Mount SINAI vs Mount ZION

Hebrews 12:18-24

3/2/97

**** Learn to appreciate the place you have come to as a N.T. believer!***

Be grateful for the contrast of two mountains:

I.Mount SINAI
A Mountain of Fear & Judgement (v.18-21)
(A reminder of God's Holy Law)

The O.T. Israelites came to a place...

A.Tangible on Earth (v.18a)

B.Blazing with Fire (v.18b)

C.Fearful with Darkness, Gloom, and Wind (v.18c)

D.Thundering with Dreadful Sound (v.19)

E.Unapproachable by Anyone or Anything (v.20)

F.Terrifying to the Sight (v.21)

II.Mount ZION
A Mountain of Grace & Salvation (v.22-24)
(A reminder of God's Loving Grace)

The N.T. Christian has come to a place...

A.Situated in Heaven (v.22a)

B.Occupied by Angels (v.22b)

C.Inherited by The Church (v.23a)

D.Enthroned by God (v.23b)

E.Enjoyed by Justified Souls (v.23c)

F.Mediated by Jesus Christ (v.24a)

G.Sprinkled by the Life-giving Blood (v.24b)



Mount SINAI vs Mount ZION



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12/29/04

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Be grateful for the contrast of two mountains:

I. Mount SINAI

A Mountain of _____ & _____ (v.18-21)

(A reminder of God's _____)

The O.T. Israelites came to a place...

A. _____ on _____ (v.18a)

B. _____ with _____ (v.18b)

C. _____with _____, Gloom, and Wind (v.18c)

D. _____ with _____ (v.19)

E. _____ by _____or_____ (v.20)

F. _____ to the _____(v.21)

II. Mount ZION

A Mountain of _____ & _____ (v.22-24)

(A reminder of God's _____)

The N.T. Christian has come to a place...

A. _____ in _____ (v.22a)

B. _____ by _____ (v.22b)

C. _____ by _____ (v.23a)

D. _____ by _____ (v.23b)

E. _____ by _____ (v.23c)

F. _____ by _____ (v.24a)

G. _____ by the _____ (v.24b)

Mount SINAI vs Mount ZION

Hebrews 12:18-24

3/2/97

Introduction:

The book of Hebrews is a book of contrasts, all designed to prove the superiority of Christ -

--The Old Testament prophets vs. Christ
--Moses' Law vs. Christ's grace
--The Old Testament Levitical priesthood vs. Christ's Melchizedek priesthood
--The Old Covenant vs. the new Covenant
--The animal blood of Old Testament sacrifices vs. Christ's once & for all sacrifice

Now in Hebrews 12, two mountains are contrasted (showing the Jews--to whom Hebrews is addressed--the folly of going back to Judaism).

Mount Sinai (also called Mt. Horeb) was the location where Moses received the Law (the Ten Commandments, etc.).

Mount Zion (also situated near a mountain range known as Moriah) was the location near where Christ died for the sin of the world.

--One mountain exposed sin; the other mountain exterminated sin.

--One place revealed sin; the other removed sin.

--One location sentenced man to doom, if the Law wasn't kept perfectly; the other saved man because no one could keep the Law.

--The Law (Mt. Sinai) was not evil, nor was it contradictory to grace (at Mt. Zion). To the contrary, it pointed to Zion and was a road map to lead us to see our need for grace.

SEE:Exod. 19:1-2, 10-25 -- God's warning not to touch Mt. Sinai
Exod. 20:1=17 -- The Ten Commandments are given
Exod. 20:18-22 -- The people fear the sight of God's presence at Mt. Sinai

V. 18

"For" - "for you see"; having exhorted us to be on the right track (12:12-17), and of the dreadful consequences if we are not (Esau serving as an example of such: Heb. 12:16-17), God now tells us that although we have come to Zion and not Sinai, He is still a God who is to be taken seriously (SEE: 12:25-29).

**** Learn to appreciate the place you have come to as a N.T. believer!***

Be grateful for the contrast of two mountains:

I.Mount SINAI
A Mountain of Fear & Judgement (v.18-21)
(A reminder of God's Holy Law)

The O.T. Israelites came to a place...

A.Tangible on Earth (v.18a)

"That might be touched" - Our mountain (Zion) is not one that is tangible, not one that can be experienced through the five senses. It is in Heaven not on earth; therefore, we *"walk by faith not sight."*

B.Blazing with Fire (v.18b)

"Burned with fire" - When God appeared, He would often be accompanied by fire.

EX: The burning bush
The pillar of fire
At Christ's return (*"In flaming fire"* - II Th. 1:8)
Note: Heb. 13:29

Fire obviously depicts His holy indignation against sin; it speaks of judgment. A reminder of the fires of hell and *gehenna* to come.

The Old Covenant shows man as worthy of God's hot wrath.

C.Fearful with Darkness, Gloom, and Wind (v.18c)

"Blackness, and darkness, and tempest" - The scene of Sinai was one of midnight darkness, gloom, and hurricane winds.

The Old Covenant Law did not bring brightness, joy, and peace.

D.Thundering with Dreadful Sound (v.19)

"The sound of a trumpet" - the trumpet was to announce God's presence (as it will at Christ's second coming - I Cor. 15; I Th. 4).

When the trumpet of Sinai sounded, only Moses could go up (Exod. 19:20); when the trumpet of Christ's return to bring us to Zion sounds, all in Christ shall go up.

"The voice of words" - including a summons to Moses to come up (Exod. 19:19, 20).

The voice of God was so awesome, so powerful, so loud (Ex: *"The sound of many waters"* - Rev. 1:15) that the people begged that Moses mediate the revelation given so that they would not have to hear God directly.

E.<u>Unapproachable</u> by <u>Anyone or Anything</u> (v.20)

Nothing, not even an animal was to touch Mt. Sinai when God appeared there.

The Old Covenant Law did not make provision for man to boldly approach God (human, priestly mediation was necessary; now because of Christ, we have such access - Heb. 4:16, 10:19).

F.<u>Terrifying</u> to the <u>Sight</u> (v.21)

Even Moses' heart was gripped with utter terror at the Lord's presence; even Moses shuddered in fear.

II.Mount ZION
A Mountain of <u>Grace</u> & <u>Salvation</u> (v.22-24)
(A reminder of God's <u>Loving Grace</u>)

V. 22

"But ye" - the New Testament believer, on contrast to the Old Testament Israelite at Sinai.

The N.T. Christian has come to a place...

A.<u>Situated</u> in <u>Heaven</u> (v.22a)

"Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion" (Ps. 9:11).

"The heavenly Jerusalem" - not an earthly mountain, as Sinai, but a mountain from Heaven (Rev. 21:2), which will descend to earth (perhaps hovering over the earth) during the Millennium (Rev. 21:9-22:5).

Rev. 21:2 - *"And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

B.<u>Occupied</u> by <u>Angels</u> (v.22b)

We should not worship angels (Col. 2:18); rather, we worship <u>with</u> angels (Rev. 19:10) (MacArthur, p. 415).

Angels, according to Hebrews, are *"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"* (Heb. 1:14).

C.<u>Inherited</u> by <u>The Church</u> (v.23a)

"The general assembly" - speaking of all the saints collectively who will be part of that grand gathering in Heaven.

"The church" - singular. There is only one; and it is not a denomination, nor a building; it is all true believers who will collectively gather in Heaven.

"Church of the firstborn" - The firstborn speaks of privilege, high rank, honor, preeminence. We have the privileges of sonship, yea, the privileges of the eldest son. The birth right is ours!

The word is plural (lit. "firstborn ones"), speaking of people, not Christ (who is the firstborn [preeminent One] over all creation - Col. 1:15-18).

"Written in heaven" - The fact that our names are written in Heaven is something that:

1)Occurred before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8)

2)Is never to be removed (Rev. 3:5)

3)Is a truth to cause rejoicing (Lk. 10:20)

The most dreaded situation one could face would be to not have his name written there - Rev. 20:15).

D.Enthroned by God (v.23b)

"To God the Judge of all" - Because of Christ, the Judge has declared us as free of charges against us. If He has declared us righteous, *"who is he that condemeth?"* (SEE: Rom. 8:31-35a).

E.Enjoyed by Justified Souls (v.23c)

"The spirits" - the spirits of the saved go immediately to Heaven at death (cp. II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Acts 7:59; Eccl. 12:7; Rev. 6:9).

"Just men" - Righteous ones

"Made perfect" - made completely perfect forever (Heb. 10:14).

The spiritual perfection we have is not through self-effort (works); it is a work of God (NOTE: the passive voice).

F.Mediated by Jesus Christ (v.24a)

"Mediator of the New Covenant" - The Old Covenant had many priests mediating; and one High Priest to mediate.

They would offer a blood sacrifice to depict how Christ would shed His blood.

"<u>The</u> mediator" - There is only <u>one</u> "go between," only one in between God and men (I Tim. 2:5) (saints and other intermediaries are null and void).

G.<u>Sprinkled</u> by the <u>Life-giving Blood</u> (v.24b)

Abel's blood called out from the ground for justice (just as the Law does); however, Christ's blood calls out for mercy and grace. *"Father, forgive them."*

The murder of Abel cried out to God for vengeance, whereas the crucifixion of Christ cries out for mercy and forgiveness.

Conclusion:

***If you are <u>not</u> saved, you must realize that the Law cannot save you.**

1)The Law was given to make sinners aware of their sin
(Rom. 3:20 - *"Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin")*

2)The Law was given to teach us our need for Christ
(Ga. 3:24 - *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith")*

"The Law is God's great mirror. When we look into it, we see ourselves as we really are -- immeasurably short of God's standard of righteousness" (MacArthur, p. 412).

No one will be justified in God's sight by keeping the Law because <u>no one has ever kept the Law</u>!

Ps. 143:2 - "And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Why can't an unsaved person keep God's commandments? He doesn't have the nature to do so. No inner ability.

ILLUS: of a lemon tree only producing sour lemons. You can pull off all the lemons and stick sweet, juicy oranges in their place; you may fool some into thinking you have an orange tree, but in reality all you have is a lemon tree with dead oranges on it. You have not changed the nature of the tree ("...a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil

fruit" - Mt. 7:17).

Our human nature is sour. Often we don't like it, but nothing we try (such as getting rid of bad habits) can change our nature. Only Christ can (II Cor. 5:17).

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

The Law was never intended to justify. Rather, God gave man His Law for 2 purposes:

1)To restrain sin - I Tim. 1:9-10

2)To demonstrate depravity

The O.T. Law gives man a "knowledge" (lit. "full knowledge" - direct awareness or deep consciousness) of his sin.

The Law was given to show us our transgressions (Ga. 3:19). The Law wasn't given to show you how good you are, but how bad you are.

It was an instructor or "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Ga. 3:24).

The Law taught man his inability to be self-righteous. Therefore, man must throw himself upon the mercy and grace of God.

All works religions are settled at Mt. Sinai. (EX: Seventh Day Adventism and other cults which trust their law-keeping to gain them access into Heaven).

ILLUS: Mt. Sinai Hospital is actually an unfitting name for a place which is to provide healing; for Mt. Sinai did not heal, it killed!

"While the Law was being given on Mt. Sinai, 3,000 people defied it and died (Exod. 32). When God poured out His grace at Pentecost, 3,000 people trusted Christ and received eternal life" (James Dersham, RBP, p. 87).

Sinai is closed to all; Zion's gates are open to all who believe.

Sinai is the mountain of Darkness, but Zion - light (Ps. 50:2). Sinai, the mountain of bondage; Zion, the mountain of freedom (Gal. 4:25-26, 31) (MacArthur, p. 414).

***If you are saved, you should show a life of gratitude for what God did for you.**

We must understand Mt. Sinai, before we will appreciate Mt. Zion.

Note the exhortation of Heb. 12:28 - *"Let us have grace"* - A heart of thanks or gratitude.

People need a balanced perspective of God (all must see His holiness to appreciate His grace; all must fear His wrath before they will flee to His refuge; all must tremble before His word regarding condemnation before the truly trust His Word regarding justification).

Many Americans "have it so good one earth, that they don't think much about Heaven."

Where is your tent pitched? At Sinai or Zion?

SONG: Psalm 48:1-2.

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aware of their sin

(Rom. 3:20 - *"Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for <u>by the law is the knowledge of sin</u>")*

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