

WELCOME TO MOUNT ZION

Introduction: I'd originally planned on preaching about the role of judgement in a Christians life, but I found myself working outside on a porch during storms. As I listened to some spiritual songs, watched the grey clouds and lightning, and heard it's thunder . . . the power and glory of God was at the forefront of my mind. It was a beautiful scene, but also terrifying. I was already thinking about how I'd share this moment with you. Then it hit me - "Lord, don't give me any more of a story to tell. I don't want to be a lightning strike survivor." I wasn't able to capture a good lightning strike that day (every time I put my camera down one came!), but I did get this one recently. Not only is the lightning beautiful, but the clouds hid the brilliant light. It's as if the Lord's Throne sat behind it - totally covered - but a light I've never been in the presence of. What an awesome God we serve.

There's a passage I'd like to consider for a few minutes this morning - it speaks of two mountains (ones you're very familiar with). It reminds us, as God's children and bible students, of who we belong to and what we've come into by the grace of God.

Before we come to Mount Zion, we must remember Mount Sinai. Like lightning, it's beautiful from a distance, but up close it's terrifying. This next passage is the same way - you're disconnected as a gentile living 3500 years after the Law was given on Mount Sinai. The scene may seem cool to read about, but it's wasn't cool for those present.

Hebrews 12:18-21 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

- It's a terrifying scene. [Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 5:22-30](#)

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

- Mount Zion was connected to Jerusalem - the city that King David took. [2 Samuel 5:6-7](#), "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, 'You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off' - thinking, 'David cannot come in here.' Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David."

- Zion also became associated with the temple hill, but more importantly, was associated with Jehovah. It was His mountain: [Psalm 2:6](#) "As for Me, I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill." [Psalm 74:2](#), "Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your heritage!"

Remember Mount Zion, where You have dwelt." **Psalm 76:2**, "His abode has been established in Salem, His dwelling place in Zion." **Psalm 99:9**, "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy!" **Psalm 48:1-3 (NIV)**, "Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; He has shown Himself to be her fortress."

- Side note: "The Greeks believed in their storytelling that the gods lived on Mt Olympus. The Canaanites believed their gods lived on Mt Zaphon. The Hebrews believed in Mt Zion."
- In the New Testament it's clearly associated with God's people.
 - **John 12:14-15**, "And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!'"
 - **1 Peter 2:6**, "For it stands in Scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.'"
 - **Revelation 14:1**, "Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads."
- It's also tied to the New Covenant and its blessings.
 - **Galatians 4:21-26**, "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother."
- However, we've not come to the full picture of this just yet. We're not yet with, for example, the heavenly host who are waiting to see you as well and celebrate with you!

Hebrews 12:23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

- Yes, your name is in the book of life. Not only are you enjoying this now, but as Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:4**, "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.". Not only are we part of the Kingdom now, but we're recorded, protected and known in heaven and waiting for a new heavens and new earth.
- Yes, those who have passed before are there as well - what a sweet reunion that will be, but what's sandwiched in between is what's most important.
- God. Again, we've not come to Him yet, but we will. What is heaven without Him? There's no shame in wanting to see others and find final rest, but this is our main aim - to be with

Him. So many so called descriptions of heaven from people who have claimed to have traveled there, yet so many times that seem to leave out the main focal point - God Himself.

Hebrews 12:24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

- This whole letter centered around Jesus - He would be the one to draw back those who were leaving the faith or tempted to leave. Without Him there would be no joy in Mount Zion - because everyone on her hills would be lost.
- Both Abel and Jesus approached God by faith and we're killed due to their righteous deeds by evil people. Abel was the first to go this way and Christ was the last. However, Jesus was more innocent than Abel. And while Abel's blood cries for justice - Christ's blood justifies. His blood screams out, "grace and mercy." Abel's blood was spilled, yes, but Jesus' was spilled for us to redeem us all.

Hebrews 12:25-27 See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject Him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken - that is, things that have been made - in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

- Deuteronomy 18:15-19
- 2 Peter 3:8-13

Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

- Romans 12:1-2