

## The Heavenly Jerusalem; Hebrews 12:18-24

### I. Hebrews

- A. A very simple, generalized summary — Christ is better
- B. To the Hebrew people that were the audience of this book Christ is better than the Law of Moses
- C. For us — nothing can compare with the glory and majesty of Christianity

### II. What We Left

- A. “What can be touched” is referring to the mountain where God gave Moses the Law
- B. Exodus 19:18–20 (ESV); <sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. <sup>19</sup> And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. <sup>20</sup> The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.
- C. Exodus 20:18–21 (ESV); <sup>18</sup> Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off <sup>19</sup> and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” <sup>20</sup> Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” <sup>21</sup> The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.
- D. I want you to think back to the last time you were in a severe storm
  - 1. I have been in many earthquakes — yes, they are scary
  - 2. I have been around wild fires and urban fires
  - 3. Thunderstorms (The Sound of Music)
  - 4. I still remember the hail storm 3 years ago during a Wednesday night study
  - 5. Could you imagine the Israelites at the foot of the mountain?
- E. The writer is telling the Hebrew Christians to remember what they left
  - 1. What did you leave?
  - 2. Even if you grew up in the church you realize that you are leaving something (which is why you made the decision to come to the Heavenly Jerusalem)
  - 3. There is nothing more scary than a life of sin, a life without God — but Satan tries to disguise that as a life of pleasure
  - 4. I did not grow up in the church — I was a practicing heathen — I had fallen for the lie that the momentary pleasure of life was worth far more than my eternal soul
  - 5. I would recommend that we start looking at any life without God as ‘shaking in your boots’ scary, horrifying
  - 6. 1 Timothy 6:11–12 (ESV); <sup>11</sup> But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. <sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
  - 7. Flee — run away scared!
- F. Ephesians 2:12 (ESV); remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
- G. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV); They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,
- H. What do we run to?

### III. Mount Zion

- A. In our text, the image shifts from the terror of Mount Sinai to the joy of Mount Zion

1. "The locations "Mount Zion," "city of the living God," and "heavenly Jerusalem" are all in apposition to one another and refer to the same place." <sup>1</sup>
  2. 2 Samuel 5:7 (ESV); Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.
- B. Innumerable angels in festal gathering
1. This seems like a big party (no, not that kind of party!)
  2. The lost sheep — Luke 15:7 (ESV); Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.
  3. The lost coin — Luke 15:10 (ESV); Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."
  4. The lost son — Luke 15:22–24 (ESV); <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.
- C. This celebration, this rejoicing, is the church!
1. "The assembly (church) of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven"
  2. This is the joy we get to celebrate as often as we meet together
  3. How do we view our assembly?
    - a) Is it a drag to come to any meeting
    - b) Do we make excuses not to attend?
    - c) Luke 14:15-24
    - d) We might say, "I didn't get anything out of church today"
    - e) My question is, "what did you put into it?"
    - f) We don't meet to "get," we meet to "give"
    - g) This is a worship service where we are the worshipers and God is the object of our worship
    - h) God describes our assembly as "angels in festal gathering"
- D. "And to Jesus"
1. He is the author of our salvation
  2. The formation of the church came about through His sacrifice
  3. It is His blood that grants us entrance into this festal gathering
  4. This new covenant is joy and celebration
  5. The church is where Jesus is
    - a) When you run to Jesus you end up in the church
    - b) Acts 2:41 (ESV); So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
- IV. The Heavenly Jerusalem
- A. No wonder the church is called the Heavenly Jerusalem
  - B. "Are enrolled" — an official registration (present tense)
  - C. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven — Luke 10:20b

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Allen, Hebrews, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 590.