

Hebrews 12:18-24

Here we have a contrast between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion. It is the same type of analogy as used in Galatians 4:21-31 which contrasts Sarah and Hagar and Isaac and Ishmael. The contrast is between a works based salvation and a faith based (grace) salvation. This is part of the warning to professing "believers," and contrasts the judgements (5 of them) that professing "believers" face with the blessings (8 of them) that possessing (true) believers have.

MOUNT SINAI

- 18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,**
19 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:

Believers have **not come** to Mt. Sinai and the 5 judgments that it speaks of.

1) **Might be touched** (touching the mountain brings death)

Exodus 19: 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:
 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

Mount Sinai brings death. It is where Moses received the Law.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
 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) **Burned with fire** - Deuteronomy 4:11, 24; 5:4-5

11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.
 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.
 4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,
 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

Fire is used in the giving of the Law to speak of God's anger with those who follow after other gods.

3) **Blackness and darkness and tempest** - Deuteronomy 5:22

22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

Blackness and Darkness - "The Greek words 'blackness' (*gnophos*), and 'darkness' (*zophos*) signifying half-darkness, gloom, nebulousness, as the darkness of evening or the gathering gloom of death. It is a darkness which does not entirely conceal color."

Kenneth Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, Hebrews, pg. 227.

Tempest - The word 'tempest' is *thuella* 'a sudden storm, a tempest, a whirlwind.' It comes from *thuein* 'to boil or foam.' It is a brief, violent, sudden, destructive blast, sometimes working upward and carrying objects into the upper air." Wuest's Word Studies, Hebrews, pg. 227.

Unbelievers are either in total denial ("blackness") of Jesus and the gospel or have some sort of "darkness" or "nebulous" understanding. They either deny Jesus or have an unbiblical understanding of Jesus and the gospel and have only judgment, "tempest," to look forward to.

4) **Sound of a trumpet** - Exodus 19:16, 19

16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

Trumpet speaks of authority and warning. Think of the 7 trumpet judgments of Revelation.

5) **Voice of words...that the word should not be spoken to them any more** - Deuteronomy 5:24-25

24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.

The voice that no one should want to hear is that of Jesus sending them to the Lake of Fire.

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

20 (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 dart:

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

The people could not endure what they saw - any contact with the mountain would bring death even for an animal - Exodus 19:12-13.

Moses was terribly frightened by what he saw - Deuteronomy 9:19.

"For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also."

The anger of the Lord is not trivial, but very real. In the previous warning passage it is stated:

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Hebrews 10:31.

The later scripture refers to the commandments of God as the ministry of death - 2 Corinthians 3:1-10.

"...the letter kills..." vs. 6.

"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones..." vs. 7.

"...the ministration of condemnation..." vs. 9

All who trust in the Law are under a curse - Galatians 3:10.

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Galatians 3:10.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

MOUNT ZION

- 22 **But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,**
23 **To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,**
24 **And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.**

As believers we "are come to" no less than 8 blessings from God:

- 1) **To Mount Zion** - Zion pictures grace in this passage (e.g. the allegory in Galatians 4 also uses Zion [Jerusalem] as a picture of grace)
- Psalm 53:6 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of **Zion**! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.
- Psalm 74:2 Remember thy congregation, *which* thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount **Zion**, wherein thou hast dwelt.
- Psalm 76:1-2 In Judah *is* God known: his name *is* great in Israel. (2) In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in **Zion**.
- Psalm 128:5 The LORD shall bless thee out of **Zion**: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
- Isaiah 62:11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of **Zion**, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

2) **the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**

Positionally we are in the Kingdom now

- Colossians 1:12-13 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:
- Ephesians 2:5-6 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Practically we will be in the eternal Kingdom in the future

Hebrews 11:10-16 -

- 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

"Both the words 'city' and 'foundations' are preceded by the definite article in the Greek text. Abraham looked for the city which had foundations. It was a particular city with particular foundations. He was looking for the heavenly Jerusalem."

Kenneth Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, pg. 202

- John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.
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.

3) **To an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly**

We will be in the presence of angels in a mass gathering with the angels. This is time of rejoicing and worship.

assembly - πανηγυρις pan-ay'-goo-ris

Meaning: 1) a festal gathering of the whole people to celebrate public games or other solemnities
2) a public festal assembly

4) **To the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**

Church is the word "ekklesia" meaning "called out ones" and speaks of Church age believers, the Church.

church of the firstborn - firstborn = πρωτοτοκος pro-tot-ok'-os - meaning position not chronological sequence

Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Psalm 89:27 Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

God will make David His "firstborn" - (David was the youngest son, 1 Samuel 16:1-13)

Jeremiah 31:9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Ephraim is called the "firstborn" even though he was the second child of Joseph, Genesis 41:51-52:

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction

In both Psalm 69:27 and Jeremiah 31:9 "firstborn" is translated with the Greek word *protokos in the Septuagint*.

Being part of the church is SO MUCH BETTER than being part of Israel and being under the Mosaic Covenant

written in heaven - written απογραφω ap-og-raf'-o

Meaning: 1) to write off, copy (from some pattern) 2) to enter in a register or records 2a) specifically to enter in public records the names of men, their property and income

The only other time this word is used in the later Scripture (N.T.) is in Luke 2:1, 3, 5 where it is translated *taxed* - "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," Luke 2:1.

This is a promise of eternal security - Luke 10:20

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven," Luke 10:20.

written γραφω graf'-o

5) **God the Judge of all**

God is the Judge of all but there is no fear for believers - John 5:24; 1 John 4:15, 17

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," John 5:24.

1 John 4:

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

6) **Spirits of just men made perfect**

This group is distinct from the church which is point 4. This speaks of people who have been saved and are now in heaven (likely pre-Church age believers). They don't have their sinful body; they have been justified; and they are perfect, but they are not in their resurrected bodies yet.

7) **Jesus mediator of the new covenant**

The only mediator is Jesus - 1 Timothy 2:5-6

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time

8) **To the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.**

The "blood of sprinkling" refers to the blood of Jesus as better (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19) than the blood that Abel offered which typified the need of blood for salvation.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Ephesians 1:7.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

1 Peter 1:18-19

The Old Covenant (Mosaic Law) and the New Covenant (grace through the Messiah) stand in stark contrast to each other. In the midst of this warning passage the certainty of God's judgment for those who embrace the Mosaic Covenant versus the certainty of God's blessings for those who embrace Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, pleads with all to reject any system of works for salvation and embrace the salvation of grace through Jesus.