some fascinating thing, something that is going to be for the moment, for the time being, and then presently it is going to fade out, and I am going to be left high and dry." That is what happens with so many of these things. They are just for a time. You can see history strewn with the wreck of things which at one time seemed to be the thing, the ultimate thing. Well, the only thing that is the thing is the increase of Jesus Christ. That is the test of everything: the increase of Jesus Christ. And the universal challenge, contest, is on that.

I have said enough. I close there praying, as I trust you will do, that this will not be a subject of a conference, just a man's theme morning by morning. The Lord will make the challenge of it, "*For yet, yet again, I will shake not the earth only, but the heavens*"; and the shaking has begun. It has begun. Christianity has entered the great shaking. What is

going to remain? Not the things that are made, not the earthbound things of Christianity; but that Kingdom, that Sovereign Rule, which cannot be shaken. It is Zion's citizens, "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem," it cannot be shaken. That is the Old Testament idea, but here it is. It is what is really and truly Spiritual and Heavenly that is in us and that we are in. It is that, to use our first word these mornings, to which we "are come." The Lord help us.

Lord, with the indelible pen of the Spirit of the Living God, write the terms of the New Covenant on our hearts, on the fleshy tablets of our hearts. Write indelibly, so that it may not pass with the week, with the ministry, with the gathering of the people—however all this may be blessed and joyous—but that the Lord's Own intention, revealed to us, may abide in our hearts. Continually check us up; arbitrate between the two courses; keep us from the options, the alternatives; and may we always come back to this: "Does this mean more of Christ?" Lord, so help us. We ask with thanksgiving, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when a land sinneth against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast; though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord. If I cause evil beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no man may pass through because of the beasts; though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, but the land should be desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off from it man and beast; though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only should be delivered themselves. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast; though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." (Ezekiel 14:12-20).

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And in these three realms these men triumphed. In the realm of evil human nature, Noah triumphed. In the realm of the world's glory in itself and rejection of God, Daniel triumphed - at great cost, but he triumphed. And in the realm of the very devil himself, Job triumphed. A threefold glorious triumph is represented by these men. It makes this statement of Ezekiel a very terrible one - for three men like that to be brought together in one time, and yet for men to take no notice, to be unaffected.

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in the realm of this world system - God-neglecting, God-rejecting, God-spurning, God-ignoring; you are right up against it. But the same Apostle cries, "*Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world*" (Gal. 6:14). Here is victory over the world.

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And, what is more, God *must have* such people in the earth. Even though others spurn them, do not heed them, pass on their way - even though it be like that, God must have them here as a testimony. He must have such people as that in the earth. He must be able to point to them and say, 'Have you considered my servant Job?' If there should be an enquiring one - 'There you are: there is where you will get help'. He must have us here like that until the end comes; He needs us.

Deliverance in a Day of Judgment

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when a land sinneth against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast; though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord. If I cause evil beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no man may pass through because of the beasts; though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, but the land should be desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off from it man and beast; though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only should be delivered themselves. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast; though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." (Ezekiel 14:12-20).

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