

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG178 – A Time of Shaking

Hello, welcome to this new podcast, and welcome to this new year. I wanted to bring this podcast this morning. It was something that I was very burdened for following my time of prayer and meditation with the Lord. I just came out of it with this drive to read Hebrews 12 to us and talk about some of the meanings that we have going on in this chapter, and what we are really looking for. One thing I want to start by saying is that I do not want this to be like some prophetic pronouncement that these things are going to happen in this year. But I am also aware that we do not know what will transpire necessarily in the year – no man knows the day or the hour, and there is much that we do not know. But by the Scriptures, there are many things that we do know; and my burden in this is that we live, as believers, prepared for the things that we know are to come. Whether they are to come today, or tomorrow, or in a week, or next year, we still are to live in a state of readiness. We are to live in a place of preparation before the Lord. This is part of our growing up in God. This is part of our maturing as believers, that we live in a state of readiness.

I am going to begin by reading from verse 1 of Hebrews 12, and let's just see how it unfolds, and how the Holy Spirit can unpack some of these verses for us. "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." I will start right here, because I think we need to constantly be aware of how much we are surrounded by the forces in heaven of the cloud of witnesses and the angelic forces, others that exist in this realm of the heavenlies. As we go on with this message, we are going to see that a great deal of what we are talking about deals with the heavenly realm and God's working within the heavenly realm. So, right in the beginning, it makes us aware that we are also strengthened and covered out of the heavenly realm by this great cloud of witnesses. We are surrounded by this great cloud of those who have gone before, as well as the other angelic forces that God has that are covering us and caring for us constantly. Because of this, we should lay aside every encumbrance.

I think the laying aside of encumbrance is something we need to focus on; because during this time, as we mature in God, as we walk forward, we need to be constantly getting rid of whatever it is within ourselves where we are tying ourselves up. Whether it is fear, or just lack of understanding, we need to be able to face the coming days and the coming events and not have a flinch within ourselves that is born out of some paradigm, or other concept, or feelings about ourselves, or restraints upon ourselves, that would make us incapable of being free and walking into what the Lord has for us. "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed" – and as we face these days in God, we need to be free in ourselves to do the will of God, and to move in the will of God, with nothing restraining us. Of course, "we lay aside the sin that so easily entangles us," and I think that we are always aware of it. That is why I wanted to emphasize this idea of other things that would be encumbering us from within our own being. So we throw that off by faith in the Lord, and we run with endurance the race that is set before us, verses 2-6,

fixing our eyes on Jesus [on Yeshua], the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the

throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."

I like what is going on here in these verses, because it is preparing us for the days ahead of us. We are to be looking at Yeshua and what He did, what He lived through, what He suffered in going to the cross. He despised the shame of it, but He endured it; and we will endure that which we have to endure as God's sons in these days. We will walk through and we will in fact endure; we will not grow weary, and we will not lose heart. Whatever we have suffered, we have not yet resisted to the shedding of blood in our striving against sin; in other words, comparing us with what Christ did. Some people may say, "Well, no, I have shed blood in the faith," but we have not gone through what Christ went through. No one has been to that level of resisting the wickedness, and suffering the pain, that He suffered in preparation for the cross. So again, He is our example. He is the one that we follow. We can look to Him. Not only are we surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, not only do we have the help from angelic forces in the heavenly places, but we also have Christ to look towards, to remember how He walked and what He went through, and how He endured faithfully as a Son.

We also recognize that God is in the process of disciplining us. Remember, Christ Himself was made perfect by the things that He suffered; and so, there will be things that we go through. I do not think we should confuse them just with end-time events. We need to recognize that part of what we will go through and do experience is the discipline of the Lord upon us. That is part of our growth; that is part of our maturing and our growing in God, what we go through in the discipline that the Lord has upon us.

It goes on in verse 6 to say, "For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." So, we will experience discipline. Do not confuse that and say, "Oh, these are traumatic end-time events that are happening." No, do not take these things lightly – that is what He is saying. Do not regard discipline lightly by kind of passing it off as some other experience that we are going through: "Oh, these are the end times, and there are these things taking place. And I'm just, you know, believing to get through it." No, if it is discipline, you stand up before the Lord, you hold Him before your face, and you get out of it what it is that He is working within you through His discipline. And you remember that His discipline comes because of His love for you, and His determination that you will be a son to Him. Verses 7-10 say,

It is for discipline that you endure [that is interesting, isn't it? it is for discipline that we endure. We go through the discipline as discipline, not as something else]; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

So we see that in the beginning of Hebrews 12, it is dealing with us individually – how we walk; how we are related to those in the cloud of witnesses and the angelic forces that are strengthening us; how we are looking unto Christ, using Him, as always, as an example to walk by; how we will suffer persecutions, potentially, and go through many things. But we do that without losing heart and without fainting. We

also recognize that we go through times when the Father is disciplining us because He is making us grow, making us mature, bringing us into a place of walking as sons with Him. And why does He do this? He does this so that we may share His holiness. He is in a process of sanctifying us.

We cannot forget these beginning verses here, or take them lightly, or get confused about what is going on in our life when we are in these phases of our relationship with the Lord and our walk with Him. Because all of these beginning verses in Hebrews 12 are very specifically talking about our preparation as believers to walk before the Lord – whether it is the end time or not the end time. We are to walk this way. We are to be growing; we are to allow the discipline; we are to follow Christ in whatever we would suffer through persecutions; and we are to strengthen ourselves by those who are surrounding us. I really love this. I want the Lord to get through very deeply to our hearts and our spirits about it.

Verses 11-15 say,

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness [so God is bringing us into His righteousness]. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord [so we really go after this reality of sanctification]. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.

Now it is talking about the relationship as believers, the interrelationship we have as sons and daughters of the King; and we have to make sure that in all that we go through, we are constantly drawing on the grace of God. We are drawing on it for ourselves, we are drawing on His grace for others. We want to see that no one comes short of the grace of God being worked in their lives. And no matter what we go through, there should never be a root of bitterness that springs up, brother against brother, sister against sister. In all of our relationships, we must guard against the bitterness that springs up and causes trouble, causes division, and causes mostly defilement of our spirits, so that we are not going to be able to walk upright before God.

In verse 16, it says, “That there be no immoral or godless person like Esau....” He became so defiled that he could not find repentance. In verse 17, it says, “For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought for it with tears.” There is a defilement that comes when we are not walking through these verses above that we have just read. The defilement becomes so deep, as it did with Esau, that there is not even an ability to find repentance after a certain point. So, all of these verses are dealing with our growing, our maturing, our walk before Him, and our preparedness; and we should live before Him prepared.

Now, as we go into verses 18-21, we kind of shift gears into what the focus of Hebrews 12 is going to; and I think it is bringing us into the area of focus of things that we may face and that we may find happening around us in these days just before us.

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.” And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I am full of fear and trembling.”

This is how they faced the Presence of God coming. And again, why the verses above? Because they are our preparation. We are to be prepared to stand and not be shamed out of His Presence because of our lack of preparation. They were not prepared. They were not ready. And even Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." Verses 22-23 go on to say, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels...." This is where the focus of this chapter begins to go, because now we see that in these days of the end, God is not dealing so much focused upon the earth; but this time, there is a focus upon the heavenly realm. That is why I think Hebrews 12 starts with this idea that we are surrounded by heavenly forces, and that is part of the reality for us in these days. It is part of the preparation for us in these days, that we are surrounded, and we are throwing off the things that would hold us back from walking in the realm of spirit as we need to. So it said that we have come, not to an earthly experience of a trembling mountain and God coming down into the earth; but we are looking at a heavenly Jerusalem, into the place of the myriads of angels, "to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect." See, everything about this is into the heavenly realm; it is into the world of spirits; it is into the spirit realm.

Verses 24-25, "And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking." Why? Because He is speaking now in this heavenly realm. Watch this as it goes forward: "For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven." You see, it is going to Sinai and using this as an illustration, when he spoke from earth and he spoke about earth, and he spoke about the preparedness that they had to walk in the earth and to possess the land of Canaan. But now it is saying, "Don't refuse this Voice, because this Voice is speaking to you from heaven; and He is warning you from heaven." And if they did not escape, when they refused him who spoke on earth, when he spoke to you from the earth, how much less will we escape if we are refusing the Voice that is speaking to us now from the heavenly realm?

Verse 26, "And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.'" When God came the first time to Sinai and touched down on the earth, and spoke into the things of the earth, He shook the earth. But now He is saying, "I am not just shaking the earth this time, I am shaking the heavens." What we face, and the reason, I think, for the great preparedness that Hebrews 12 takes us through, is because of the fact that this timeframe is about shaking the powers that are in the heavenly realms, not just the earthly realm.

We will read verses 26-29 again:

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken [see, this is talking about the Kingdom of God now], let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

We are facing these days of the consuming fire of God, when He is coming not just to shake the earth, which has happened in the past, but now He is going to shake all of the heavenly realms. And I think that we see Scriptures that make us very aware of this. Let's look at Ephesians the sixth chapter, at verses 10-14.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God [see, the preparedness], so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm.

We do stand firm, don't we? This is what we do. This is what we know we are facing. We are facing the time in which God now is going to shake all of the heavens. And when He shakes the heavens – because the heavenly forces are those forces that impact the earth and affect the earth, in fact have authority in many phases over the earth, which has to be broken for the Kingdom of God to manifest – we know that this is going to very much affect the world we live in. But we are not to be fearful. We are to stand. We are to be prepared before these things occur. You do not wait until the disaster strikes, and then try to go out and purchase everything you need to live through the disaster. We see that on a natural level with storms that come in, whether it be hurricanes, whether it be things like earthquakes; after it hits, it is too late. The store shelves are empty. You cannot prepare after. And that is why this is just entreating us to prepare ourselves before.

In Luke 21, the Lord Himself addresses some of these things. Starting with verses 25-26, He says, “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations.” What is happening is happening in the heavenly realms. It will bring “dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” See, it is the powers of the heavens that are being shaken. This thing is very much transpiring in the heavenly world. Remember, He must reign until every enemy is made the footstool of His feet. And where is He now? He is in the heavenly realm; and this final expression will take place in the heavenly realm. However, the world is going to experience these things. Men's hearts will literally faint from fear in the expectation of the things which are coming onto the world; but what is transpiring is the shaking that is happening in heaven.

Verse 27 says, “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Very similar to what happened at Sinai, isn't it? Verse 28, “But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” What does He tell us to do? He says, “Straighten up. Don't be cowering over in fear.” Other translations say, “Lift up your eyes, because your redemption draws near.” See, always, in the time of the end events, there are two things happening: One is that God is dealing with the forces of wickedness and the spiritual forces in the heavenly places that must be dealt with. But He is also preparing, and delivering; He is disciplining; He is creating His people into sons. Will there be fire? Yes, there will be the fire. It says, “Our God is a consuming fire.” And we will face that. But with that thought in mind, I want to take you back to Daniel the third chapter. This is a story that I want you to read on your own. It starts really before verse 8, but just read the whole chapter of Daniel 3 and you will get this idea of what is going on. We see that the king, Nebuchadnezzar, is acting wickedly, and he is creating a god and putting up an idol, forcing everybody to worship it. And so, we have Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the Jewish young men who are rulers there in Babylon, and they refuse to bow to this god; they are just not going to do it, and the king gets really outraged.

In verse 13, it says, “Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego,” because they would not bow down. And he confronts them and he says, “Look, I am

going to play the psaltery and the bagpipes and all this, and then you are going to bow down"; and they say, "Listen, don't bother. We will save you the trouble of playing the band here, because we are not going to bow down, no matter what you say." In verse 17, they go on, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king." See, it is very important that we not bow down to the forces, especially these spiritual-realm kingdoms and principalities and powers that are going to be dealt with. We cannot submit to what is going on, because that is their purpose, to reign from heaven (God is the one who is supposed to reign from heaven), and to impact the earth and get humanity to bow down to them as though they are gods, and they are not God. And so, we have to stand.

When we are looking at the verses about Yeshua, He stood, and He was persecuted for it; but He stood. And we, likewise, will be prepared in our spirits, and we will stand, because we know what is happening: God is shaking. God is dealing with these spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places that have perverted and subverted His authority on the earth, and He is making a final end to it. And it may be scary. It says "men's hearts will fail them for fear"; but we are not to be those who are fearful. You may say, "But, you know, it's scary! And what about the fire?" Well, that is why I brought us to this story here, because to me, it is so real what these guys did. You all know the story, you have heard it before. But isn't it fun to review it every once in a while?

So, they made the fire much stronger than it was, and they threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace. They were bound, hand and foot, and the furnace was so hot that the ones who threw them in died. So they throw them into the furnace, and Nebuchadnezzar is looking on. In verse 24, it says, "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, 'Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?' They replied to the king, 'Certainly, O king.'" So he looks, and he sees four men walking; and we are going to do this. Whatever we go through, it may seem like it is destruction and shaking of the heavens, and shaking the earth; but for us, it is our time of deliverance. Not only were they safe in the fire, our God is a consuming fire – for us that is a place of safety, in His Presence; and it is what burns away the cords and the bondages that we are under. And while we are in that place of His Presence, His fiery Presence, there is always somebody standing with us: Yeshua the Messiah comes and is with us in all that we go through. We are not to be fearful. We are to stand.

Again, as I said in the beginning, I am not saying this is some prophetic forecast; but what I am saying is, read the Scriptures for yourself in their context. Hebrews is saying these days will come upon the earth. When will they come? We do not know. Will it be this year? Possibly. It could be today or tomorrow; maybe it won't happen in our lifetime. But we are to prepare ourselves, and be prepared to walk through these days; because unless we are prepared, we will be like the rest of humanity, in fear and trembling. But for us, we will straighten up, and we will look up into the heavens to observe the show that is going on, God exerting His authority and establishing His Kingdom – the days that we have waited for. We look up because our redemption is drawing near. And whatever may be a source of fear and trembling for others, for God's people these are days of deliverance and salvation. These are days when the fiery Presence of God is going to free us from our own personal bondages, and the bondages that have been laid upon us by others. It is truly a day of deliverance, a day of fulfillment. It is the day that our hearts have believed for, cried for, and waited for; and so, we should go through them as days of fulfillment, days of joy to stand in His Presence. And as it said in Hebrews, we should have gratitude in our hearts to the Lord, as we stand in awe and wonder of the King of kings and the Lord of lords, ruling and reigning and establishing His throne, not only in the heavens, but on the earth.

It would be wonderful if we really did have the privilege of living in these days, and seeing it with our own eyes. But whatever we do, and whatever we feel, we know that we should be preparing ourselves, as the beginning verses of Hebrews 12 tell us. So we stand in faith before the Lord, and we will be those who have prepared themselves. And we give gratitude to the Father, and to the Son, as we stand in awe and wonder of what He is doing in establishing and bringing forth His Kingdom. We bless this to our hearts.

Amen.