

Come Unto The Mount

Hebrews 12:18 - 29



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FOCAL Hebrews 12:18-23 (KJV) "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, {19} And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: {20} (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: {21} And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) {22} But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, {23} To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

1. Grace Is Amazing

The writer of Hebrews now gives us *another proof* as to how *amazing Grace is*. This morning in the Book of John we talked about this Amazing Grace that saved us, and not only saves us *but keeps us saved*. We talked about the truth that we truly had *no part* in our salvation - it is entirely a work of God. Salvation is ...

Ephesians 2:9 (NASB)¹ "not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. "

FOCAL Hebrews 12:18 (KJV) "For ye are not come²

1 New American Standard Bible, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

2 proserchomai, Second Perfect Active Indicative + negative ou = *you are not*

unto the mount ..."

The Christian is *attracted to the mountain of God*. The word **come** here means "to be attracted to, to have the attention pulled toward". This same word is used when Jesus went up to preach the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:1 (KJV) "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples **came [proserchomai]** unto him:"

or when the disciples were on the water, afraid for their lives, which reads:

Matthew 8:25 (KJV) "And his disciples **came [proserchomai]** to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish."

or when the woman with the issue of blood came to Jesus for healing:

Luke 8:43-44 (KJV) "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, {44} **came [proserchomai]** behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd."

This word means to *be drawn as a moth to the light*, to be attracted to, to be pulled toward.

drawn to or attracted to

The children of Israel, having rejected God's Grace a number of times, were *driven* to the mountain of the Law - they were not *drawn* or *attracted* to it. Because they repeatedly rejected a relationship with God by faith in Christ, they were driven to a *lesser place*.

FOCAL Hebrews 12:18-20 (KJV) "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, {19} And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: {20} (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart .."

The *mountain of the Law* was a frightful place. Fire and smoke rolled from the mountain. Though that mountain could be touched, to touch it was *death* for God commanded the Israelite:

Exodus 19:11-13³ (ESV) ".. and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain."

³English Standard Version, The Holy Bible, English Standard Version
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This is not the mountain that we were attracted to. The mountain that attracts the Christian is a *different mountain* than the one that was

FOCAL Hebrews 12:21 (KJV) "... **so terrible** was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

I praise God that this is *not* the mountain that we were drawn to. Think on this for a moment. **The mountain that Israel was drawn to was a mountain of works. But not just a mountain of works, but a mountain of failed works.** God emphasized that Israel could *never* reach a place where they satisfied God under that system by *refusing* to allow them to touch the mountain. Only one, and that one was Moses, was allowed on this mountain. All others were forbidden, lest they touch the mountain and die. *Even its mediator Moses feared that mountain*, for it was a place of works - not of Grace.

Illustrate In a recent article written to *Pulpit Helps* R. Albert Mohler writes in the article "**Whatever Happened To Hell?**":

"The U.S. Constitution disallows "cruel and unusual punishment," and the courts have offered evolving and conflicting rulings on what kind of punishment is thus excluded. At various times the death penalty has been constitutionally permitted and forbidden, and in one recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, the justice writing the majority opinion actually cited data from opinion polls.

The transformations of legal practice and culture have redefined justice for many modern persons. Retribution is out, and rehabilitation is put in its place. Some theologians have

simply incorporated this new theory of justice into their doctrines of hell. For the Roman Catholics, the doctrine of purgatory functions as the penitentiary. For some evangelicals, a period of time in hell—but not an eternity—is the remedy.

Some theologians have questioned the moral integrity of eternal punishment by arguing that an infinite punishment is an unjust penalty for finite sins. Or, to put the argument in a slightly different form, eternal torment is no fitting punishment for temporal sins. The traditional doctrine of hell argues that an infinite penalty is just punishment for sin against the infinite holiness of God. This explains why all sinners are equally deserving of hell, but for salvation through faith in Christ."

What did Jesus say of Hell?

Matthew 25.46 (KJV) " And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.."

Just as life is *eternal* for the saved, life separated from God is *eternal* for the unsaved. As horrible as the mountain of the Law is, it is nothing in comparison to that mountain the Bible calls HELL. But we who have believed in Christ do not come unto that mountain, but unto the Mountain of Grace. We are drawn to Sion or Zion.

FOCAL Hebrews 12:22-23 (KJV) "... But ye are **come [proserchomai]** unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, {23} To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God

the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

That great Reformer **John Calvin** wrote in his commentary:

"He adds weight to these two things by a comparison between the Law and the Gospel; for the higher the excellency of Christ's kingdom than the dispensation of Moses, and the more glorious our calling than that of the ancient people, the more disgraceful and the less excusable is our ingratitude, unless we embrace in a becoming manner the great favor offered to us, and humbly adore the majesty of Christ which is here made evident; and then, as God does not present himself to us clothed in terrors as he did formerly to the Jews, but lovingly and kindly invites us to himself, so the sin of ingratitude will be thus doubled, except we willingly and in earnest respond to his gracious invitation. Then let us first remember that the Gospel is here compared with the Law; and secondly, that there are two parts in this comparison, — that God's glory displays itself more illustriously in the Gospel than in the Law, — and that his invitation is now full of love, but that formerly there was nothing but the greatest terrors."

The Law produces terror, the Grace of God produces *love*, free and unfettered *love*. We have come to Mount Zion, not Mount Sinai.

2. Are You On Mount Sion/ Zion or Mount Sinai?

Sion is first mentioned in **Deuteronomy 4:48**, and is equated with Mount Hermon:

Deuteronomy 4:48 (KJV) "From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon,"

Sion or *Zion* is the place where God's blessing was Jerusalem. We are not - as Israel was - standing *apart* from God, unable to approach Him or the Mountain that He dwells on. But we are, **by faith, entered into union with God. Jerusalem**, that city of David, was the capital city of Israel - God's chosen people. The Apostle now emphasizes that the *saved by faith in Christ* are *entered into union with Jesus* - our names are now in that Book of Life in eternity.

What has the believer in Christ received from accepting Him as Savior? We have received a number of blessings. We are in Sion - not Sinai - because of Christ. We are entered into the *hall of records* in Heaven - we have a *citizenship* in Heaven:

1 Peter 1:4-5 (KJV) "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, {5} Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

and are kept by the power of God unto salvation. If we have accepted Christ as Savior then we are members:

FOCAL Hebrews 12:23 (KJV) "... To the general

assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

of the **Church of the Firstborn**. Constable⁴ says:

"The first-born was the son who received the greatest amount of inheritance. This is another reference to Christ's companions (1:9; 3:12) who are partakers of His glory (3:14; 6:4; 12:8), namely, those who faithfully persevere in their faith. Their names are on a heavenly roll as those who died cleaving to the Lord (cf. Exod. 32:33; Ps. 68:29; Isa. 4:13; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12).⁴²⁷ "The spirits of righteous men made perfect" evidently refers to all the glorified redeemed, faithful and unfaithful, whom Christ's sacrifice has perfected (cf. 10:10, 14; 11:40)."

3. Mount Sinai - I Live Through The Law Mount Sion - I Live Through Christ

It is God's Will that the believer *allow Christ to live through him*. Jesus Christ is not only *our Savior*, He is also *our enabler* to live for Him. The Christ that saved us:

FOCAL Hebrews 12:24-27 (KJV) "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. "

is the same Christ that *keeps us saved by interceding for us*. It is this same **Christ that God has determined we must put on**:

Romans 13:14 (NASB)⁵ "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

We who are saved **put on** Jesus. What does that mean? We're told - just before we're told to **put on** Jesus, to

Romans 13:12 (KJV) "... cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

The **Christian is a Spirit born, Spirit indwelt, Spirit enabled person**. Unlike the Old Testament Saint who struggled to reach God by *living the Law*, a Law given by fire and smoke, terror and inability, we are indwelt by that Spirit of Christ so that Christ *can be formed in us*. The Apostle wrote the wayward Church at Galatia:

Galatians 4:19-29 (ESV)⁶ "... my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are

⁵ New American Standard Bible

⁶ English Standard Version

⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Sonic Light Commentary on Hebrews*

two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now **Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia**; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. **But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.** For it is written,

"Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. **But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. ."**

The Christian is called to live his life in a *perpetual relationship with God through Christ*. We cannot live the life of Christ apart from the Spirit of God. We cannot *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* if we do not pray and seek His face.

A.W. Tozer writes:

"It was never in the mind of God that a privileged priesthood of sinful, imperfect men would attempt, following the death and triumphant resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, to repair the veil and continue their office of mediation between God and man. The letter to the Hebrews makes that fact very plain. When Jesus rose from the dead, the Levitical

priesthood, which had served Israel under the Old Covenant, became redundant. God's better plan for an eternal High Priest and a sinless Mediator is also made plain in the letter to the Hebrews. Jesus glorified at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens is now our High Priest forever. His priesthood is not after the order of Aaron and Levi but after the enduring priesthood of Melchizedek."

At the moment of salvation the believer in Christ *left off trying to save himself* and - by faith - *put on Jesus*. We read:

Galatians 3:25-27 (NIV)⁷ "Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

If faith saved you, is not faith *that which you must now follow*? It is not the physical that blesses the Christian, but the *spiritual*. It is not Mount Sinai that blesses us, but Mount Zion.

FOCAL Hebrews 12:25-27 (KJV) "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: {26} Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. {27} And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the

⁷ New International Version

removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

The Christian is saved to a *new and living relationship with God* where He leads us - not by Law and Ritual, but by His Spirit. The Christian is *spiritual*, for he is *born again* and *able* through the power of the Holy Spirit of God to live for Him.

The Scripture uses a very interesting analogy between the Old and the New Covenants. The Old Covenant gave a very *temporary blessing* to Israel. The New Covenant gives a *permanent blessing* to the believer, because Jesus Christ our High Priest ...

Hebrews 7:25 (KJV) "... ever liveth to make intercession for them."

This is *very* important, because Moses as well as all the representatives of the Old Covenant failed God. Jesus Christ never failed God, thus He becomes an *eternal Mediator* of that covenant.

FOCAL Hebrews 12:28-29 (KJV) "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: {29} **For our God is a consuming fire."**

Since we have **received a kingdom that cannot be moved** (for it is in Heaven), we must focus on serving God *through Grace* and through *the means He gives us*.

If we will not use our spiritual resources, then we may find ourselves in the place where we discover that **our God is a consuming fire**.

The Bible describes God often best with *short verses* that pack a punch. We hear that **God is light**:

1 John 1:5 (HCSB)⁸ "Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. ..."

that is, it is God's nature to *bring light or clearness* to any situation. Our God is *not the Author of Confusion* (**1 Corinthians 14:33**), but He is the *Author of eternal salvation* (**Hebrews 5:9**). God is also **love**:

1 John 4:8 (NLT)⁹ "But anyone who does not love does not know God--for God is love."

and those who know Him know what it means to be recipients of love. But God is also **a consuming fire** ... and this warning is first used in Deuteronomy, where we read:

Deuteronomy 4:24 (KJV) "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."

God is *jealous* for those Whom He has loved. His love for you consumes Him ... which should both *comfort* as well as *caution*. If you know Christ as Savior, do not believe that the Beloved will continue to allow you to wander in the way of the world. He loves you - and is

⁸ Holman Christian Standard Bible

⁹ New Living Translation

jealous for your love. Praise God for that! His love consumes Him.

His love for you also gives you great protection, if you abide in Him. The Bible says:

Deuteronomy 9:3 (KJV) "Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee."

Like a *Consuming Fire* God will protect you from your enemies, from all harm. The same love that commands you obey is the same love that protects you along the way. I praise God for this *protecting love!*

