

## **The Unshakable Kingdom!**

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We live in a time of unusual difficulty and crisis. Anybody who can think and read must agree we live in days of exceptional problems. In fact, we can go further and say we live in a day and in an age when we see things collapsing all around us. Even the agreements that are being made are not holding steady, they are falling apart. Trade agreements fall apart and there is secession is going on, for example, Brexit. It has been nothing but turmoil and on and on and on. Things that people have always assumed are durable and lasting, but now we live in a post truth era when not even obvious truth is considered permanent.

There is no reason but that we are passing through one of the great climactic turning points in history. It is what we might call a paradigm shift in world events, especially for this nation. We are losing our sovereignty in many areas of the world, including economically, which is dissipating very quickly. There have been similar epics and eras before when the whole world and its future seemed to be in a kind of transition and no one knew exactly what was going to emerge next.

These are days of great crisis, but they are also days of great testing, especially for God's church. It is easy to go to the Feast. It is easy to keep the Sabbath. It is easy to do things like that when the money is flowing and when the economy is good and that type of thing. But when things go awry, we face even more testing than the world does to see where we stand. And although many are hopeful that President Trump will continue to turn things around in correcting the former destructive social, economic, and geopolitical policies of the United States, he is still just a worldly man with worldly solutions, and he cannot solve society's problems because they are spiritual in nature.

As we look at the direction the world has taken, do we have any real hope regarding the future? Maybe I should say, do *they* have any real hope facing

the future? Every thoughtful person in some form or other is asking the very questions that the Bible has always been putting to mankind. The Bible after all is the most practical Book in the world. It is a book of life and it is not a philosophy, it is not a fairy tale, it is not a collection of fantasies. It is the *most essential* book in the world about life and living. It has a great message about mankind from beginning to end and it is this: humanity is always in trouble because ultimately humans are fools.

Now stick with me on this. I do not mean that as harshly as it sounds, but nevertheless it is true. They are fools in this respect: from the very beginning they have believed that they could make a perfect world for themselves. That was the original temptation, was it not? The Tempter came to Adam and even said, paraphrasing, "Has God said such and such? Don't listen to Him. He wants to keep you down under His thumb. He knows that if you eat of that fruit, your eyes will be enlightened and you will know as much as He does. You will be as gods and you'll be able to run your world and everything to perfection." And they listened to him as anyone with human nature probably would.

This has been the whole trouble with humanity from the beginning. Humanity has held this fatal view that they do not need God, and without God they can build and establish a solid, assured, and certain construction of life. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good."

So the Bible goes on to deal with this essential fallacy from the beginning to the end and puts it in a very convenient form to us somewhat like this. The first thing anybody coming into this life must realize, we are told in Scripture, is that he is confronted by a choice. A choice. Now, it is always one of two things. It is either obviously the narrow way or the broad way—the narrow way leads to life, but the broad way leads to destruction. It is either heavenly treasures or it is worldly treasures. These are the alternatives. God put His choice before the children of Israel before they went into the Promised Land of Canaan. Two ways: Mount Ebal or Mount Gerizim. Two ways, blessing or cursing.

The Bible tells us that in this world we make our choice between things that can be shaken and things which cannot be shaken. Or, if you like, in yet

another form, we can become citizens of the Kingdom that can never be moved or we can belong to the kingdom of this world that can be moved.

**Hebrews 12:25-29** See that you do not refuse [that is literally turn away] from Him [and of course, that is Jesus Christ] who speaks, for if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more, I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. [That is referring to things which are eternal.] Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

So we are living at a time when we see human institutions collapsing all around us, things on which we had banked, so to speak, literally and philosophically failing society. And the whole society itself is collapsing around us, as we are told, even by the president, that the economy is better than it has ever been or things are better or improving or America is great again (not to criticize him overly, but just to say that that is what he believes, I suppose), but the reality and the facts show otherwise. So the most urgent problem for everyone everywhere is not whether the president is a Republican or a Democrat or a libertarian or socialist or fascist or communist or an atheist or Muslim, but whether we *personally* belong to an eternal Kingdom that cannot be shaken and cannot be moved. This contrasts with physical kingdoms of the world that can be shaken and can be removed.

Now, the apostle Paul in putting it this way, was dealing with the problem confronting Christians at that time, and also knowing that in the future Christians would be faced with it on a regular basis. They had seen the truth and had left their old religion, had become Christians, and for a while they were enjoying their Christian life and most things were going well for them. Quite often that is similar to what happens to someone who is newly

converted and things go well for them for a while and then God decides it is time to start testing. We all, most of us at least, have been through those things.

But sadly, troubles had arisen and they had been badly persecuted because they had become Christians, and their families and friends ostracized them and actually hated them. Some were beginning to listen to false teaching and some were beginning to look back. Some were looking back with longing eyes at the Temple and its ritual and ceremony and its human priesthood, and Paul writes to express his disappointment in them and to help them out of their discouragement. He says, "Can't you see that those things are only temporary? Those are the physical things that can be shaken and can be moved, and they have been because that which cannot be shaken and that which cannot be moved has come in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom."

So in the book of Hebrews, Paul contrasts the two covenants—one on the earth and one that issues forth from heaven itself. Since those who refused the Old Covenant did not escape, how could those of the New Covenant who turn away expect to escape as if they did that, if they turned from that? The originator of the New Covenant, who now sits at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, is the divine voice that once shook only the earth, but will ultimately shake not only the earth, but also the heavens as well.

About 580 years before Haggai had to deal with a similar problem of discouragement for a similar reason to what Paul did, when the foundation of the Temple had been laid waste 16 years before Haggai wrote. Some of the older men had looked back in sorrow as they remembered the glory and the beauty of Solomon's temple. It is likely that Haggai was a member of the older generation and had seen the Temple before it was destroyed, but he did not weep with the rest of his peers. He rejoiced that the new work had begun and he wanted to see it completed and he knew he had to do something to encourage people to have enthusiasm and zeal in the work. So in Haggai 2, we are going to read the first three verses. Haggai gave several prophetic sermons of which chapter 2 is one of them.

**Haggai 2:1-3** In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying:

"Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is it not in your eyes as nothing?'"

It was not the same glorious temple that Solomon built, it was much less—much less quality as well as much less in size. So rather than ignore the problem of discouragement that was developing when the people compared the two temples, Haggai faced the problem head on and God inspired him to pick an important day on which to deliver his message, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. But the important thing about the date was this: it was during the Feast of Tabernacles that King Solomon had dedicated the original Temple, there in I Kings 8:2, and Haggai wanted the people to think about the significance of that very thing. The restored building had nothing of the splendor of Solomon's temple, but it was still God's house, built according to His plan and for His glory, and the same ministry would be performed at its altars and the same worship presented to the Lord. The times change, but the Lord's ministry goes on.

This was a shakable physical temple, but later an unshakable, more glorious spiritual Temple would replace it. So Haggai did not deny that the new temple was as nothing in comparison to what Solomon had built. But that was not important. The important thing was that this was God's work and they could depend on Him to help them finish it. To encourage them, Haggai used the command to "be strong" three times, once to the governor, once to the high priest, and once to the people working on the temple. Those two words were very significant to them.

**Haggai 2:4** 'Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts.

God inspired Haggai to encourage both the leaders and the people to move ahead in God's strength and they were being hardened to move from their past reflection to present action by means of a series of urgings. God's presence, emphasized in His words, "I am with you," forms the basis for

their ongoing work in the face of pessimism. And we in God's church need to do the same thing to continue with God's work. "I am with you," He says.

As you know, during the Feast of Tabernacles, the Israelites had the book of Deuteronomy read to them. So they knew of the record of the three times Moses told Joshua and the people to be strong. Or, God told them through Moses. You find it in Deuteronomy 31:6-7 and verse 23. No doubt they also remembered that three times the Lord told Joshua to be strong. That is there in Joshua 1:6-7 and verse 9. And when King David charged Solomon with the task of building the original Temple, three times he told his son to be strong. They are in I Chronicles 20:13; 28:10 and verse 20.

"Be strong" was not an empty phrase. It was an important part of their Israelite history and it is an important part of the church's history as well. It is one thing to tell people to be strong and work, and quite something else to give them a solid foundation for those words of encouragement. Haggai told them *why* they should be strong and work. It was because it meant the Lord was with them. He is the One empowering them and us. The promise of God's presence was an encouragement to both Joshua and Solomon, and we can claim the same promise as we serve God. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So, the promise of God's presence with His people is guaranteed by His unchanging Word, which cannot be shaken.

When the Tabernacle was dedicated by Moses, God's presence moved in because the Lord had promised to dwell with His people.

**Exodus 29:45-46** "I will dwell among the people of the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God."

So the same Holy Spirit which enabled Moses and the elders to lead the people, enabled the Israelites to finish the Temple. The same Holy Spirit empowers the church today, empowers each individual who has been called and baptized and received His Holy Spirit.

**Haggai 2:5** 'According to the word that I have covenanted with you [God speaking], when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

"Do not fear." God said this to physical Israel, but it is even more applicable to spiritual Israel, the church today. The prophet Zechariah, who ministered with Haggai at the same time period, also emphasized in Zechariah 4:6 the importance of the Holy Spirit for the enablement needed to do God's will. He said, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." So with prophetic insight, Haggai looked ahead to the time when the Son of God would minister in His Temple and bring the glory of God into it.

Now Herod's temple replaced the temple Zerubbabel built. But the Jews still considered it the Second Temple. It was a rebuilding of that Second Temple. Certainly the glory that Jesus brought into that temple was greater than the glory of the Temple Solomon built, being Himself and the Kingdom of God.

**Haggai 2:6-7** "For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts.

God promises to shake all nations, as well as the heavens and the earth, and the result of this shaking will be that the treasures of all the nations will be yielded by the nations to adorn the Temple. But the result will also be more than this because the Lord will fill His house with glory and He will fill it with His own presence.

Haggai looked into the future and saw the end of the ages when God would shake the nations and Jesus would return. Verse 7 is quoted by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 12:26-27 that we read earlier and applied it to the return of Christ at the end of the age. Now considering Paul's reference to this chapter, we find that this is also a foreshadow of events unfolding in the incarnation of Christ and ultimately in His second coming at the end of the age. So Jesus speaks of His body as this temple in John 2:20-21. God had shaken Sinai

when He gave the law and He will shake the nations and the kingdoms of the earth before He sends His Son.

But today God's people belong to a Kingdom which cannot be shaken and we will share the glory of Christ when He establishes that Kingdom on earth. We were already members of that Kingdom which cannot be shaken.

The phrase, "the Desire of All Nations" in verse 7 has been generally interpreted as a Messianic title of Christ. The nations of the world inwardly desire what Christ alone can give, whether they recognize this spiritual yearning or not. What does the United Nations *supposedly* stand for? Peace on earth. Is that not what most people want, peace in their lives and on earth?

**Haggai 2:8-9** 'The silver is Mine, the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts. 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the Lord of hosts.

Isaiah 60:1-5 and Zechariah 14:14 teach that the nations will bring their wealth to the king when Israel is established in the promised Kingdom. So God not only promised the coming of Messiah and the glory of God in the future temples, but He also promised peace. "In this place" in verse 9 refers to the city of Jerusalem where the Messiah will reign as Prince of peace, as Isaiah puts it. So those who believe in and obey Jesus Christ today have peace with God because of Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection. We enjoy the peace of God as we yield to God and Christ and trust completely in Them. And knowing that these things are unshakable and that they are their permanent, gives us and helps us to have the faith we need—faith *in* Christ and the faith *of* Christ—to give us the spiritual strength to bear up under whatever may come in the future.

In verse 8, the Lord assured them that, in spite of the bad company and their lack of wealth, He was able to provide all they needed. "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine," so the remnant had promises of provisions from the occupying government, but government grants are limited and unreliable. God promises to go even beyond all of that. God owns all the wealth, even the wealth stored in the king's treasury and even in what is controlled by the Global Federal Reserve Bank, and He can distribute it as He wants.



God promises to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. God's wealth is real, but the wealth that man supplies is supposed and contrived, just like the Federal Reserve note is nothing more than paper that says, "I owe you" and it is a debt. The whole system, the whole economic system of the world is based on debt. As we heard in the commentary, we can get out of debt if we apply God's principles. Paul assured the church in Philippians 4: 19, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ." He was speaking of spiritual gifts and blessings, but He also takes care of our physical needs as needed. That is, He takes care of our physical needs, not necessarily our wants.

The humble temple that the Jewish remnant was constructing in Haggai's day would not last and even Herod's ornate temple would be destroyed by the Romans, but there would one day be a glorious temple that nobody could destroy or defile. Knowing this, the discouraged remnant in Haggai's time, and today, could take courage and finish their work, and we must take courage in this knowing that God is with us and that we have a work to continue on, to finish, and it will be God who decides when it is over and it will not be over until His plan is complete, and then it will be a new beginning. So, in a sense, it will never end and never be shaken.

Let us take a moment to look closer at things that can be shaken, the things that can be removed. Unless we are clear about these, we will go on to hold onto the things which finally are going to be shaken. We will long for the kingdoms of this world that are passing away and are coming to nothing. So let us have a look at the things which can be shaken that mankind by nature has always believed cannot be. What are they?

Well, they take many forms and the first one I want to call attention to is empires. Man has always been a great empire builder. You read about that in the Scriptures. You can read about it in secular literature and in secular history. Man has always had this idea that if he could only conquer the world and set up a great government, a kingdom, and organize it and control it, by the military and various other means, that he would have a kind of utopia, a kind of perfect society. Is that not what was promised to those who did not know what communism was when communism was offered first to them, a utopia of communes where everybody shared everything and there was

peace and safety in the world. And then the communist nations formed and showed how raunchy the system was and how bad life was under them.

So man has to learn the hard way that these things, their ways, do not work. Man has always has always had this idea that if only he could conquer the world. And so the history of the past very largely has been the history of great empire building. These are man's attempts to bring blessings to mankind, but they are driven by wicked men who have selfish motives and the history books are full of the accounts.

As you know, there was a great empire called Babylon and there was a great king at the head of it called Nebuchadnezzar. He conquered everybody and he was in many ways a great man. But he began to think that he was a god and he was making the people worship him. You are very familiar with this story.

**Daniel 5:20-21** But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened with pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

He looked at his great empire and he believed that it was unshakable and nothing could ever touch it. But quite soon this man found himself like an ox in a field. His nails grew into talons. His hair became long and unruly, and his whole body was covered by hair. The dew of heaven descended upon him and he ate grass like an ox. Ridiculed, humbled, and brought to nothing. That is exactly what has happened to every empire that man has formed. In this case, it was a man who was made an example of and actually learned his lesson.

Then there was another great kingdom that arose called the Medo-Persian Empire, a tremendous empire. It defeated three nations: Lydia in 547 BC, Babylon in 539 BC, and Egypt in 538 BC. But it disintegrated the same way as the Babylonian Empire. The great Greek empire under the mighty hand of

Alexander the Great. What a military genius he was and he so rapidly conquered so much of the world. He conquered actually the whole of the then-known world before he was 30 years of age. Here he was controlling the entire civilized world and his kingdom seemed to be unshakable as well. But what happened to him? It all came to nothing and it all passed away and the world speaks about the glory that *was* Greece. People to this day visit the Parthenon and other great ruins. The empire is long gone and only ruins remain.

Then, of course, there was the great Roman Empire. What an empire that was. In many ways they were the greatest empire builders, experts in law, in military prowess, in devolution of government. The Romans were masters at empire building. Look how they went through Europe, even through Britain, conquered it and built their arterial roads and Hadrian's Wall across the width of Britain to keep out the Picts from the north.

About 10 years ago or so, Sue and I actually stood on Hadrian's Wall. It is incredible that it goes all the way from one side of Britain to the other, from east to west, and when you stand on it and you look as far as the eye can see both ways, in some areas you just see mounds of dirt and grass and you can see that there was a wall there. The area we stood on was one of the Roman legions castrum and it had the the leftover blocks from the walls of the buildings and the wall there. But it was almost indistinguishable. There are parts of the wall still standing because they are rock but most of it has been grown over and is under the land. It was a great kingdom and that was a great wall. It was not called the Great Wall but it held back the Picts in Scotland and it was an incredible sight to see, even in its ruins. But it was shakable and God tore it down.

The Romans also went through the Middle East, North Africa, and into Asia. And they did this primarily on foot. What an empire that was, traveling around on foot, with some horses, but primarily on foot. Certainly nothing could remove it or so the people thought. But the empire was removed when the Barbarians, the Goths, and the Vandals descended in their hordes and conquered the Roman Empire and sacked the great city of Rome. The ruins of Rome can still be seen today and it has all just disintegrated. And it is amazing because when the Goths and Vandals and Barbarians (I think it might have been the Barbarians who went in), they just walked into Rome. It

was not even defended. There was no form of government or even army to be left to be able to defend the city.

Then in more recent times there was a man called Adolf Hitler. By human standards he was a great empire builder. He repeatedly claimed that he was building the Third Reich, which was going to last 1,000 years. But how long did it last? Not much more than 12 years and it ended in a bunker, so to speak, in the city of Berlin, which had been reduced to a heap of ruins.

Up until the early 1900s, the greatest empire that recorded history has ever known was the British Empire. This was the empire on which the sun never set—a world empire in which now the sun does set, an empire that has almost been entirely wiped from history. It will not be long now, sadly. It is talked vaguely about in terms of a commonwealth but there is no empire. Queen Elizabeth signed away the United Kingdom's sovereignty to the elusive European Union. Not only is Britain no longer an empire, but for all practical purposes the UK is no longer a sovereign country. Now the British people want their sovereignty back by what is called Brexit and there is all types of forces at work here to stop that.

Now, these were empires that people thought were certain and these seem durable and they were supposed to be lasting, nothing could ever move them, but all are gone, or almost gone. So is the United States too great to fall? Is it too great to disappear? Is it too great for an army to walk into it with no resistance? I do not believe quite yet. But what God decides will happen and whether He decides to have us overtaken or not, of course will be His benevolent, wise choice one way or another. God has removed them all. They were all shakable and movable.

I mentioned the United States and I am going to again here. The United States of America has been another attempt at power building. As I said, economically, militarily, scientifically, and technologically, no nation has ever been greater. But again, she has already been in decline and in every conceivable way she too has all but lost her sovereignty to the globalist deep state. Treacherous leaders, going back more than a century, have sold her out and she has been robbed and pummeled from within by corrupt politicians, perverse academic professors, self-serving religious leaders, immoral citizens, and spoiled, unruly children. She is an empire of death that even

murders her own children by way of child trafficking and abortion. There are abuses that go on in child trafficking that are mind boggling and we do not even want to think about them, but we have to realize that they are happening, and people are paying their way out of being prosecuted.

The globalists are now making an attempt at a world empire. Actually, it is Satan's ongoing attempt at his own global empire and it is being revealed and is forming before our eyes. It too will go the way of the others because God rules in the affairs of men and He is eternally sovereign. He sets up kings and strikes them down and He will do the same to anything Satan raises up.

Let us shift gears at this point. One of the most important ways the Bible speaks of the Lord in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is that He rules over kings eternally. We first encounter this in the Song of Moses and Miriam, which affirms that the Lord will reign forever and ever. This idea of the Lord's eternal reign as King in the future is repeated numerous times in Scripture and His permanent reign extends into time immemorial in the past as well.

**Psalms 93:1-2** The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. [that is, by anyone but God Himself] Your throne is established from of old, You are from everlasting.

The culmination of Jesus Christ's kingship is found in Revelation 19:16 and also in Revelation 17:14. There He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Revelation 15:13 tells us that the Lord God Himself is the King of the nations, or of the ages. In fact, most of the book of Revelation is devoted to declaring God's victory over the powers of evil.

God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, who, like His Father, are everlasting in both directions of, I guess you could call it time, although it is infinite in both ways for Them. So God the Father and Jesus Christ are everlasting in both directions, infinitely into the future and infinitely back in time. And They have no beginning or end.

**Psalm 102:24-27** I said, "Oh my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days; Your years are throughout all generations. Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and your years will have no end."

The years of God stretch through all the generations of people and all the changes that have transpired on the earth. He existed at the very beginning of the earth and He continues to exist to the very close of human history and beyond. He is unchangeable. He is unchangeably the same.

Another thing that most people bank on is a belief in law and order, or that is, good government. There was a time when there were many monarchies and oligarchies and aristocracies, and so on. But now we have the ultimate, the perfection of political science. The illusion of democracy. The rule of the people, the people governing themselves—government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Sadly, that too is an illusion.

But how can you guarantee that this is going to be alright if every man is going to have a say in government? Everybody cannot be in charge. How are you going to keep law and order? Some people naively believe you do not have to worry, every man instinctively believes in observing the rule of law. Well, we have certainly found that not to be true in the last few decades, especially not looking back through history. The rule of law, they used to say, is unchangeable. You can rely on it. Ultimately men, in the end, will always respect the rule of law and they will obey. But what is happening today?

It is interesting that we have the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, which were the firm, solid, unshakable laws of the land that we thought no one would go against. And now we have even our leaders going against it on a daily basis. We are reading constantly about people saying, "Oh, I know that the bill was passed by the government, but I don't like it." That is basically what they are saying. And so they ignore it. They ignore certain courts of law, they ignore

governmental legislation, they ignore the Bill of Rights, which states that all men are created equal. And if a group of men say, we do not agree, we do not like it, they say, "We are not going to abide by this."

Is there any true rule of law? Is not one of the major causes of the present crisis that men and women are no longer paying any respect to the law? Deuteronomy 12:8 says, "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today, every man doing what is right in his own eyes."

But now even this perfect government system of democracy has been shaken, moved off its axis. The foundational laws of this once-great nation are ignored today because this nation has become a nation of perverse sins—lawbreakers and self-serving narcissists. The majority of the people of this nation demanded the right to sacrifice their children to the God of sex by way of abortion. How many years ago (it was in 1973), all the way up to now. It is embedded in their attitude and mind, an immutable law that they have set. It will be stopped. But their laws no longer work because of the flagrant rejection of God's immutable laws. It is interesting that the founders or the originators of the Constitution and Bill of Rights for the United States said these would only work for God-fearing people or people that keep the Ten Commandments. And there you have it.

**Genesis 1:27** God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

His laws are immutable. He is the one who created us. He says what goes and what does not.

Shifting gears again. In 1778, James Madison, who later became the president of the United States of America from 1809-1817, is reported to have said, "We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God." It is not confirmed perfectly that he said that, but traditionally it is believed that he did.

But now the greatest empire in the history of man is being shaken by God Himself. He is the one who has supplied the blessings to this nation. We are

living in an age of collapsing institutions, not only religion and knowledge, but everything is really and literally collapsing before our eyes. I do not watch sports, but every once in a while the news will either reference them or actually a sports commentator in the commentary and they are arguing over politics now. They are confused and they are arguing over whether or not the NFL should allow transgender bathrooms.

Everyone has lost their way so this has affected education, sports, entertainment, economics, business, throughout the nation, whatever. No matter what nook and cranny you may look in this nation's foundation, you see it being eroded and shaken seriously and in a terrible way by flagrant and the most perverse of sins. But now the greatest empire in the history of man is being openly shaken by God Himself for for the whole world to see.

We are living in an age of collapsing institutions. Now the question that arises is this: why can all these things be shaken? The apostle Paul answers it. Listen to how he puts it:

**Hebrews 12:27** Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Things that are *made*. That is why all these things are collapsing, because they are things that have been made by mankind, or that God has allowed to be built. They are all created by mankind and they are therefore all finite. Everything that man does is made by a finite being. Physical man is finite. Everything he makes is finite, temporary. He is too small and weak. He does not have the understanding. And yet he does not hesitate to turn his back on God and laugh at Him and ridicule Him and say that he can conquer the universe. What is going on with space exploration? Although this nation cannot afford it, neither can the other nations, yet they are pursuing going to other planets while people starve in our streets. In the richest nation on earth people are starving in our streets. The news media keeps quiet about it, but that is what is happening.

According to the Bible, these things that a man makes are not durable and are being shaken away, not only because man is created and finite, but more importantly, he also is sinful. And because he is sinful, everything he makes



is corrupt and his very best is corrupt. The more he aspires towards perfection, the more he shows his corruption.

**Matthew 6:19-20** "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

So it does not mean that you cannot enjoy the things of the world that are proper and okay and not against God. It means that we have to be very careful that we do not put our emphasis in those things, that that they are not our treasure, that our treasure is in heaven.

Everything man touches, everything man makes is corrupt—corruption meaning physical, shakable, deteriorating, rusting, or whatever it may be. Unless he is guided by God, at the heart of men there is this treachery, and it manifests itself in all that he does. Look at the greed and the selfishness, the jealousy, the envy, and the readiness to stab one another in the back in business. Who can trust who is the characteristic of the whole of human life and of all worldly institutions. Everything that man touches is corrupt. It has been perverted, and because of that, it begins to decay the moment he makes it.

In a sense, even the solar system and the universe deteriorates and the only thing that keeps it going is God. If He were to pull away His power from that, everything would wind down because even scientists have proven that the solar system and the universe are winding down. They are deteriorating if God does not keep them going. And that is interesting. God says that His Kingdom is not shaken and it is immovable and that it will always last. But what we can see physically *is* deteriorating.

But you know the ultimate cause of the collapsing of all the empires man made—whether military or civilization or philosophy or science or whatever it is—is this: that the curse of God is upon them because of sin.

God will not allow man to make undue claims that these powers are his. Patience is a virtue and God sets the standard for it. Look at it in the Old

Testament stories. God allows these great empires to arise and at times they seem to be encompassing the whole world, and then God shook them and they vanished. There is a dramatic story at the end of the 12th chapter of the book of Acts of the Apostles. As you know, Herod, the Jewish king, hated the Christians. Herod arrested Peter and thought of killing him, but Peter escaped. Then we are told that the people came to Herod and they wanted some favor from him, so they flattered him and they did their bow before him, and they praised him and he delivered a great speech, then took all the glory for himself.

**Acts 12:21-22** So on a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

What does this sound like that we have witnessed in the news in the past administration? That is what people were doing with Obama. Remember when he was on stage in Denver and they had this temple, looked like a Roman or some type of a temple, and he came out on stage and people were just falling all over themselves.

**Acts 12:23-24** Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. [Now that did not happen to Obama, he can be thankful for that, but it did happen to Herod.] But the word of God grew and multiplied.

So God will not allow man to inflate himself to the heavens for very long.

In this world, depicted by scientists, philosophers, and politicians, is there anything that we can bank on? Is there anything that we can hold on to? There is, so listen to this. What are the things that cannot be shaken? The first thing is what Paul refers to in Hebrews 12:25-27.

**Hebrews 12:25-27** See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven [That is, He has spoken to each and every one of us.],

whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven. Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Paul starts off in his epistle to the Hebrews (assuming that he is the author) by saying,

**Hebrews 1:1-2** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

You know that it comes to this: there is only one hope in this world at any moment. What is it that God has spoken? The Word of God. And here is something that cannot be shaken. Paul says, "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks." Why is this unshakable? Christ Himself put it like this:

**Matthew 24:35** "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

The sermon of the apostle Peter years later repeated it in these words.

**I Peter 1:23-25** having been born again [or born from above], not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

So the word of God is everlasting. What words can be spoken that are everlasting? These are those words. It is truly amazing the power in them. Every time we pick up the Bible and read, turn to a page and read it, it is a dynamic book and it has meaning every time, and sometimes it comes at us in a different way or in a different direction. It is a dynamic book. Unlike any

other book on earth, it has God's Spirit. It is God's Spirit as far as the words are transmitting to us, the words of the Spirit. But the mind of Christ in us is His Holy Spirit and mind of God.

So here is something vitally important that we must understand. This is something that can never be moved, never be shaken, and God has gone on speaking. Look at the centuries along which this word has been spoken. 2,000 years plus, all the way back to the creation of mankind. It has and will withstand the test of time. From God's creation of Adam and Eve, the Word of God has been mankind's only hope and it goes on speaking when everything else comes and goes.

**John 1:1-4** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Why is this Word so durable? The answer is because it is the Word of God, Jesus Christ. God is from everlasting to everlasting. "I am who I am," the sovereign God. And Jesus Christ, God's spokesman, is eternal. He said, "I and My Father are one." And so He has spoken and what He has taught us? Well, He has given us His law and this is another absolute. It is unshakable. It is unmovable. God, having made man, told him how to live. And He told him that if he did not live in that way, he would be miserable and that his life would be what the history of mankind has proved to be. God told Adam and Eve that very thing when He had made them. And He repeated this law in the Ten Commandments given through Moses and expounded by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

God has told us perfectly, plainly, how to live and these are absolutes, as they were at the very beginning. These absolutes, which man should have banked on and man should have lived by, he has rejected. God has said that if you do not obey His laws, you will have a life of misery and wretchedness. And He sums it up in a phrase, "The way of the transgressor is hard." The phrase seems like an understatement sometimes. But regardless, if a person sins, life will be hard in some way or another. If he continues to sin, his whole life will be hard.

**Isaiah 57:20-21** But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

Although nations and empires may become wealthy, and though they may accumulate knowledge, they will never know peace without God.

**Romans 3:10-18** [more familiar scriptures] As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one." "Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way to peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Is there a better description of the man of the world than that? It states his condition, it states why, and it states his agony. These verses describe the vileness and wickedness of various parts of the human body, indicating figuratively that every part contributes to a person's condemnation. In sequence these quotations pertain to three actions: talking, conduct, and seeing.

Talking: that is throats, tongues, lips, and mouths in verses 13 and 14; conduct: that is the feet in verses 15-17; and seeing: that is the eyes in verse 18. So their speech is corrupt, that is, open tombs or graves. It is dishonest, that is, deceit, damaging, it is poison, and blasphemous, cursing and bitterness. From talking of sin, they commit sin even to the point of being anxious to murder. As a result they and others are destroyed materially and spiritually. They are miserable and know no inner peace.

All this is summarized in Paul's words, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." And as you know, fearing God, that is, reverencing Him by worship, trust, obedience, and service is the essence of a godly person. We are responsible beings made in the image and likeness of God, and we will have

to give Him an account for the deeds we do. It is coming. It is absolute. (Mark spoke in his sermonette about individual responsibility.) Each and every one of us are responsible for making sure this happens in our lives. With God's help and with God's inspiration, we can do it; without, we cannot. We are responsible beings made in the image and likeness of God. And we will have to give an account. This is not the word of politicians or philosophers, it is the Word of God. But thankfully, Paul does not leave it at that. Otherwise we would all be hopelessly lost.

There is a way of escape. We can leave the kingdoms of men that are collapsing. We can become citizens of a Kingdom which cannot be moved and which can never be shaken. These are absolutes. But there is another vital absolute and it is this: that there is only one way of entering this Kingdom of God. Paul expresses it here in Philippians 3.

**Philippians 3:18-21** For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their minds on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

So, our citizenship is in heaven and it is the only citizenship that is going to last. If you belong to the kingdoms of men, you will be destroyed with them and you will reap the consequences for your choice of where you place your loyalty. There is only one true permanent place of safety and that is the Kingdom of God. There is, of course, a temporary physical place of safety for the church during the Tribulation. But I am not talking about that one. Here is a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, that cannot be moved.

**Hebrews 12:28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

We are in the process of receiving a Kingdom, which means that we believe the Word of God that His Kingdom cannot be moved. And that is faith building. If we can just hang on to that, our faith can be solidified and strengthened by Jesus Christ.

As we begin to wrap this up, it is recorded in the Old Testament that three times Moses told Joshua and the people to be strong. Three times the Lord told Joshua to be strong. Three times King David told his son Solomon to be strong. And three times Haggai used the command to be strong—once each to the governor, the high priest, and the people working on the Temple. Those words were very significant to them and they are to us.

According to the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, three is the minimum number necessary to establish a pattern of occurrences. A single event can be pure chance, a pair can be mere consequence, but three consecutive occurrences of an event serve as a rhetorical signal indicating special significance. Three speaks of the totality and sufficiency of the work of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament there is another three times that the command be strong is used and that was only by used by the apostle Paul.

**I Corinthians 16:13** Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

**Ephesians 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

The third and last place in the New Testament that God's people are told to be strong is:

**II Timothy 2:1** You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The evil direction of the world today should be enough of a warning to motivate us to be serious, humble, and prayerful. We should make it our determined goal to be prepared for the solemn scenes through which we are soon to pass. We should be developing a habit of contemplation of the truth

and understanding that all that we see is soon to pass away. It should cause us to ask with deep earnestness whether we are prepared for these solemn scenes should they certainly burst upon us.

**II Peter 3:5-14** But this they willfully forget: that by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same [unshakable] word, are reserved for the fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of person ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the [first and second] heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

The fact of all these things dissolving should exert a deep and unshakable influence on us, to persuade us to lead holy lives. We should know that there is nothing immovable on the earth, that this is not our permanent home, and that our vital interests are in another world, another Kingdom.

So remember the three: be strong, be strong, be strong! The Word of God is unshakable, and we have great hope regarding the future because we belong to a Kingdom which cannot be shaken.