

# (Hebrews - Part 47): Yet Once More

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of obeying God's word and the consequences of refusing it, highlighting the significance of the word 'yet once more' in Hebrews 12:26.*

**Duration:** 29:55

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:1-17, Hebrews 12:25-29

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living according to God's will and the consequences of disregarding His words. The tragedy of Israel is highlighted as an example of the repercussions of ignoring God's commands. The speaker also discusses the involvement of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the act of redemption and the significance of God speaking from heaven. The sermon concludes with the reminder that we are surrounded by mystery and that it is important to trust in God even when we cannot fully understand His ways.

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## Transcript

Now, let's look at Hebrews. We've been coming slowly along in the book of Hebrews. I hope that you have been marking your Bible, taking notes, and otherwise veiling yourself of the opportunity to get something of a theological education.

We're now to the twelfth chapter and the twenty-fifth verse, and then the rest of the chapter. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth. But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things which are made, that of those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire. Now, the Holy Spirit here refers to two mighty divine acts, both in the past, at the time he wrote.

One of them was the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, with the attendant phenomena. The other one was the giving of the gospel with its blessed results. Then he speaks of a third divine act which is yet to be.

It was yet to be when these words were written, and it is still yet to be. Yet once more, says God, yet once more, signifying that he will remove the things that are movable, and he will shake the things that are shakable, because they are things that are made, in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Now, let's look at these acts.

The first mighty act was the giving of the law. God declared his moral will for his people. That is, he declared our moral duty toward God and men.

The Ten Commandments given by God on Mount Sinai have gone out of vogue. You don't hear them very much. Moody used to preach on them very often.

Wesley claimed that he preached on the commandments in order to get a place for the gospel. Torrey said that if you didn't preach the law, there is no use to preach the gospel, because it is the law that prepares us for the gospel, shows us how we need the gospel. Otherwise, we don't know we need it.

And there are denominations, I think particularly now, of the Dutch Reformed who preach the law and believe in the law and preach it. Now, I happen to believe that we are not under the law of Moses. I happen to believe, and I think I'm correct, that we are under law to Christ, which is the law of love, and that God has delivered us from the law of commandments.

But I also believe that everything that is morally commanded in the Ten Commandments given on Mount Sinai, while not binding upon us because it was given there, but the moral principles are binding upon us because they are the will of God for people. God there expressed his will for people. And the will of God for people is the same.

That is, it's always been God's will that people should not worship idols, although we are not under the Mosaic law. Still, that doesn't free us to worship idols. We have a different reason.

We have a different reason for not worshiping idols. Our reason is that we are in Christ, we have met God, we love God, and that there is no sense in worshiping idols. But nevertheless, we are not to worship idols, and so it is with the taking of the name of the Lord in vain, and so it is with coveting and with killing and committing adultery and stealing and lying, all of those things are yet not binding upon us in that we are in chains, but it's the normal thing that a Christian ought to do because he is in Christ.

It shouldn't be necessary for a Christian to have laws binding him from the outside, because what the law could not do, if it was weak through the flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemns that we might live according to the Spirit and have the Holy Spirit bringing righteousness in our hearts and living it through us. But nevertheless, the moral law was a mighty and terrible act, coming as it did in the midst of a heathen world, coming to Israel who had just come out of one of the great pagan nations of the world, Egypt, and it was accompanied by supernatural terrors. It tells us here what they were.

It says that the mountain burned with fire and blackness and darkness and tempest and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, which voice was so terrible that they begged that they might not have to hear it. And they couldn't endure it. And as much as a beast touched the mountain, it should be stoned.

And so terrible was the sight that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. That was God dramatizing the necessity for people to live according to his will and setting before us the high principles of morality that he requires of his creatures. That is said to be God speaking on earth.

And Israel disregarded God's words. That was her tragedy. This was Israel's tragedy, that she disregarded God's words.

The result is, as you know, historically, she lost her temple, she lost her king, she lost her land, she lost her home, she failed to receive the Messiah, and today she is scattered throughout the whole world, a nation that is constantly in trouble, with weary feet and troubled breasts and no home that she can call her own, wandering everywhere. That's Israel. And her wailing wall back in Jerusalem is symbolic of her great tragedy.

And her tragedy resulted from failing to hear God who spake on earth. Now, says the Holy Spirit here, there was a second mighty act, which was the giving of the gospel. And this act was more completely divine than the first, in that the act was done by the holy persons of the Godhead.

I don't want to repeat myself too much, but repetition is sometimes necessary to make a point. And in my book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, I have explained this pretty carefully, and I've also explained it here in public. But there were three great things that happened, and all three persons of the Godhead had part.

There was the incarnation, when the Father would tell the woman that she was to bear the Son, who was to be the second person of the Trinity. He said, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. That was the angel speaking from God.

So all three persons were active in the incarnation, the power of the Most High and the Holy Ghost and the Son, all there working. Then at his crucifixion there were the three persons. Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.

There you have the three persons. At the resurrection you have the three persons. He was declared to be the Son of God with power through the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead.

So in all the great acts of God, in this one great act of redemption, the three persons of the Godhead were engaged, working harmoniously, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Here God declares his redemptive will. In the first great act of God he declared his moral will for mankind.

He spoke on earth. Now he speaks from heaven and declares his redemptive will. And this, I repeat, is said to be speaking from heaven in a way that was greater than when he spoke on earth at the mountain.

Now much more, he says here, how much more shall they be punished if they do not accept him who speaks on the earth. Refusing the words of God in the earth and giving moral commandments. And it is terrible to disregard them, and the punishment must follow.

But it is worse to disregard the efforts in the three persons of the Trinity speaking from heaven, and there is no escape. Why did Israel disregard God's speaking on the earth? Well, there were numbers of reasons, and here are just a few of them. There was idolatry.

They had the example of others all around about them. Do you know the greatest teacher in the world? The greatest teacher in the world is example. What we see others do, that's what we learn to do.

A little child learns by example. They do things. I sat across the plane aisle yesterday coming in from Detroit, from Windsor, with a young mother, so young she looked like a child herself.

She had a little year old boy, she told me his name was Jay. He was a nice little fellow, and he would stand up there and wave his little hand at me. The mother thought that was the richest thing, she laughed about that so appreciatively because he'd waved.

He'd seen others wave, you know, he wasn't necessarily a genius. He was learning by example. She thought he was a genius, and I didn't disillusion her.

I asked his age and his name, and her face was shining while she told me about her little chick. He had learned to wave, and he was waving at people. The stewardesses were coming by and looking at him, and he was waving.

He learned by example. One of these days, if he hasn't already started, he will be speaking words, all by example. That is why if you are born in any language group, you speak that language better than any other.

I wrote alongside of a man from Holland, he was in the United States lecturing and was coming up here. He didn't tell me what for, but he was coming up and he had learned to speak English in Holland. We had a nice conversation, and he said that there was something he couldn't understand about the United States.

There are some things I can't understand. Why didn't he say something? Because he had been born in Holland where they don't have them. They have to say it another way.

If I were to practice for one hundred years, I couldn't speak Dutch the way he speaks it. I am sure that if he were to practice, he wouldn't be able to speak English the way you and I do. Because that first example that we get when we are young, you adopt a baby and it looks like you after a couple of years.

People say, Why do you think it was yours? You know why, because its little facial expressions have taken your facial expressions on. It has learned from you, so that it's not unusual at all for an adopted child, loved just as much as a natural born one, looks like the adoptive parents, because it's the facial expressions. Our dear little lady, we tried so hard to get her here for the convention, little Miss Frances.

Well, I don't know how old she is, it's not nice to talk about women's age, but she doesn't even try to walk straight up anymore. She just bends over and walks around with a heavenly smile on her dear little old face, and everybody loves her, including the teenagers that mob her for autographs. She looks like a Japanese.

Now, positively, she has lived in Japan so long that she has taken on the facial expressions of the Japanese. And while if you actually measure her face, it's an Occidental face. But she has taken on the Japanese smile and the Japanese facial expressions, so that if you just looked at her and looked away and didn't examine her, you'd say, that's a little Japanese lady.

Well, that's example that does that, my friends. The most powerful force operating in the world is not the H-bomb, but example. And these Jews lived among the heathen, and they couldn't resist the power of example.

When they saw the heathen worshiping their idols, they said, why should we be forced to worship an invisible God? Let's make something to remind us, as our Catholic friends say. This isn't an idol, it's just a reminder. Sure, sure.

Let us make a little reminder. And they did, and God Almighty condemned them from the start. Examples of the heathen round about them, they just couldn't resist it.

So they made the golden calf and they made idols out under trees. I don't know whether you know it or how many of you know it, those who have studied it would. But the average rank and file Christian wouldn't have any reason to know it.

But I wonder if you know, in the Old Testament, wherever the word grove, g-r-o-v-e, grove, wherever that word appears, that's not right at all. And every scholar knows it isn't. What they did there was to use an innocuous word to cover up a word they couldn't put in print.

These idolaters were worshiping idols, and worshiping idols, the word is phallic, as students know what that means. It has to do with sex. And what they were doing there, in what they called the groves, they were performing religious rites that were so foul and filthy that the police on the street would pick them up and put them in jail if they caught them doing it.

Actually, these people who had been brought out from Egypt by the mighty hand of God, and it had the law given to them on the mount, now they fall so low that they not only commit adultery, which they were commanded not to, but they make it a religious rite and worship Jehovah by evil and licentious acts. Now, that was an example that did that. And they escaped not.

God spoke on her, and they escaped not. Then there was Sabbath breaking. If you know Sabbath breaking, it was that they were working seven days a week instead of the six, and resting the seventh.

And they had an economic reason for breaking the Sabbath. Somebody's wheat needed cutting and it looked stormy, and it was within an hour of time to quit for the Sabbath, for it began at 6 o'clock Friday night. And some old Jew just said to himself, Listen, I've only got a one-third of my wheat in, and if I don't work tomorrow, this wheat will be down.

The storm will hit us here and it will be down and I'll lose my grain. So he came out on the Sabbath day and did his harvesting. He said, I know God doesn't care, there are economic reasons for this.

And we have become adept in our day of finding economic reasons for doing things we shouldn't. Even among some of the missionaries, I regret to say, I'm shocked and horrified to have to say it, that they are making strong arguments in favor of polygamy. They say, Wait a minute, we don't go to the heathen to change their social habits, we go to preach Jesus to them.

And if a man has nine wives and that's his cultural more, we don't go there and change it, leave him as he is. Because if we insist that he give up all but one wife, we have created social problems for the man. Jesus said, If your hand is in your way, chop it off.

If your foot is in your way, cut it off. If your eye is in your way, pluck it out. He wasn't concerned with these economic and social problems.

If you're going to be a Christian, you've got to stand up and take the consequences of your economic and social problems. Sure you will have problems. The Lord isn't going to take you to heaven on a pink cloud, you'll have to face up to it.

And those Jews couldn't take it, rather than lose a harvest while they'd work on the Sabbath. And the Lord saw it and displeased him. In the honoring of the parents, even in Jesus' day, they had a little trick.

They didn't want to give something to their poor, broken-down parents, so they said, Corbin! That's consecrated to God. God never got it, neither did the parents. The Lord said he couldn't stand that, and there was stealing and lying, and the prophets of Israel.

Sometimes our friends, the Jews and the Benebrith Anti-Defamation League, stand up on their hind legs and condemn the people for their attitude toward the Jews. Nobody ever said anything against the Jews more terrible than their own prophet. Once in the city of Chicago I got a call from Moody Bible Institute, and they said, You know, Benebrith is after you.

And I said, After me? Well, I don't like to be gotten after, so I said, What's the trouble? Well, they heard you say on the air that all the trouble in the world was caused by Jews. And I said, Well, I never said it. Who told you? Well, they said, The Anti-Defamation League called us.

So I called the Anti-Defamation League, and I said, I'd like to talk to the boss man, the head man. So they put a man on, and I said, My name is Toter, and you have said that I have said that everything in the whole world, all troubles of the world, can be traced back to the Jews. I said, You just hold that receiver to your ear while I talk to you.

He said, First, ever since the day that I was converted and began to read the Bible, I have believed in the Jews. I have believed in their glorious future to come. Some of you don't, but I do.

I said, I know more about the history of Israel than I know about the history of the United States, where I was born. Furthermore, I have baptized Jews. Furthermore, I am a member of two Jewish boards dedicated to the blessing of the Jews, and further, I have had at least one Jewish assistant pastor.

By that time, the fellow was crawling, and as soon as I had hung up from him, I buzzed around a bit, and then I called Moody's. I said, He said, Brother, did you? He said, We got a call here just before you called, and he said that man was apologizing all over the place. He had got the wrong man.

They had heard somebody say that, and it might have been somebody else with a voice like mine. They said, I did it, I didn't. But anyhow, I don't know how I got over there on that one.

I'll leave my outline and go off on a side trip. But I just wanted you to know that the Jews, the Prophets of Israel, said more against Israel than anybody ever said to Hitler. Hitler went out and gassed them.

Let's keep two things in mind. The Jews have a wonderful future. We owe them a great debt.

We owe them our Messiah. We owe them the book of Psalms. We owe them a great debt.

And there will be a day when the prophecies of the Lord are fulfilled, when they will again be a beautiful nation. But in the meantime, we are not supposed to shut our eyes to the fact that they have been a wicked people, and that God has judged them, and that they are now under judgment because they rejected him who spake from the earth. Now, be careful, he says, for much more shall we suffer if we refuse him that speaks from heaven.

What are some of the reasons that we refuse him that speaks from heaven? Well, carelessness is one, and some people have every kind of excuse. Some say they are hypocrites in the Church. Well, sure.

People say to me, I've become quite an ambassador of goodwill for Canada. When I go down over the border, they say, How do you like Canada? Well, they don't expect a lecture, but I give it to them. And I tell them what a marvelous people you Canadians are and how I've enjoyed my three years here.

It's wonderful that you know if I say to them, Listen, listen, you know what? They have murders in Canada. They have murders. People murder people in Canada, and there are rapes in the newspapers talked about.

And they are gangsters. Well, that's what I could say. But am I going to get up and fly over the border and never come back because here and there there might be a bad man? What nation doesn't have some bad men in it? So it's a mighty hypocritical for me to say, I won't go into the Church because there are hypocrites in the Church.

Of course there are hypocrites in the Church. Jesus had a hypocrite or two in his outfit, and they had in the early parts of Acts, and they've had all down the years. And just as there are some criminals in Canada.

But who in his right mind would condemn Canada because there are some criminals in it? So who in his right mind would say, I don't believe in the Church? Of course there are hypocrites in the Church. It's silly and hypocritical to hide behind a hypocrite. The only thing thinner than a hypocrite is the one who hides behind him.

And then they say, Well, there are too many churches, and I don't know which one to join. And there isn't one word in the New Testament about joining any church. It says, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

Although it's been normal from those days to this day that people who become believers in Christ join the Church, some church somewhere. And some people say there are too many questions that are not answered. Boy, if you quit living because you couldn't answer the questions about life, how many of you know anything about it? Oh, William Jennings Bryan, that great old commoner, that great orator, said, Who can explain how a black cow can eat green grass and give white milk with yellow butter? Nobody can answer that question.

Nobody! And how is it that a cow can eat green grass and give milk, and a goose can eat green grass and they do and lay eggs? Nobody can answer those questions. How is it that a microbe so small that you have to have powerful magnifying glass to see it, when it gestates and matures, may be a Corker Spaniel, or it may be a Prime Minister? It depends. It's all from the same cell.

And who knows whether that is going to be a Shakespeare or a Dachshund? Nobody can tell. So if you are going to quit living because you can't explain the many unanswered questions, you'd better go home now and lie down and get ready to go, because you are surrounded by mystery. I said to the crowd gathered at the Alliance Church on Forest Street in Detroit last week, there was a pastor sitting down there looking learned, and I said, We are surrounded by mystery all the time.

And I said, When you hear your pastor learnedly holding forth, all he is doing is giving names to mystery. We don't know what it is, so we name it. And everybody says, Wonderful, we now know what it is.

No, we don't know what it is. We have just named mystery. That's all.

Well, somebody else says, I am too weak. Another one says, I am too bad. Another one says, I am too good.

Another one has another excuse. But remember what he said here, Whose voice then shook the earth, but now he promised, I will shake the heavens. If ye they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

May God grant that these great messages of God, the great voice of God speaking on Sinai to give us his moral will for us, speaking again in the gospel to give us his redemptive will for us, and while we wait in the gap between that cross and the judgment to come, grant that we may not be so foolish as to emulate the poor Jew who turned away from God's voice speaking on earth, with the result she lost her temple and her king and her land and her home and her Messiah. What will we lose if we neglect to hear the voice of God speaking to us in the New Testament? God grant we'll have moral wisdom enough to listen to the voice of God and believe it and obey it. Amen.

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