

God Speaking From Heaven

by John Nelson Darby

Christ speaking from heaven signifies the full accomplishment of all He engaged for, and the believer's association with the things that cannot be shaken.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:25-26

Topics: "Peace in Christ", "Heavenly Assurance"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of Christ speaking from heaven, contrasting it with His earthly voice. He warns that those who turn away from this heavenly voice will face dire consequences, as it signifies the removal of all that opposes God. The sermon highlights the believer's blessedness in resting on Jesus, who has accomplished salvation and now speaks peace from His position of glory. Darby encourages believers to focus on the eternal promises of God, which cannot be shaken, and to remain vigilant in their faith amidst worldly trials. Ultimately, he reassures that the voice of Jesus brings peace and joy, affirming the believer's identity and security in Him.

Transcript

GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN

HEBREWS 12 : 25

The apostle, in addressing this exhortation to the Hebrews, acted upon the ground of the character in which Christ spoke, and the consequences resulting therefrom. Observe: His character is specifically brought forward as speaking "from heaven," contrasted with His character as speaking on earth : "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth [that is, when He spake from mount Sinai, thundering out His righteous law], much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven "-speaketh from the right hand of God, in the midst of His glory.

Here is the contrast : Christ, as speaking now from heaven, and then on earth ; an awful warning to transgressors, by the evidence of what then happened, to effect much more : "Whose voice then shook the earth." This having occurred sanctions the word spoken, which says, "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 that are made." And those things, dear friends, are what the saint is in now-not of them, but in them. Therefore is he, thus surrounded 'warned not to turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven."

This then is the ground on which he stands. On the one hand, he sees the full blessedness-the unqualified hope which this voice, speaking from heaven, makes known to him; and, on the other hand ' he sees there is nothing else to rest upon but the word of Jesus, which is perfectly stable in that it has been tried and proved. This cannot be removed or shaken ; everything, no matter what, that is not in association with this, being liable to be shaken, shall be removed. When the voice speaks from heaven for the removal of all that opposes it, all that is not of this heavenly character must go.

This same speaking then implies the deep blessedness of the believer, and his not having anything else to rest on but Jesus ; not merely to rest on Jesus in the way of righteousness, but for all things - for everything ; for all else is in opposition to God, and when the time of this speaking closes, all that is not of grace goes. " He then shook the earth." Tremendous mount was all on fire, and there was a very great earthquake. This was calculated to inspire great terror. But here is manifested the blessedness of the child of God, he is not come to that: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest . . . but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God," etc.

Here we have the character of the dispensation to which we, as believers, are called ; it is spoken nominally of all the professing church, though only true of those who are alive to God. They have come to this ; their warrant is, that this voice has spoken to them from heaven, and that they have heard it, and that it is the voice of Jesus. Thus He is presented, as having entered into His glory, and from thence speaking.

Thus then we learn from this word that this same Jesus who spake on earth is now speaking from heaven. " Who is he that ascended but he also that descended first into the lower parts of the earth ? " The Lord Jesus is speaking specially, as having effected the entire accomplishment of all that His people failed in, and that could in any degree militate against their happiness. This voice tells us that it is the same Person, the same Christ who was humbled for our sins ; who went through the world, weary and sorrowful; the same man who was crucified, dead, buried, raised, and ascended, that now speaks from heaven, as having passed through all these, and is now at the right hand of God, from whence He is inviting His people up thither.

This then is the joy of the child of God, when he hears this voice of Jesus addressing him from heaven, testifying of what He has done, and speaking as a witness of peace ; speaking in the consciousness of having so overcome-so entirely to have borne the sin of His people as to set it aside for ever by the one sacrifice of Himself once offered. And in this position He speaks-I have set aside for ever the sin which kept you excluded from God; and I am entered into the rest and glory, as your representative, in the presence of the Father. When this voice is heard and known, we have peace.

When the Lord Jesus therefore speaks from heaven, He speaks of having accomplished all the work which the Father gave Him to do. He speaks in the consciousness of this ; and He gives us the consciousness of the same in the power of the Spirit, when He visits us individually. He, the Redeemer - He who stood the bearer of sin - stood responsible for His people ; and by His perfect satisfaction acquitted them entirely. Now He, having ascended, says, I have done; I tell you, as in the presence of the Father, the result of all the work I accomplished: I am now in the very glory to which I am about to bring you. Here is the voice with which He speaks ; and if ever He speaks from heaven to any soul now, it is just thus. The voice may be heard very indistinctly indeed ; but that is just what the voice declares-that is the story which Jesus brings to the soul.

It is a tale of mercy, of boundless, inconceivable mercy. It may indeed, poor trembling soul, begin with a tale of thy sin. This is calculated to originate deep thoughts-deep searchings of heart ; but the beginning and end is for peace blessed peace! The voice still continues to speak; to say, those sins are gone-utterly put away, no more to incur God's wrath ; no further requirement to satisfy for them : Jesus has done that. You may indeed have sorrow still as to this world; for you are in the very midst of that world which crucified and rejected Christ, the Lord of glory. You are still in that world which displayed its utter and total enmity, even in rejecting the Author of all blessedness. That the world did, and He triumphed over it. He was crucified by the world, and He returned to the Father. What brought Him there, but the total rejection of Him by the world ? There He is now, and speaks. And what does this voice declare ? Why, that He has no part with the things of the world. He does not own it. The world would not own Him when He came in humiliation, and now He will not own it when seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Christ is now speaking from heaven with the witness of His rejection on earth, but with the full recognition of having passed through it, and triumphed over its most inveterate malice. This constitutes the blessedness of God's people here ; for they see a full salvation. Christ now speaking from heaven, who once spoke on earth, brings with it the certain evidence of the full accomplishment of all He engaged for. Nay, more, by His thus speaking from heaven, we, as believers, are privileged to know all that we are come to, even here. For this voice says, " Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; and to the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven ; and to God the judge of all ; and to the spirits of just men made perfect ; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant

and to the blood of sprinkling.

Here we have, not only the confidence of acceptance, but the entireness of deliverance ; not only as having overcome, but the blessedness to which believers are privileged to come. Blessed indeed is the portion to which they are called! A salvation which is already finished for them-a present salvation! This voice speaks, not of something which occurred some time ago, or in a distant place; but, when brought with power into the soul, it shews the present realisation of these things. It brings the soul to say, I am come to these, because He is there. Thus faith brings near these things. This then is the conscious position of the believer when under the energy of the Holy Ghost-the total putting away of all that hindered and dissociated him from that intimate communion with God, to which he is united, and which it is his privilege to enjoy.

All this Jesus speaks from heaven, and therefore His voice is a voice of peace-peace under all circumstances. He speaks the same under all the variety of exercises and trials of this mortal life. We may be bowed down, and think hard things of ourselves : but there Jesus sits in the calmness of conscious victory, and His words are only words of peace. Persecution, affliction, and woe, may speak from earth; yet the voice from heaven speaks nothing but peace. The voice of the Lord Jesus is a voice -of peace and conscious rest. Whatever conflicts with this peace is not in or from Jesus.

This position of the Christian is his perfect identity in spirit with Jesus as He now is : " Bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh," and therefore He can well sympathise with us. We may be tempted, harassed, oppressed ; but, notwithstanding that, we are really come to " the things which cannot be shaken." " He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." This may indeed be but dimly seen here, but it is not less real, and it is known to be real, by the power of the Spirit dwelling in them that believe. They see the " old man," in their weaknesses which they have crucified, and now are raised, according to the Power of the Spirit of

holiness, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christ, our Saviour, is a risen and ascended Saviour; and He now speaks from heaven, as a pledge that He is in the very place to which He will bring us, and where we shall behold Him.

Moreover He so pleased the very Mind of God, having performed all His will, that therefore He can say, It is done it is accomplished-it is finished for ever. Thus He now speaks from heaven one whole testimony of peace; it must necessarily be the voice of peace, bringing in the blessedness of the results of that which brought peace. It is only of peace then that He speaks, whether it is heard or not. As Paul says, " and came and preached peace to them which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Christ wrought sorrowfully, even to the death of the cross, to obtain this peace for His people ; and now He proclaims it. Man knew not peace while at enmity with his Maker; and so the Lord Jesus undertook the whole responsibility attaching to His people, and has overcome all impediments to obtain their peace. And this is the only way true peace can be obtained-this is what Jesus died to obtain, and, having obtained, now testifies to the truth and certainty of it. See then that your eyes are fixed on Him that speaks from heaven : else you never can obtain peace; for, in very deed, it is the word of God.

Christ now sits in heaven proclaiming peace, which brings before us the unspeakable blessedness of the manifestation of the prerogative of God's love against the extent of man's sin, not only in His excelling greatness triumphing over it, but being made the sacrifice Himself, so putting it away. We come now to see the stability of God's promise, and the certainty of its accomplishment: " 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 that are made." We have seen the association with Jesus into which we are brought, and are come to things spiritual, which, being stable, and resting on the security of God's word, cannot be removed when all else shall be shaken.

We will just see what they are: " Ye are come unto Mount Sion; and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." And shall that be shaken ? No; the city of the living God rests on the living God, and can never be removed. " To an innumerable, company of angels, the general assembly." Can they be shaken? No; there was one great shake in heaven, and the rebel angels were driven deep into darkness, there to remain; the rest are upheld by His power. " And to the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven ; and to the spirits of just men made perfect." And can these be shaken ? No; being made perfect by God, they must remain perfect; they cannot be shaken.

And ye are come " to God the judge of all." He being the very security and support of all else that cannot be shaken, He must so stand. And ye are come to Jesus, who is where all these will be-that is, not on earth, but in glory ; He was on this earth, and the men of the earth did not like Him, and therefore rejected Him. His voice once shook the earth, but now He is in heaven, and speaking from thence, He has promised, yet once more, to shake all that can be shaken.

In the word, " Yet once more," we have a remarkable expression, for it comes to us as a promise on the authority of

God ; it presses itself upon one's spirit, and bears witness to the truth in the power * of the Holy Ghost; it comes to us as a promised truth. Now let us consider whether Jesus has so spoken to us from heaven, as to lead us to thank God that He has promised this from heaven-that in truth we believe the promise, and are looking for the accomplishment of it.

Have we understood this voice from heaven? and do we rejoice in knowing that everything which Satan, the world, and the flesh have set up in opposition and enmity to God shall be shaken terribly, even to their destruction? Can we say in faith, I understand the voice so speaking, and am looking forward with joy to its accomplishment, when all that offends Christ shall be done away with? But have I also heard the voice so speaking to me from heaven as to identify me with all and everything that cannot be shaken?

Well will it be for the saints when they see the removal of all that burdens and keeps them from the perfect realisation of their unspeakable privileges. They have nothing to fear from that terrible voice which shall "shake terribly the earth." They have heard, and are identified with that blessed voice which speaks to them nought but of love and mercy and peace, and they want no other.

Brethren, beloved of the Lord, what a contemplation is it to enter into, that of our being established-firmly established and settled in those things which cannot be shaken! The extent of that tremendous shake, which is full of woe to him who is fixed here-who is settled on any of those things liable to be shaken-is full of joy to him who is come to the things which cannot be shaken, and which shall therefore remain.

"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." This shaking time will come; but it is your joy, that those things on which your mind and affections are set, and with which you are associated, cannot be shaken. And further, this voice to believers implies much more, wonderfully much more, than the removal of all things which cannot stand the shaking; it implies their whole blessedness; that they shall then be brought into the full perfectness of the joy of Jesus, resting alone on the stability of God. All things which are made shall be shaken. At that time, he who is associated with God, and he alone, shall stand the shake. For he is now come spiritually unto that to which he shall enter personally, where nothing defiling, nothing unstable, shall find an entrance.

The believer therefore rests on these two grounds: that the Lord Jesus Christ is thus speaking to him from heaven speaking peace, and therefore taking away all fear, as regards himself, in the promised convulsion and upturning of all things, and also that the promise of God shall stand, in the setting aside of all that shall not participate in his present glory. Here we see the total dissociation of all and everything connected with an interest in the things of this world: that they are opposed to the things of God-they are quite distinct, and never can be united.

As soon as the season is past for the exercise of God's longsuffering and patience with a guilty world, then will the shaking commence: happy they who are in a way of grace then! Yet there is an admonition to them to watch: "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" and this watchfulness is to continue to the end, amidst all opposition, supported therein by the life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost. The believer's life is thus manifestly a life of watchfulness; but he rests not here, he looks forward. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable": but he sees beyond this life, he has come to perceive eternal things; and in the power of the Spirit to discern the unquestionable blessedness to which he is called - into the spiritual enjoyment of which, even here there is no hindrance, not the least impediment) except as regards himself. Christ has done all that could be, all that was necessary to be done, in order to make the reconciliation Perfect.

There is then no hindrance as regards Christ's work; it is a mark of complete Perfectness. All things that could keep us from God have been overcome, set aside, triumphed over: and He is now in heaven, in the

full consciousness of victory finished as regards our salvation ; entered into altogether of God for us, and continually speaking heaven, in the presence peace. to us His people-the consciousness of which, on our part, is 'wrought in our souls by the eternal Spirit, who, testifying of the joy into which Jesus is entered, and the peace which He proclaims, makes us also full of joy and peace in believing, and looking to that glory into which we also shall be brought, " whither the forerunner is for us entered."

This is the only ground of peace which Christ promised, and it is the privilege of the believer to enjoy this peace, even in the midst of trials and conflicts and afflictions. He looks to Jesus where He now is ; and, resting on Him who is now which passes all speaking from heaven, he has that peace understanding, arising from his union, his oneness, his identity with his Lord and Master. Have you thus known the Lord Jesus Christ, as speaking from heaven to you, and speaking peace ~ Has He told you that all is finished, and that you are privileged to have peace? Do you see your own personal iniquity put away ?

I would ask you still further, dear friends, in how far you are associated with that which shall be removed ? The voice from heaven has witnessed, has promised, the removal of all things which can be shaken. If you are associated in any way with those, oh, how sad, when Christ comes, to find you thus! They that are earthly do mind earthly things-that is their character : as the apostle says to the Philippians, " Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." The voice speaking from heaven proclaims the dissociation of Christ and His company from these-from all that is earthly.

I solemnly put it before you, dear friends, Are you thus engaged ? or are your hearts, affections, and desires lifted up to Him that is higher than the heavens-to that which cannot be shaken, and can never be removed ? Could You receive the shaking of all things, as the promise of God ? He has promised, " Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Blessed, everlastingly blessed, are they who are established in Him who is higher than the heavens! They who are thus fixed are as secure as they will be when associated with Him in glory.

Let me again ask you, dear friends, If this shaking were to come now, where would it find you ? Would you be found trembling under the consciousness of being mixed' up with that which is to be removed ? or borne in perfect peace upon the heart of Him who is to shake all things ? May the Lord find you in the latter circumstances-happy in the consciousness of His love and power, ready to enter into the joy unspeakable, and glory of your Lord. Amen.

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