

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Mount Sinai or Mount Zion?

Scripture: Hebrews 12:18-29

Code: 1256

Hebrews Chapter 12 and Verse 18. It's a tremendous book with some great, great truths in it. We count it a great privilege to be able to study it together and I know my own heart has been refreshed.

I've taught this book in the past. I remember when I was in seminary I took a course in the book of Hebrews from Dr. Feinberg and had a great time. Nothing like having somebody who studied 14 years to be a rabbi, and then who is an expert in the truths Old Testament and the New Testament to teach you the book of Hebrews. We had a great, great time in it and it's with a great sense of love that I approach this book again tonight to share with you some things from Chapter 12 and Verse 18.

I want to read verses 18-24, if I may, so that you get a setting for what we're going to be talking about. "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.

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 spear.

And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who 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, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Now we'll be commenting on some of that because some of it you noticed that read did not appear in your New American and there are some textual variations we'll comment on in a moment.

But you notice at the very outset that there is a comparison between Sinai, this terrible mount that burns with fire and smoke and another mount in Verse 22, Mount Zion. And that is exactly what the writers of Hebrews is point out, the distinction between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

Now what does that have to do with us? Well, asks a question to begin and then we'll follow it through and see how it fits the text. What happens to a person who refuses the salvation that is offered in Jesus Christ? What happens to a person who refuses the salvation that is offered in Jesus Christ?

Can that person count on his or her good deeds to secure for them salvation? If they refuse that salvation that God has graciously given, can they depend upon their own good works? That's really the issue of this particular section.

What is in view for someone who willfully turns away from the Gospel? Is there any other avenue of salvation? Is there any other hope of being redeemed?

Now this is one of those passages in the book of Hebrews that we classify as a warning passage. The major thrust of the book of Hebrews is written to believers, the major thrust. But periodically through the book there is a recurrent theme of warnings to unbelievers. There are several of them here and this is the fifth of those warnings in this book.

And in every case the warnings come to people who know enough of the Gospel to be responsible and who are not responding as they ought to and so the warning comes and says, "Look, you have enough information to come all the way to Christ, to commit your life to Christ. You're not doing it and so I warn you."

And five times the writer of Hebrews warns the person, particularly in this case the Jewish person who understands the Gospel but for one or another reason does not come to Christ, does not take that final step of commitment.

And not unlike many people today who understand the Gospel, who understand the claims of Christ, who understand enough of the truth of the Bible to be responsible but for some reason or another they hold back from really committing themselves to Jesus Christ.

Now basically there are five different reasons why people do that. There are five different reasons why people who know the truth don't move into the truth, don't really respond to Christ in a positive way.

Reason number one is neglect. And that is the topic of warning number one in Chapter 2. How shall we escape if we what? Neglect so great a salvation. That's the first reason that people don't come to

Christ when they know the truth, they just never get around to it. There is the element of neglect.

The second one is unbelief. There are some people who believe but they don't believe. In other words they say, "Well, I sort of believe and I guess it's true but I haven't really settled my own thinking on it." And that is exactly what you have in the third chapter of Hebrews where you have the second warning in the book where he says, look you better take heed. In Chapter 3, Verse 12, "Lest there be in any of you an evil heart" of what? Unbelief. Somebody who stops short of believing the fullness of the Gospel.

So you have some people who don't make that real commitment to Christ just because they neglect and some people because of unbelief.

And the third thing, there are some people who never really come to Christ because of what you might call tradition. And of course that's very, very true in the case of many Jewish folks. It's just a matter of the way they've always done things and Christ has never been a part of it and why should they make such a dramatic change now?

Often when you share Christ with somebody who's older they'll say, "I've lived so long, my life - under these conditions, why should I make a dramatic change at this point?" Or, "I've been raised a Jew and this is forbidden for a Jew to do. I could never bring myself to such an act, it's against my tradition." And they are really hanging on to the old covenant.

Now he discusses that in Chapter 5, Verse 11 through Chapter 6, Verse 6. And he says to those people, you had better not hang on to the old traditions. The old foundation concerning Messiah, the old covenant, the doctrine of washings, the laying on of hands, all those elements of Judaism that you're hanging on to, you better let go of.

And so there is the possibility of not coming to Christ through neglect and not coming to Christ through unbelief and not coming to Christ because you're hung up with some of your old ways and some of your old patterns and some of your old tradition, be it religious or not.

And I think too, a fourth warning comes in Chapter 10. Another reason why some people withhold from the act of committing themselves to Christ is, I guess, what you could call impatience. Impatience. You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, the best way to say it was they just never really see all that Christianity promises come to pass and so they question the legitimacy.

"Well, if it's really true, why doesn't God straighten out the world?" Right? "Well, if it's really true, why is everything the way it is?" And he discusses that in Chapter 10, Verse 25 through the end of the chapter.

There are some people who draw back to perdition because they look at Christianity and it doesn't seem to solve all their problems, in fact, they kind of surmise it may be more problematic being a Christian than not being a Christian and they get a little impatient with the claims of Christianity, and so he speaks about that in Chapter 10.

But then there is a fifth one, and that's the one in our text. There's a fifth thing that kept these people from coming to Christ and I guess you could call it fear. There was neglect and unbelief and tradition and the sense of impatience about why God didn't do everything that their God was supposed to do and then there was just plain fear.

You know what they saw when they looked at Christianity? They saw persecution, didn't they? Anybody living in the first century who took a very good look at Christianity saw persecution. He saw the fact that when a Jew became a Christian immediately got ostracized from his family. He saw that there was some real problems. He saw Christians who suffered an awful lot.

He saw Christians who went through all kinds of trials and all kinds of troubles and he figured, "Man, there's no use in getting into that kind of thing." And maybe he even attended the assembly when the preacher was preaching on the discipline of God and he heard the preacher say, "You know, now that you're a Christian, boy God's gonna work on you and he's gonna mold you and refine you and you're gonna be like gold in the fire and it isn't gonna be easy and it's gonna be tough and you're gonna have to get in the race and you're gonna have to run it with everything you've got and once in a while God's gonna throw something in your path that's gonna make you stretch your muscle a little bit and this Christian life isn't easy." And he said to himself, "Who needs it? I've got enough problems."

And so he figures that the whole price is a little too high. And so there's a sense of fear relative to the style of life that he understands as demanded by Christianity. And that fear element is behind the whole thrust of Chapter 12.

There were some who were afraid and they weren't even willing to get in the race. And so he says, "Come on, get in the race." What he means by that is become a believer. Become a Christian. Give your life to Jesus Christ. Sure you're gonna suffer a little he says. Remember last time in Verses 6 and following? But it isn't punishment, it's God's way of framing you and shaping you into His image.

And God wants to bring about; I love this, Verse 11, "The peaceable fruit of righteousness to those of you who are exercised by certain discipline." There's nothing to fear. Sure you may suffer a little bit but as Peter said, "After you've suffered a while, God will make you -" what? "- perfect."

Sure there'll be some trials James said, "But the trying of a faith worketh patience and when patience has its perfect work." See? So there is certainly some things that are gonna happen but listen, it's

like the Apostle Paul said that the pain of this life isn't worthy to be compared to the glories that shall be hereafter.

And so really all through the twelfth chapter he's trying to say to these people, "You don't have anything to fear." This isn't - when Christians have trouble and when Christians have problems, it isn't God being mad at them and it isn't God being angry with them and it isn't God punishing them. It's God lovingly correcting them to chase them back within the parameters of His will which are the parameters of great blessing.

And so there's nothing in the new covenant to be afraid of. You don't need to say, "Well, I don't want to become a Christian and then have to be responsible to God and have Him dogging my steps." Nothing to fear. He does it because he loves you, does it because you're His child.

Now having said that, he goes on in Verse 18, and I love this, he says, look, what have you got to be afraid of? Watch this, here's the whole thrust of the passage in one sentence, "What do you have to be afraid of? You're not approaching Sinai, you're approaching Mount Zion and that's a big difference."

He's saying to these Jewish people, "What are you fearing? You're not coming to Sinai, you're coming to Zion. You're not coming to the mountain of law that poured out fire and smoke and thunder. You're coming to the mountain of grace where all there is, is love and forgiveness. What do you have to be afraid of?"

You should be afraid not to come to Zion because the only place left to go is to Sinai and it isn't gonna be any nicer when you get there than it was when Moses and the children of Israel got there.

So the Holy Spirit has called to these people and said, "Don't let neglect keep you back. Don't let unbelief keep you back. Don't let tradition keep you back. Don't let your impatience keep you back." And He says finally, "Don't let fear keep you back. In fact you have nothing to be afraid of because you're not coming to Sinai, you're coming to Zion."

Now I want to follow this thought through the passage with you. You'll find this to be very exciting. Someday God is gonna judge, gonna judge everybody. "Appointed to men once to die and after that the judgment." God's gonna raise everybody, all to be judged.

There will be two standards for judgment, the Gospel and Law. Those who love the Lord, Jesus Christ will be judged by the Gospel and they will be forgiven, set free, and enter into Heaven. Those who have not the Gospel will have to be judged on the basis of their, what? Of their works. So they'll be brought to Mount Sinai and be condemned. It's a lot safer to run to Zion, that's his message, nothing to fear.

All right, let's look at the comparison that begins in Verse 18. He says, "Don't be afraid for you are not come under the mount -" and he means Sinai here, the mountain that the children of Israel first approached in the wilderness where God gave the law, remember? "You are not come to the mount that -" Actually, in the Greek, the mount that can be touched, in other words a physical mount, he's not saying that you can touch it because later on he says, "Nobody can touch it without being dead." But he means the physical mount.

You aren't coming under the physical mount that burned with fire, nor blackness, and darkness, and tempest. Now what that is, is a picture of Mount Sinai and Mount Sinai is a picture of the old covenant, which was a covenant of fear.

In the old covenant you either obeyed God, or else, basically. Now I realize there was grace, but that was basically the covenant. I mean when God gave the law to Moses, there wasn't a lot of birds flying around and little breezes through the trees and blue sky and "Isn't it lovely?" It was crash, bang, thunder, fire, smoke, lightening and so forth and smashing and crashing and God was letting them know what character this covenant had. It was a, "Please obey, or else" covenant.

And so he says you come to the mount that is physical, tangible, _____. It's a mount that you could touch in the sense that it's a physical mount. You're not coming to that mount.

Boy, just think back to that day. That was a day unequalled in Jewish history when God was really demonstrating His holiness. And God was demonstrating His justice and God was giving His law and He was saying, "This is my law." And the rugged heights of Sinai rocked with thunder and crackled with lightening and the mountain was literally on fire and God's presence descended on that mountain in fire and smoke and accompanying it was a tremendous earthquake that just shook the whole place.

You read Exodus 19, and we won't take time tonight, and you read Exodus 20 and you read the unbelievable things that occurred when God gave the law to that mountain.

There was no indication of any condescension, there was no indication of any forgiveness there, there was no indication of any grace, there was no indication of any relief from the requirements of the law. There was no pardon mentioned, there was no promise of grace mentioned. There was just a whole display of condemnation and death. Mount Sinai, fearful place.

In 2 Corinthians 3:7 Paul calls the old covenant "the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones." It was the ministration of death written into stones at Mount Sinai. God was there and He was there in an unbelievable outward demonstration of infinite holiness and justice and severity and terrible majesty on the one hand and there was man cowering and shaking and shivering in the

lowest condition of sin and misery and guilt and death. That is Sinai.

And in fact, even when it was going on, what were the children of Israel doing? Worshipping a golden calf. Sinai is condemnation. Notice again in Verse 18 that the mountain burned with fire. Fire is frequently in Scripture the symbol of divine wrath. In Deuteronomy 4:24 it says, "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire." In Deuteronomy 33:2 it declares, "From his right hand went forth a fiery law." That is a law to which was attached judgment and wrath.

Fire then speaks of the awful majesty of God. Of His inflexible judgment and the terror of His law that should strike the heart of everyone. But you see, the writer of Hebrews is saying to these people, "Why should you fear coming to Christ? You see, if you hold on to the only other alternative, look what you've got. You've got judgment and terror and vengeance and wrath. But if you come to Christ you come to the mountain of grace, Mount Zion."

Verse 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." There was a trumpet call at Sinai to assemble the people, a tremendous trumpet blast to assemble the people for judgment. There'll be another one in the future. Revelation Chapter 11, when God calls the world to judgment He'll blow another trumpet and call people to the terrible fury of ultimate judgment.

And so the trumpet blew and the people came and they heard the voice and they cried out that the words should not be spoken to them anymore. They didn't want to hear it anymore. It was more than they could bear, it was more than they could handle, it was more than they could take. They were stricken with terror in their hearts as they encamped below Sinai and it belched out its volcanic majesty and wrath.

As they looked up they saw the mount full of fire and smoke and underneath the ground shaking. It must have been something of what Paul thought in 2 Corinthians 5 when he said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

And so this is the thing that God wants to reinforce in the minds of His children, that He is an inflexible God of justice. When God deals with men He wants to shut them up to their sin. Read Romans 3, the end of Romans 3 simply says, the end of the first part, Verse 19, "So all the world stood guilty before God and every mouth was-" what? "-stopped." Nobody had any claim on righteousness or grace.

God gave the law to Israel. He didn't give it to them in Canaan, He didn't give it to them in Egypt, He gave it to them in the desert. He gave it to them in absolute isolation. He gave it to them in solitude so that they couldn't run and they couldn't hide and there wasn't anything to see and there wasn't anybody to turn to and there wasn't anyway to escape and there wasn't any shelter and He drew

them out into the middle of nowhere and He flat out had them wide open to face the reality of His wrath and there was nowhere else to go.

That's exactly what the law was intended to do. When God sets His designs toward the sinner, He takes that sinner in hand, He yanks him out of his hiding place, He drags him out into the solitariness of a desert wilderness and He exposes his sin and He compels him to face the just demands of the law and He reveals to him the terror of judgment and it is at that point in the life of a sinner that he turns to God.

Isaiah 28:17 says, "Judgment also will I lay to the line of righteousness and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." God says, "I'm gonna bring my judgment and I'm gonna lay it out like a plumb line and I'm gonna drive everybody right out of his hiding place to face that line of judgment."

And you know what the end of it is? In Isaiah 28:20, a few verses later, it says, "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." You know, when God's blast of judgment comes, you can't hide. The bed's too short, you can't get your feet hidden, the covers are too narrow, you can't get yourself covered up. You're bare before God. That's what Isaiah's saying.

And so Sinai was meant to paralyze the sinner, the sight of divine majesty to overwhelm him. Verse 20, "For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned." That last phrase is not in some manuscripts. And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Now listen, beloved. Moses was no stranger to God but even he shook from head to toe.

Beloved, the law of God, from the time it was given at Sinai, to the day in which it is preached today is always to do the same thing. It is to make the sinner shake in reality as he looks at judgment.

You see you can't preach grace and you can't preach love and you can't preach forgiveness unless there is judgment and justice and law and sin. If there's not that, then none of the other means anything.

You can't preach forgiveness without having something to be forgiven of so you have to preach law. People say, "Oh, you should just talk about love and not talk about sin and not talk about guilt and all those bad things." As I've said to you before about when I'm preaching I hope you feel worse, first, and then you'll feel better. You can't feel better about forgiveness until you know how rotten you are and how wonderful forgiveness is.

So God wants to shut every man up to the law and make them shake. And believe me God is a God of judgment. God is a God of wrath. God is a God of terrible, terrible vengeance against those who refuse. Every man who ever lived is gonna wind up at Sinai or Zion. Take your choice.

So he says to these people, "Hey, you've been to Sinai, you like it? Want to stay there? You have nothing to fear coming to Zion but you have a lot to fear if you hang on at Sinai." Listen; if you never come to Christ, you are stuck with Sinai. You will be judged on the basis on God's inviolable law and if you've ever broken it once, you will be damned.

That's the word of God. Better you should come to Mount Zion. Verse 22, but he says, "Look, in becoming a Christian you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God." Christians come not to a real mountain, we come to Mount Zion, which is sort of - I like to call it Grace Mountain.

Mount Zion is really not much to look at, I've been there. There's a monastery on Mount Zion, I've wandered all through its little halls. I've been to Mount Zion a few times. You hardly can find it. You ever heard of the Valley of Hinnom, the south part of Israel? That's sort of where Mount Zion is. There's a little gulley there. On the east part of Jerusalem, I mean, on the east part of Jerusalem we have HedronValley. HedronValley makes a little turn going toward Bethlehem in the south and becomes the Valley of Hinnom. And at the far end of the Valley of Hinnom was a place known as Gehenna, which was the city dump where the fire never went out and that was the term for Hell.

And so from Hinnom you go right straight up and there's a little ole hump; I mean you could throw a rock from the bottom to the top and that's Mount Zion, tremendous, you know? I got over there, "I've got to find Zion, where is it?" "Well, you see that little - over there? That's it." They said, "See that old bus going up that little grade? That's Mount Zion."

Oh, that was really kind of a disappointing thing, Mount Zion. Got kind of exciting just standing there but he says, "Look, Mount Zion symbolizes love, and Mount Zion symbolizes grace."

Look at Verse 22, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are written in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." We'll stop there.

Here is the Holy Spirit presenting how incomparably more excellent is the new covenant. Mount Zion represents grace and atonement and forgiveness because, watch this, Mount Zion is the symbol of God's love for a people.

Mount Zion, you remember, was once a Jebusite stronghold and the Jebusites were the ancient inhabitants of that area. But you remember David conquered the Jebusites? Yes, and in the seventh year of David's reign he made the Jebusites mount, Zion, which is right next to Mount Moriah, which is where the Temple Mount is, right there David made his throne and it became the religious center of the kingdom.

In fact, in 2 Samuel 6:2, it says they put the ark of God on Mount Zion and God says, "This is my place. This is my city. This is where you can come and you can sprinkle blood on the-" what? "-on the mercy seat." This is the mount of forgiveness. This is where it all changes, this little hill.

It says in 1 Kings 14, I think it's Verse 21, "Which God has chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there." God says, "This is my little mountain and here my ark is and here the priests can sprinkle the blood and here can be the place of my abode." And God, you remember, dwelt between the wings of the angels in the top of the ark. And that was God's place.

And God was saying, "Yeah, Sinai was terrible, and judgment was terrible but you can come to me here and find forgiveness." And so Zion became synonymous with Jerusalem and all through the Old Testament you see it used interchangeably. He'll talk about Zion or Jerusalem or Jerusalem or Zion and it's all the same thing.

And though the temple was later erected on Moriah, Zion is still God's favorite name for Jerusalem. In fact, it's still the Jews favorite name. And when you are a super avid pro nationalist Jew you are a Zionist, see? A special place, special name.

And in Psalm 48:2, God says, "The joy of the whole earth is mount Zion." And why? Because the city of the great king, God, is known in her palaces, watch this one, as a refuge. God, you see, set up his gracious place at Zion. God is not approachable at his law; God is not approachable at Sinai. God is approachable at Zion. And all He's simply saying here is, "You can't approach me on the terms of law but you could approach me on the terms of grace, forgiveness."

In Psalm 50, Verse 2 it says, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Psalm 132:13, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever. Here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

Later David said in Psalm 133:3, "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even eternal life." Are you getting the picture here? The earthly place of God's dwelling, Zion, symbolized an approachable God. You couldn't touch Him when He was spewing out His law. You couldn't approach Him on the basis of works. But you can approach Him at Zion because there He stands ready to forgive.

And so He says, "Come to Zion." And when we come to Christ we come to a spiritual Zion, a place of grace, God is approachable. In fact earlier in Hebrews He says we can come boldly, can't we? To his presence. By works, God is unapproachable. You march up to God with your works and you will find Sinai belching fire right back at you. You walk up to God and meet Him at the point of His grace, extended in Jesus Christ and you will find His arms open wide.

And so he says to these people, "What do you have to fear if you come to Christ?" In Christ the Mount is Zion and God is approachable. Now when you come to Zion, he says you get seven benefits. You ready for this? Just like an insurance policy, seven benefits.

Benefit number one, "You come", Verse 22, "to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." You know the first thing you get when you come really to Zion, you're coming to Christ and to come to Christ, you're coming to the cross. And when you come on the terms of God's act in Christ and when you come to God, not in your own works, not on your merit, you don't find somebody belching out the law, you find wonderful forgiveness because of Christ. You find God is approachable.

And it was always that God could be approached through the sacrificial system, right? Always through the sacrifice and ultimately the sacrifice of Christ. And so as you come to Zion, based on the sacrifice of Christ, God is approachable. And the first thing you receive is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You know what that is? Heaven. God says the first thing that happens when you come to me is you inherit Heaven.

You know Heaven's a great thing to think about, isn't it? You know, I sometimes start thinking about Heaven and what it's like. Ever since I was a little boy I used to do that. In fact, when I was a little boy I used to think Heaven was a bad place to go. It would get very boring. I used to think that.

But you know something? That was before I understood the fullness of love. Because finally when I matured and I began to love my wife in the fullness of what a mature love is, I came to the place where my company with her could be eternal and never boring. And I was able to transfer that over to my children. My company with them could be eternal and never boring. And then I was able to transfer that over to Christ as my love for Him began to grow and I began to realize Heaven isn't just a perfect place, Heaven is where Jesus is and that could never get boring. That's the first benefit of coming to the mountain of grace. Heaven.

Second, and we could say a lot more, that's what the preacher says when he's just run out of material. Second, we not only come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, but secondly to an innumerable company of angels. And literally the Greek says, "In festal gathering." We come to an angel party! Great. The Greek word means "a gathering for celebration." We get in on it.

You know they've been celebrating a lot of times for a lot of years up there. In fact, every time somebody gets saved they celebrate, don't they? There's joy in Heaven over one soul.

And we get in on the angel party, the innumerable angels are having a constant festival in the presence of God and all of a sudden we say, "Hi." I mean, just to be there, right? I mean, in that kind of classy company, wow. That's the second benefit, just kind of run around with the angels. Wow.

You know something? There were an innumerable number of angels at Mount Sinai. Remember that? Check Psalm 68:17 and Deuteronomy 33:2. But you know what the angels were there for? To make sure nobody came near. But when you come to Mount Zion, the mount of grace, you join the party with the angels.

Third benefit, you come to the general assembly and that - I should say that connects back with the angels. That literally means "the festal gathering." You come to the church then next, thirdly, to the church of the firstborn who are literally enrolled in Heaven.

Did you know that you've been enrolled in Heaven? You know how you go and enroll your kids in school before it's time? Beginning of summer you enroll your kid? So you've been enrolled in Heaven. When did you get enrolled? Let me tell you something, you got enrolled before the foundation of the world. Isn't that great?

Now roll call for you comes along whenever God designs it but you're enrolled there. Oh, yeah. They have a place for you. Jesus went away to prepare it. It's got your name on it and you know something? Jesus said, "All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me, I have lost-" what? "-none of them." Nobody takes anybody else's place. So it just waits for you.

But you're enrolled there and further than that it says you're gonna join the whole church of the first born. Who is the church of the first born? Well, who's the first born? Who's the protocast, who's the primary one, the preeminent one, the first born? Christ.

You will become a part of the whole gathering of eternal saints of the church. Won't it be really super when all the joint heirs are there together and everybody's perfect? I mean, I love Christians even now when they're not. Guess what? We'll be there with the whole family.

You know, I know some of you are like I am. The best time of your entire week is when you're here with the family. Or when you're fellowshipping with the family at home that love the Lord or when you go to a Bible study or when you meet somebody and you spend time in prayer or sharing in the Word, you just are so fulfilled. "Well," he says, "look, come on to Mount Zion and you can have it forever with all of them." You like to hang around Christian? They're all gonna be there.

And then fourth, and the fifth, you not only come to the heavenly Jerusalem, Heaven, to the party the angels are having, to the church of the first born who are all written in heaven. But you also, I love this; you come to God, the judge of all. Boy, that's so good. You can come to Heaven and enter into the presence of God.

Can you imagine what that meant to a Jew? You see to a Jew even to speak the name of God was something blasphemous. And so a Jew would never say God's name, never. He would never utter it out of his lips for fear God would judge him.

God was too holy. Why? Because the Jews saw only Sinai, only the thunder and the judgment. And he says, you see now you can approach the bench, God who is the judge of all. You see your attorney for your defense, the Lord, Jesus, the mediator, has made way for you and you can approach God. Not at Sinai, only at Zion.

I tell you, it's a wonderful thing to think about. When Jesus died, it says the veil of the temple was what? Torn in half. What was that symbolizing? No more barrier, come into the presence of God.

I talk to God every day. Do you? I say His name and someday I'll enter His presence. I'll see Him reveled in the image of Jesus Christ but it'll be no less his full presence. Oh, what a glorious thought, that an absolutely holy, righteous God could bring into His presence, John MacArthur. Incredible.

And not only that but He can make me worthy to be in His presence but imputing to me the very righteousness of His son, the Lord, Jesus Christ. I'm not just gonna go to Heaven and see if I can't arrange for an appointment. You know in John 14 it says, "In my Father's house are many mansion" the King James says, it's not mansion. That is not the Greek word. Heaven isn't gonna be a whole lot of houses like some kind of a tract. You know, the \$30,000-\$40,000 over here, the \$50,000-\$60,000 over here, the \$140,000 are over here, those are the missionaries, and so forth and so forth. They did without so long they're gonna get, wooooo, you know, big ones.

No, you see it isn't a, you know, nobody's gonna be thirteen blocks down and four blocks to the left. What it says in the Greek is, "In my Father's house." You can't have mansions in a house. "In my Father's house are many rooms." Is that good? I'm not gonna live fourteen blocks down and four blocks to the left, I'm in the Father's house! See? Right there with Him. So are you, big house. And so he says you can come to God. At Sinai you come to near to God, you die. At Zion, you come near to God, you live.

A fifth benefit, through the spirits of just men made perfect. Who would that be? Well we're already discussed the church? Who would be the only ones left? Old Testament tribulation saints, they're gonna be there. Their spirits were perfected. You say, "When were their spirits made perfect?" On

the cross. They're still waiting their resurrection bodies until the Second Coming of Christ but they have perfected in their spirits. And when you and I go to Heaven, their spirits will be there and we will meet with them and be with them and we will be one. And I'm telling you, I can't wait to see Abraham. So many things I want to ask David. I want to ask him one thing, "David, how could you love God so much and be such a crummy character?" I want to find out.

And I got - my son, he wants me to introduce him, first of all to Samson. So does yours, probably. And I want to talk to Noah about how it was to really be a preacher of righteousness. I mean, that's gonna be exciting. And I want to talk to Isaiah and find out how it was that he managed to get sawn in half. I want to meet all those people and talk and spend forever. Those are the kind of people I like to be with. You too? What do I have to fear coming to Christ?

Sixth, not only do we come to Heaven and to the angel party and to the church and to God and to all the Old Testament saints, well, in Verse 24, but we also come to whom? To Jesus, mediator of the new covenant.

I guess most of all that's it, isn't it? We come to Jesus. Jesus is His redemptive name. What did he say? Call His name Jesus. Why? For He shall save His people from their sins. That's His saving name. Yeshua, Savior, His redemptive name. So we come to the redeemer, the mediator of the new covenant, Jesus.

Boy, that's thrilling. See that's - you know when somebody's who's a Christian dies, they just really never experience death. They just go to sleep and all of the sudden they are face-to-face with Jesus Christ. Now you say, "How do you know that?" Paul said this, "It's nice to stay with you Philippians, and I actually could tell you I'm kind of torn about the thing. But frankly it's far better to depart and be with-" whom? "-Christ."

Sure, people ask me all the time, "Well, when you die do you just kind of hang around somewhere for a while?" Where? Where would you hang around? "Well, what happens?" "Far better," Paul says, "to depart and-," what, "-be with Christ." And Paul said, "absent from the body, present with the Lord." Great thought. To be with Jesus.

So to come to Christianity, to come to Christ, nothing to fear, is to come to grace, to come to peace, to come to safety, to come to worship, to come to fellowship, to come to God, to come to Jesus. And one more, to come to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

You know, old Abel, he did a good thing, Abel did. You know what he did? He made a good sacrifice, didn't he? A good one. A good sacrifice. God accepted that sacrifice. It was an excellent sacrifice. You wanna know something? Jesus made a better one and that's just what he means.

He says to those Jews, "You may think that the kind that Abel made is really where it's at but I want to introduce you to the mediator of a new covenant and the blood of sprinkling that speaks a lot better things than Abel."

Full, final, complete, total, forever forgiveness. Boy, that's great, isn't it? You ever seen that bumper sticker, "Christians aren't perfect, they're just forgiven"? That's true and I mean we are forgiven for everything. You want forgiveness? You want Jesus? You want to fellowship with all the saints of all the ages? You want to just go into the presence of God? You want to just be one of the big family of the church? You want to go to the eternal party the angels are throwing? Would you like to spend forever in Heaven? Don't be afraid, come to Christ. That's what He offers.

But on the other hand, if you don't, Verse 29 says, and I close with this, "For our God is a consuming fire." And we're right back at Sinai. Because if you don't come to Zion and accept Jesus Christ and accept God's grace, the only alternative is Sinai and you're thrown back on your works and you will be brought before a mountain of thunder and fire and smoke and condemned.

Let's pray. I speak with force and conviction because I know the word of God is so urgent at this point and sinner must be warned even as the writer of Hebrews warned again and again. All I can say to you is there's so much at Mount Zion, so much. Why would you go back to Sinai? Why would you have to be left with your works, which cannot stand before the righteousness and justice of God? Why would you not come to His grace? There's nothing to lose, everything to gain.

On the other hand at Sinai there's everything to lose. And so now for this moment in your heart, you approach God and you will one of two ways. You will either march into His presence and say, "Well, God here are my good works" and you will find Sinai.

Or you will march into the presence of God with great boldness and you will say, "I stand here in the grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ" and you will find that it is Zion and Heaven is yours and the choice is up to you.

And the act of faith in your heart, the commitment to Jesus Christ tonight can be the difference and that's between you and God.

Father, we pray right now that You and Your wonderful grace would reach down by Your spirit and touch the hearts of any here who do not yet know You, who have not yet come to You at the point of grace but stand at the point of law.

And, oh, Father, we pray that in your wonderful love You would draw them to Mount Zion to all that You have for them in Christ in whose wonderful name we pray. Amen.

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