

- Church Web Site

www.tryonchurchofchrist.com

All sermons are posted here
plus additional resources



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- You are familiar with the phrase:
 - ***“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,”***
- The author of Hebrews gives a rather pessimistic take on history and the legacy of those that have gone before.

- **Chapter 11**

is the much beloved

Faith Hall of Fame,

- Here the author list

heroes from

Israel's history

- Encouraging believers

to emulate their example

in their own lives.

- In chapter 12, history is meant to serve as a different kind of motivation.
- History is now listed as something to learn from and not repeat.

- The author makes the following comparisons:

- Between a

tangible Mount Sinai

and the

intangible Mount Zion

(**12:18–24**)

- Between
a group of listeners
at Mount Sinai
- And a group of
listeners
at Mount Zion
(12:19, 12:25).

- Between a heavenly warning and an earthly warning. (12:25).

- Between
the shaking of
things on earth
and the shaking of
things in heaven.
(12:26).

- Between that which is shakeable and that which is unshakeable (12:27–28).

- The reference to **Esau** **in Hebrews 12:16** provides an **important framework** for the chapter.

- The author describes him as both:
 - **A fornicator**
 - **An unclean person.**

- It is the author's depiction of Esau as fundamentally **faithless** that proves most important for interpreting **Hebrews 12:18–29.**

- **Esau**

sold his own rights

as a firstborn

for a single meal.

- This choice,
made during a time of
great physical need,

proved disastrous

and

irreversible

(**Hebrews 12:17**).

- Why include this warning about becoming like **Esau**.
- It is the contrast between the **tangible** and **the intangible**.

- Esau couldn't see past his nose .

- He did not appreciate the true gift of his intangible birthright.

- Do not be like Esau who squandered his birthright and could not undo **the consequences** (**Hebrews 12:15–17**).

- Likewise, the author speaks of two mountains:

- **Mt. Sinai**

- **Mt. Zion.**

(Hebrews 12:18-24)

- Esau was a man who did not look for God's blessings after death.
- Esau was a man who did not believe in what he could not see.
- Many are like that today. ¹⁷

- The spiritual blessings which accompanied the birthright of the firstborn were

“unseen”

future promises;

- The bowl of stew was something he could

see, smell, taste.

- Esau’s immorality was evidence of

his desire for present physical pleasure,

as opposed to

delayed divine blessings.

- So what does this have to do with the author contrasting Mount Sinai and Mount Zion?

- Mount Sinai
is something
like Jacob's stew,
- Mount Zion
is like Esau's birthright.
- The birthright
and its blessings
were vastly better,
- But these were future
and as yet
“unseen.”

- The revelation of God to Israel at Mount Sinai was **seen, heard, felt.**
- The law that was given set forth **God's conditions** for Israel's enjoyment of an earthly kingdom.

- Judaism clung to Sinai, Moses, and the Old Covenant because it seemed to offer a more immediate (**albeit inferior**) and more visible kingdom.

- Mount Zion
represents
a spiritual city
“*the heavenly*
Jerusalem,”
and thus a
spiritual kingdom.

- **Mount Zion**

represents all
that Christians hope for
in the next life
and that for which they
are willing to make
great sacrifices
in this life.

- Just as Esau had to make a choice between a bowl of stew and God's promised blessings.

- So the readers of the Hebrew letter must choose between an earthly kingdom (Mount Sinai).
- Or God's promised eternal kingdom (Mount Zion).

- This passage is a contrast between the **old** and the **new**.

- The old law
on Mount Sinai

- And
the new law
which Jesus gave.
(**Mount Zion**)

- In the giving of the law at Mount Sinai three things are stressed.
- (# 1) The sheer majesty of God.
 - (# 2) The absolute unapproachability of God.
- (# 3) The sheer terror of God.

- **Hebrews 12:18** (GNB)

You have not come, as the people of Israel came, to what you can feel, to Mount Sinai with its blazing fire, the darkness and the gloom, the storm,

- **12:19** *the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of a voice. When the people heard the voice, they begged not to hear another word,*
- **12:20** *because they could not bear the order which said, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."*
- **12:21** *The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling and afraid!"*

- Of special significance is the phrase:
 - ***"If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."***
(Hebrews 12:20)
- The reality behind this command **is the holiness of God.**
 - He is unapproachable **by sinful men.**

- He is so holy that even animals cannot get too close, or they must be put to death.
- So far as sin is concerned, animals are innocent.
 - But if God requires that innocent animals be put to death for encroaching on God's sacred space,
- Then what does this imply for sinful men?

- The sound of God's voice was so terrifying that the people did not wish to hear it again and so entreated God to speak only to Moses who would convey to them the message of the Father (**Hebrews 12:22; Exodus 20:18ff**)³²

- The “[sound of the trumpet](#)” is of special interest
- Since a trumpet sound is associated with:
 - The final judgment
 - The resurrection of the dead (**1 Corinthians 15:52**).
 - Also, the seven angels with seven trumpets are a feature of John's vision of the last things. (**Revelation 8:2**)

- The events at Mount Sinai **were intended to inspire** a **reverence** and **awe** for God that would **encourage obedience** to His commands.
- **So what is it about**
Mount Sinai
that our author wants us to grasp?

- One could not ask for more impressive or substantial proof, not only of God's existence, but of His majesty, power, holiness.

- In spite these
awesome
manifestations
of God's
power and holiness
did not produce
faith or obedience.

- As evidenced by the parting of the Red Sea.
- The grand display of His awesome holiness at Mount Sinai.
- The Israelites still murmured and grumbled and rebelled against God.

- While they were still at the base of Mount Sinai and Moses was still on the mountain, they had Aaron fashion a golden calf, which they worshiped like the heathen's of Egypt.
(Exodus 32).

- But to the Christian
there has come
the new covenant
and
a new relationship
with God.

- **Hebrews 12:21**

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

- **12:22** *But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,*

- **12:23** *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,*

- The Hebrew Christians are told that they have not come to Mount Sinai;
- They have come to Mount Zion.
(Isaiah 2:3)

- **22** *But you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the assembly*
- **23** *and congregation of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous, who have been made perfect,*
 - **24** *and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than Abel's does*
(**Hebrews 12:22-24**)

- Our primary focus and desire should be to dwell in the presence of our Lord.

- And thus we read that the heavenly Jerusalem (**Hebrews 12:22**)

is the place where we will dwell in the presence of

God the Father
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit.

- The Father is referred to as **“*the Judge of all.*”**
(Hebrews 12:23)
- The revelation of God **at Mount Sinai**
highlighted His holiness,
- Which prompted the Israelites **to shrink back in fear.**

- **At Mount Zion,**
God is present as
well.

- And yet men
do not
shrink away in fear.

- **Why is this?**

- Why is this?
- The Father's wrath has been satisfied by the sacrifice of the Son.
 - *And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than Abel's does (Hebrews 12:24).*

- As we conclude this lesson, let me suggest a few major themes from our text and some of their implications.

- First,
seeing isn't
necessarily
believing,
- But believing
is seeing.

- Those who believed God's promises did so on the basis of God's Word,
- Faith is not based upon sight, but it gives us sight.
 - Sight to see the unseen.
(2 Cor. 5:7)

- Second,
the spectacular
and
sensational
do not strengthen
our faith
and produce endurance
as much as
suffering does.
- Let us remember
Job and Joseph.

- That is why we are exhorted **to endure afflictions** as **divine discipline.**

- **It is suffering** that deepens and enriches **our faith,** thus producing endurance: **(Hebrews 12:7)**

- Third,
being certain of
an “unshakable” kingdom
- Gives Christians the
basis for an
unshakable faith,
even in the midst of
difficult days.

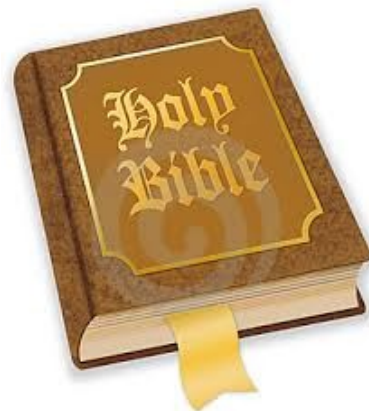
- What better reason to persevere, knowing that this life is short
 - And that Mount Zion is eternal and unshakable?

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



- 01-08-2023 Tryon, NC

-