

Beulah Baptist Church
Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor

Sunday School Lesson
September 25, 2022
Rev. Mark A. Seals, M.Div., Instructor/Teacher

Lesson—Faith Inspires Gratitude

Text: Hebrews 12:18-29

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. **KNOW** the meaning of God's forgiveness and promise of eternal life;
2. **EXPLORE** our fears about death and assurances of God's grace and
3. **REPENT** for sometimes rejecting God's grace.

Key Verse— *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Hebrews 12:28, KJV)*

Lesson Song of Praise and Worship: *"Thank you Master" ...by Donny Hathaway*

II. People Places and Times

Mosaic Covenant. The Pentateuch (first five books of Old Testament) record the conditions and requirements of the Mosaic Covenant, which was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai for God's people, the Israelites. The Mosaic Covenant was conditional based on Israel fulfilling its part of the covenant.

New Covenant. The New Covenant is based on Jesus Christ, the Mediator, who died for the sins of all humanity. Jesus established the New Covenant through His own death and commissioned His disciples and believers to share the Good News about the kingdom of God. Believers will dwell with God in the heavenly city of God, Mount Zion (Sion).

Mount Zion. This is a reference to the heavenly city of God and believers who will dwell with Him. The mountain is available through the blood of Jesus. It is a celebration of the Holy One where angels, believers, and righteous people dwell.

Background

The number of Jewish Christians grew, but the church communities endured physical and social persecution from the Jews and Romans. Many people were arrested and ostracized because of their faith, and some suffered physically and experienced loss of their property because of their belief. The writer of Hebrews expressed the superiority of Christianity and urged believers to keep their eyes on Jesus.

As the believers at the newborn church struggled, disciples who had victoriously run the race gazed at the struggling believers. The writer urged them not to be discouraged by struggles that perfect believers. He also urged them to be very careful and guard against defiling themselves and selling their birthrights, which would result in losing the promises of God. We

must remember our actions have lasting consequences. Although we repent and seek God's forgiveness, we cannot eliminate the consequences of sin.

III. The Lesson At-A-Glance...

1. The Two Mountains: Sinai and Zion (The Heavenly City) (Hebrews 12:18–21)
2. The Heavenly City (Zion or Sion) (vv. 22–23)
3. The Heavenly City and Jesus, the Mediator (v. 24)
4. Criteria for Entering the Heavenly City (vv. 25–26)
5. Preparing for the Heavenly City (vv. 27–29)

V. In Depth with More Light on the Text

1. The Two Mountains: Sinai and Zion (The Heavenly City) (Hebrews 12:18–21) The writer of Hebrews compares the Mosaic Covenant with the New Covenant by examining two mountains: Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. God gave the Law to the Israelites at Mount Sinai with a majestic display of “thunderings, and the lightnings ... they (the people) removed (themselves) and stood afar off” (Exodus 20:18). The people came before God with fear and trembling at Mount Sinai. They feared that speaking directly to God would lead to death. In contrast, through a New Covenant, Christian believers joyfully approached God through the blood of Jesus on Mount Zion (Sion), which is the Heavenly City of God.

2. The Heavenly City Zion (or Sion) (vv. 22–23) Ancient custom approved special treatment for the firstborn son, who received a father's blessings, which was a double portion. The firstborn son received special blessings from his earthly father. The heirs in heaven are believers, who are justified and made perfect because they are in heaven, they are “just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23). Through Christ, believers will inherit the Kingdom: “Ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:24). We have the promise of eternal life, our inheritance. By faith, believers' names are recorded in heaven; they are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

3. The Heavenly City and Jesus, the Mediator (v. 24) Jesus Christ is the mediator or “go-between” uniting two parties: God and sinful humanity. Moses was the mediator of the Mosaic Covenant; he was the liaison between God and the Israelites. Moses gave the Israelites God's Law, instruction, and the obligations for the covenant between God and the Israelites. In the same vein, Jesus is the mediator for the New Covenant that was established through His sacrificial death on the Cross.

4. Criteria for Entering the Heavenly City (vv. 25–26) Jesus Christ speaks to humanity and He offers forgiveness through God's grace and mercy. Because we have more knowledge of Christ and the promise of eternal life, “If we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” we will be judged for our unbelief (Hebrews 12:25). Therefore, our faith in God should inspire our gratitude for all that He's done for us.

5. Preparing for the Heavenly City (vv. 27–29) The writer of Hebrews explains that temporary things will be shaken and removed when Christ returns, while the eternal things will not be moved. The “things which cannot be shaken may remain”; they are eternal (Hebrews 12:27). Only God's kingdom will last.

Liberating Lesson— See Sunday School Book...
Application for Activation— See Sunday School Book...
Discuss the Meaning

Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration (from the Application for Activation)?

1. What have we learned (😊 Charlie Brown)?
2. What do you consistently show God gratitude for?

Vocabulary-New Words

A. Voice (Hebrews 12:19, 26) phone (Gk.)—A sound; a tone; speech; the sound of uttered words.

B. Mediator (v. 24) mesites (Gk.)—One who intervenes between two others to restore peace and friendship.

Daily Bible Readings For the Week of September 19th

MONDAY

Listening to the Voice of Warning (Ezekiel 33:1–9)

TUESDAY

Listening to the Spirit (Revelation 3:1–13)

WEDNESDAY

Anticipating a Better Covenant (Hebrews 8:1–7)

THURSDAY

Giving Thanks for the Faithful (2 Thessalonians 1:1–7)

FRIDAY

Loving with God’s Kind of Love (Matthew 5:43–48)

SATURDAY

Pursuing Peace and Holiness (Hebrews 12:12–17)

SUNDAY

Offering Acceptable Worship (Hebrews 12:18–29)