

Lesson Text

Hebrews 12:14, 15, 18-29 (NIV)

¹⁴ Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

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¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.” ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵ See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” ²⁷ The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.”

Today’s Lesson Aims

- **Learning Fact:** To state the meaning and the significance of Christ as Mediator.
- **Biblical Principle:** To explain how and why the believers’ approach to God in the Old Testament era differs from the believers’ approach to Him in the New.
- **Daily Application:** To come boldly (with reverence) to the throne of God’s grace.

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
November 19, 2017

“Mediator of the New Covenant”

Lesson Text:
Hebrews 12:14-15,
18-29

Background Scripture:
Hebrews 12:14-15, 18-
29; Psalm 66

Devotional Reading:
Psalm 66

INTRODUCTION

In the Presence of Greatness

At one time or another, we wonder what it would be like to meet a great figure of the past. What would it be like to have breakfast with Abraham Lincoln during America's Civil War? How would we react in the presence of Winston Churchill or Catherine the Great?

Chances are, such meetings would not be as pleasant as we would like them to be! After all, why would such leaders even acknowledge us? The only way such a meeting could happen (aside from solving the issue of time travel!) is if someone were to take us into the presence of such greatness.

At Mount Sinai to approach God was forbidden. To that scenario, we contrast the era of the new heaven and earth, when believers are welcomed into God's presence. Even now, we are encouraged to "come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16). Something significant has changed that allows us into God's presence.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Time: approx. A.D 67

Place: Unknown

We do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews. One reason for this uncertainty is that the book, unlike most biblical letters, does not begin by identifying the author. Some Bible students think Paul wrote Hebrews. Various similarities between Hebrews and Galatians, one of Paul's letters, are seen to lend support to this proposal. One such similarity is the subject of this lesson: the contrast of Mount Sinai with the heavenly Jerusalem (see Galatians 4:24-26).

There is less uncertainty regarding the original intended audience of the book of Hebrews: Christians of Jewish background who, in the face of persecution and doubt, wanted to abandon the church and return to the synagogue. By the time we get to the text of the current lesson, the author of Hebrews has painted the consequences for such a decision in stark terms: there is no escape for those who reject the Christian message of salvation (Hebrews 2:3). Forsaking the blessings of the Christian life (such as the Holy Spirit) leaves one with no options for repentance and restoration to God (6:4-6).

The bottom line is not that the old covenant is bad; rather, it is that the old covenant is obsolete, having been superseded by a better covenant (Hebrews 8:13). Moreover, this new covenant did not arise from thin air. The Christian covenant was prophesied in the Old Testament (Hebrews 8:7-12, which quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34).

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The author of Hebrews uses vivid word pictures to support his points. The function of the Word of God is compared with that of a sword (Hebrews 4:12). Christian teachings are likened to categories of milk and meat (5:12-14). The Christian life is compared to a foot race (12:1). Worship is described as a “sacrifice of praise” (13:15). This lesson relies on the imagination of the reader to picture Mount Sinai at the time of the reception of the law. It was a place of terrifying thunder and lightning and of a supernatural trumpet blast that caused the people to tremble. The mountain was filled with smoke and fire, and it shook violently (Exodus 19:16-19). That encounter filled the hearts of the people with fear. We must keep this unique, awe-inspiring event from Israel’s past in mind as we engage our lesson.

What Do You Think?

- What are some things you can do to foster peace with others?
- How will God see holiness in you daily?
- How can we guard against becoming resistant to God’s Word?
- How should the fact that “God is a consuming fire” affect the way we live?

POINTS TO PONDER

- Our behavior influences others; so we should live so that we faithfully represent our holy God to others (Hebrews 12:14-15).
- Through the new covenant, God invites us to come near to Him through Jesus (vs. 18-21).
- Thank God we can come to Jesus! For without Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, there would be no new covenant (vs. 22-24).
- We are part of Christ’s eternal kingdom which cannot be shaken (vs. 25–27).
- Worshiping and serving God must be done with a proper attitude of reverence! (vs. 28-29).

CONCLUSION

Honor God

As believers, we are moving toward a heavenly kingdom, but as we move toward the heavenly kingdom, we need to recognize that we should be serving God down here. However, how are we to serve Him? Well, we are to serve Him “acceptably.” How do we serve Him acceptably? “With reverence and awe.” My friend, Christianity is not playing church, and it is not assuming a pious attitude. It is a living, vital, and real relationship with Jesus Christ that transforms your life and anchors you in the Word of God!

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father of fire and earthquakes, Lord of light and truth, may we never forget Your power or Your grace. May we serve You with holiness and reverence. We pray in the name of Jesus; amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

- God's grace is not an absence of holiness.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is **"Remembering the Covenant"** and focuses on remembering Christ's sacrifice, spiritual reflection, and personal examination when observing the Lord's Supper. **Study 1 Corinthians 11.**

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