

An Unshakable Kingdom, Part 2 (Hebrews 12:18–29)

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Introduction

1. The apostle encourages perseverance by convincing the Hebrew Christians of the superiority of the Christ and His New Covenant comparing it to Moses and the Old Covenant.
 - a. The whole epistle demonstrates the gospel reality as superior to the Old Covenant promises, our passage being best and final effort to present these facts.
 - b. Each mountain stands for what was inaugurated on it and, as a consequence, represents what is symbolized (for example, *Washington* stands for the federal government of the United States).
 - 1) Mount Sinai represents the law and its fearful consequences; Mount Zion represents gospel grace and the freedom in Christ that salvation affords.
 - 2) Scripture must be carefully studied in order not to confuse the message by insisting on a literal interpretation when the text is to be taken as spiritual (ex. Mark 10:29, 30—are we to receive a hundred mothers? or John 1:51—is Jesus an actual ladder?).
2. What is compared must also not be seen as distinct and antithetical but as two steps or stages toward the attainment of a single end.
 - a. Why would the believers want to return to what was but foundational and preparatory?
 - b. Mount Sinai was but the inferior primary stage to be completed and perfected in Mount Zion.
3. Sinai and Zion also represent two ages (dispensations) pressing toward the one goal of uniting all things in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10).
 - a. Christ has come, fulfilling all the previous prophecies and promises, types and shadows (Matt. 5:17, 18; 2 Cor. 1:20).
 - b. The apostle lists six items that describe Mount Sinai, six being the number of man in his weakness and incompleteness (the number of completeness being seven).
 - c. Eight items compose the list describing Mount Zion, eight being the number of new beginning and new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).
4. In this message, two things need to be looked at carefully before we examine the eight items that describe Mount Zion and the eternal state (next week's lesson, part 3).

I. You Are Come

1. The Spirit desires the reader to understand that New Covenant believers actually possess now the great realities that make up the eternal state.
 - a. The verbs verses 18 and 22 are present tense with both perfect and passive voice configurations, showing two things:
 - 1) The present tense speaks of what is current, not a future hope as we have previously noted, for in Christ we have eternal life *now* (life possessing the quality of the eternal realm, 1 John 5:11, 12).

- 2) The passive indicates the subject's being acted upon, for in no way can a believer share in any aspect of his salvation (Eph. 2:8–10). What the Spirit works in us is of His will and power, in which we are entirely passive.
- b. The whole argument is that “*you are not come*” (v. 18) to the temporal (Mount Sinai), but “*you are come*” to the eternal (Mount Zion). However, one cannot come to Mount Zion until he has first come to Mount Sinai—to what it represents (the law, sin, and condemnation), then, grace can bring the repentant sinner to Mount Zion and the glory it represents.
2. When Scripture speaks of “heaven and earth” (Deut. 4:36, 39; Jer. 23:24; 33:25), it is not speaking of real estate so much as realms or dimensions (temporal and spiritual).
 - a. Before sin entered the Garden, perfect harmony existed between heaven and earth and these were joined in one realm. Sin disrupted that harmony and separated them.
 - b. Mount Sinai addresses the condition of the earthly and temporal, which must be addressed before one is made new and conditioned to dwell in the new creation represented by Mount Zion.
 - c. When the resurrection comes, both realms will then be reunited in a new creation (Rom. 8:21; Isa. 24:14–16, 21, 23).

II. Mountain and City

1. Israel possessed the Promised Land, but was never able to conquer Jebusite Jerusalem (Josh. 15:63).
 - a. The first time that Zion is mentioned in Scripture is 2 Samuel 5:6, 7, which has great prophetic significance.
 - 1) David (“beloved”), prefiguring King Jesus, did what sinful Israel failed to do.
 - 2) Thus Zion prophetically stands for the highest revelation of God's grace in the Old Covenant era.
 - b. Zion has two peaks; *Moriah*, on which the temple stood, and *Zion* where David's palace stood, which also has prophetic significance for in the new earth Christ is both priest and king (Psa. 48:2, 3; 50:2; 132:13, 14; 133:3).
2. Spiritually, Zion represents the glory of the eternal realm (Psa. 9:11; 2:6; Isa. 24:23; Psa. 125:1; 128:5; Isa. 59:20; 40:9; Micah 4:2; Psa. 87:2; 148:2; 14:7; 110:2; 128:5).

Application

1. Abraham “*was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God*” (11:10). What city are you looking for (Gal. 4:25, 26)?
2. Jerusalem was next to Mount Zion, which speaks to the *nearness* of God to His saints. Do you recognize the great privilege that you have to be near your God (Eph. 2:19)?
3. Zion is the eternal dwelling place of God and His people, a place of safety and security from every enemy, filled with every provision to meet every need and that for all eternity. What more could we ask, it's being all of grace?