

# Hebrews 12:28-13:6: Will God's Consuming Fire Burn You or Bless You?

Ricardo Campos, Pastor Grace Chapel, Orange, CA January 13, 2019

## I. Introduction

God is a consuming fire and He demands certain behavior from us. And you will either see His fire as something that will warm you and give you light to navigate this difficult life or as something that will consume you. You will either see His demands as blessings that place you under His ever-present care and protection or as burdens that you cannot meet.

## II. Hebrews 12:28-13:6: Has God's Consuming Fire Saved You or Burned You?

How can this audience “run with endurance the race that is set before” them the way Jesus endured His tremendous suffering? How can they see their suffering as something that will benefit them greatly instead of forsaking God's grace and becoming bitter like Esau? How can they serve God, who's a consuming fire, “acceptably with reverence and godly fear”? The author explains as he lists several things God expects of them lest they be judged by God, lest the temptations and troubles of life overtake them and they forget that the Lord has given them an unshakable Kingdom where He never leaves or forsakes them, all of which means that they don't have to fear anything from nothing or no one.

**13:1-3**, now that God's given them an unshakable Kingdom and the grace to live in it with reverence and godly fear, there are certain things He expects of them. First, they must not let their current suffering under persecution keep them from showing love and care for each other as they have in the past (6:10). It's harder to have concern for others while you're concerned for yourself...but where do we face our concern, inside or outside the unshakable Kingdom? They know how to be concerned for others while dealing with their own suffering (10:32-33). Second, included in brotherly love is showing hospitality to strangers. They must open their homes and lives to strangers, whether a place to stay, a meal, clothes, money, time, etc. By doing so, some have unwittingly entertained angels (like Abraham did, Genesis 18-19—the word “angel” means “messenger.” You never know when God is messaging you through an angel or others). Third, they must also remember those who have been imprisoned because of their faith. In fact, they must see the imprisoned as if they were chained with them. Why? Because the imprisoned and the free are all one Body and when one suffers, the rest of the body should feel it (1 Corinthians 12:26; 2 Timothy 1:16-18). This means we visit and provide goods for them if we can. It also means we identify with them, even if it costs us our livelihood or even our freedom as was likely the danger with this audience who was under persecution.

**13:4**, Fourth, what should their marriages look like? Honorable and there mustn't be any sexual immorality (like watching porn or inviting others). Is your marriage honorable? If Jesus moved into your house for two weeks and you didn't change your behavior just because He was there, what would He witness between you and your spouse? Would you change your behavior just because He's there? Guess what, He is there, every second (Galatians 4:6). God is a consuming fire and His fire/light will either bless you and give you an honorable marriage or burn you with severe discipline if you commit adultery or fornicate (whether single or married, God will judge [discipline, not send to hell] all adulterers and fornicators).

**13:5-6**, Fifth, what about when it comes to money? What should our attitude be? In the unshakable Kingdom, your way of life should not be characterized by a love of money; you should be free from the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10). The only thing that's supposed to have that kind of mastery over your life, the only thing you're supposed to love like that is God, nothing else (Matthew 22:37; 1 Corinthians 6:9-12). Instead of worshipping money, we're supposed to be content with what we have, whether we have everything or nothing! (Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:8). If you choose to love money, God's consuming fire will discipline you (1 Timothy 6:10).

Why should we be content with what God's given us? Because He promised never to leave us nor forsake us. This promise that God made to Israel and Joshua (who were about to face the armies and giants of the Land, Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5) Jesus repeated to us (Matthew 28:20). That is why whatever state we're in, whether in dire need or abundance, we should see our reality with this indisputable fact: we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). This is why we're supposed to be able to say **BOLDLY**:

"The LORD *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

The author closes his argument by quoting Psalm 118:6, a psalm that is BOLD in its proclamation that no matter what odds you face, the Lord will deliver you. Therefore, this audience which is undergoing persecution can be boldly confident in the face of this persecution. Because the Lord is on their side, what in the world can their persecutors do to them, what's the worse? Even if they are killed all the day long, they will be more than conquerors (Hebrews 11:35b-39, cf. Romans 8:36-39).

**When you walk in Jesus' Unshakable Kingdom, nothing can harm you, not your past, not your job, not your marriage, not your children, not your financial troubles, not anything**, to many who don't understand the purpose of God's Word, His Word is something that keeps you from a good time and is hard to obey. To those who understand the meaning of God's Word, it's something that can provide you a much better time. And by "better time" God means that His Word will get rid of your stress, it will remove your anxiety, it will reassure you of your financial future, it will fix the problems between you and your spouse, it will turn nervous and frustrating parenting into a satisfying endeavor of raising your child into a strong, wise, godly adult.

A couple's tremendous struggles outside the unshakable Kingdom and their deliverance by the Consuming Fire inside His unshakable Kingdom.....

### III. Conclusion

*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. Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also. Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*