

## **An Unshakable Kingdom, 4 (Hebrews 12:18–29)**

**By Pastor Jeff Alexander (11/26/2017, 12/3/2017)**

### **Introduction**

The New Covenant believer has far greater privileges than that of the Old Covenant saints. This is the theme of the apostle's comments in this text. Thus, he writes, "*You have come to Mount Zion*" (vv. 18, 22). *Come* refers to the special dignity and high honor that New Covenant believers have in coming to the heavenly throne for worship and service (4:16; 7:25). This is truly worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24).

What may be touched refers to the tangible and temporal items that supported worship in the Old Covenant era. Jesus Christ, fulfilled all the types and promises thereby establishing the true and permanent realities. Christ will reunite both heaven and earth, separated by sin in the Garden (Ephesians 1:9, 10).

### **I. Mount Sinai, the Old Covenant**

Parts 1 and 2 covered the items mentioned under this point.

### **II. Zion, the New Creation**

Part 3 introduced the 8 items listed under Mount Zion. This message completes the list.

1. To *Mount Zion*, meaning *a parched place*, refers to the fortified mountain controlled by the Jebusites until David took it (2 Sam. 5:7), the place for His name to dwell and to serve as His *throne* to rule over His created order (Psa. 2:6; 9:11; 76:2; 99:2).
2. To the *city* of the living God or the city of the great king (Psa. 48:2), *the heavenly Jerusalem*—the *household* of God (Eph. 2:19). The city stands for the whole of the country of which it is capitol—in the way we use Washington to stand for the whole USA.
3. To the "*Innumerable angels*," used here to encourage the believers that God is the Lord of hosts to *protect* and *care* for His own (Psa. 46:7).
  - a. "*In festal gathering*" (ESV, the Greek is *paneguris*, the whole public assembly from *agora*, market place or gathering place: note Dan. 7:10).
  - b. This is illustrated in God's requirement of Israelite males to gather at the tabernacle three times a year to observe the solemn feasts (Ex. 34:23; Deut. 16:16; Psa. 22:22, 25; cited in 2:12).
4. To "*the ekklesia of the firstborn*."
  - a. The distinction between the *paneguris* (gathering) of angels and the *ekklesia* (assembly) of the saints.
    - 1) An *ecclesia* (assembly or, as it is used in the western cultures, *church*) was gathering of citizens to conduct the affairs of the city or the state. The assembly was called and the citizens were summoned to attend (10:23–25).
    - 2) Jesus promised to build His assembly (Matthew 16:18).

- 3) We use the term *church* to designate the assembly of Christ because it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *kirk* (from the Greek *kurios* meaning the *Lord's* to distinguish it from the assembly of the Greek city/state).
- b. *Enrolled* means to be officially *registered*—an authorized citizen of the heavenly kingdom.
- c. *Firstborn* designates the great privilege we have, not of priority, but of *dignity* with respect to the inheritance and position of dominion (Gen. 49:3). They are enrolled in *heaven* because Jerusalem is in heaven now (Eph. 2:11–13; 18–20).
5. To “*God the judge of all*” —used in the sense of God’s being the supreme head of this kingdom society.
- In one sense, God’s ultimate supremacy is set against that of Satan, the accuser of the saints, who usurped authority over God’s created order, corrupting and defiling it with sin and lust (Romans 8:31–39; 2 Peter 2:21–23).
6. To “*the Spirits of the just ones made perfect*” is a reference to the cloud of witnesses of 12:1, whose faith and faithfulness were the subject of chapter 11. These are the OT saints who lived by faith and died before Christ and before the restoration of all things (11:39, 40).
- This also is the destiny of those who die in Christ in this New Covenant era before the resurrection of the body. They, too, have run the race, finished the course, being completely delivered from the sin and sorrow, and labor and trouble experienced in their moral life. They have now entered their eternal Sabbath rest and reward, coming immediately into the presence of God (2 Cor. 2:8) and the joy of their reward.
7. To Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant. The focus here is on the name, Jesus, the one bringing salvation to His people (Matt. 1:21).
- a. Jesus is contrasted to Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant. He was chosen by the people: “*You speak to us and we will listen*” (Ex. 20:19–21). The people stood afar off while Moses drew near.
- b. God called Him and sent him to lead the people out of Egypt (1 Cor. 10:12). But, Moses was a man, a descendant of fallen Adam. Although he gave the law to Israel, he was unable to honor the law with perfect obedience (Num. 20:11, 12).
- c. Jesus brings all the mercy, grace, and glory to His New Covenant people because He is able to be their surety (guarantor).
8. To the blood of sprinkling that speaks of better things than that of Able (Lev. 16:14; Ex. 24:6–8) prefigured the blood of Christ sanctifying the church.
- a. The more that a believer exercises repentance toward God and faith in Christ Jesus, the more he will experience the peace (wholeness) speaking the power of the blood, because it alone is the perfect satisfaction of divine justice.
- b. The contrast here with Abel has to do with *speaking*. Abel’s blood calls for vengeance; Christ’s blood calls for blessing.
- c. Abel’s blood cried out from the ground; Christ’s blood speaks in heaven itself (Heb. 9:11, 12).