

Michael Brown: God's People Will Not Be Shaken

It's true that the coronavirus has caused upheaval around the world. Whole countries have been quarantined. Massive sports events were canceled. Even the Olympics were postponed.

Universities were closed. The stock markets have jumped and plunged down like a yo-yo. Millions have lost their jobs. Tens of thousands have lost their lives. But this is a mere tremor compared with what is coming. One day the whole earth will be shaken.

As the author of Hebrews tells us, the Lord "has promised, 'Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' The words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:26-27, NIV). Everything will be shaken on that day.

This is how Jesus described it: "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26).

Or, in the vivid language of the book of Revelation: "Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?" (Rev. 6:15-17).

Can you even imagine a scene like this?

Very few want to talk about God's judgment today, even within the church. Preachers choose to avoid it, and the congregants cheer them on. "Give us sweet stuff! Give us happy stuff! Tell us nice stories. Make us smile! We don't want to hear about judgment. That makes God sound mean."

On the contrary, that makes God sound just. He will judge unrighteousness. He will punish the wicked. He will bring retribution. That is good news for the righteous and the godly. As the psalmist said, "Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness" (Ps. 96:13). Judgment on the wicked also means salvation for the righteous.

Revelation also speaks of the pouring out of seven bowls of divine wrath on the earth, resulting in horrific judgments on those who refuse to repent (See Rev. 16). There will be no vaccines or cures on that day. There will be no intervention by the federal government. There will be no way of escape—other than running to the Lord for mercy and taking refuge under His wings. Judgment is certainly coming! And to repeat, it will be an act of justice from the Lord.

Thankfully, the Lord will provide a place of refuge and safety in the midst of the intense judgment storm. As Proverbs states, "The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (Prov. 18:10). And as Psalm 91 declares, there is a place of protection, a hiding place, in God Most High.

That's why Jesus said this to His followers, immediately after warning of the judgment that would be coming to the earth: "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). The coming of the Lord is at hand. And that's why the very passage from Hebrews that we quoted at the beginning of this article ends with this: "Therefore, since we are

receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire'" (Heb. 12:28-29).

The whole world will be shaken, but God's kingdom—and God's people—will not be shaken. As the psalmist declared:

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day" (Ps. 46:1-5).

What amazing words! Even with mountains crashing into the sea and the whole earth quaking, we will not fear.

As the psalmist also wrote:

"Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes" (Ps. 112:6-8).

It is true that the coronavirus has taken many lives so far, and every life is precious. And it is true that many more lives could be lost and there could be ongoing suffering and hardship for hundreds of millions due to economic crises. But this is only a small blip on the radar compared with what is coming.

Now would be a good time for us, as God's holy people, to learn to trust Him in the midst of crisis, putting our spiritual roots down deep. Now would be a good time to realize that all life is transitory and that at best we are only passing through this world. Now would be a good time to take

hold afresh of the beauty of the cross and the gift of eternal life.

And now would be a good time to be used as agents of mercy and hope to a hurting world. In Jesus we have all that we will ever need. And in Him we will never be shaken. {eo}

Excerpted from Chapter 11 of When the World Stops: One Day Everything Will Be Shaken by Dr. Michael Brown.