



¹⁸ For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰ For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” ²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” 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, 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, 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.

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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.” ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:18–29 (ESV)

Open it

1. Have you ever built a model of something? How well did it replicate the real thing? Was it lacking anything the real thing had?

Daily Devotions

Day 1

Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Hebrews 12:18–29

GET THIS!

The reason we can “lift our drooping hands and strengthen our weak knees” is that we have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God.

It all starts with a simple little word — for. But this little word helps us understand a lot about what this passage is supposed to mean. It tells us that these verses are going to explain or give a reason for what’s just been said. Take a second and look at Hebrews 12:12–17 again. What do these verses teach? They tell us to do some things — active words. We’re told to lift, strengthen, make straight, strive, and see to it. But how and why were those Christians to do these things, and are we supposed to?

This passage talks about two different mountains that symbolize the Old Covenant and the New Covenant and compares the two of them. The reason we can “lift our drooping hands and strengthen our weak knees” is that we have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God.

2. How do verses 18–21 describe “what may be touched”?

BONUS: What mountain is he referring to in verses 18–21?

3. Where does verse 22 say we have come?

4. According to verse 28, what should we be grateful for and how should we demonstrate this gratitude?

5. What does verse 29 say God is?

Day 2

Today's Theme: Mount Sinai — Fear and Wrath

Read Hebrews 12:18–21

Before from my senior year of high school, the school invited the local fire department to come demonstrate for us the consequences of drinking and driving. After holding an assembly in the gym where we were told not to drink and drive, they took the whole student body outside in front of the school. The fire department had set up an “accident” that had been caused by a drunk driver. They went through the whole process of rescuing people from the car and even had a helicopter fly in to “take them to the hospital.” The scene felt all too real and many of my classmates were crying as they contemplated the potential consequences of their actions. Why would a school do this? Because seeing something has a way of helping us understand the seriousness of the situation.

These verses paint the picture of a terrifying scene of when the nation of Israel first received the law from God at Mount Sinai. Exodus 19 gives us glimpses into what took place when God would come down and dwell physically on that mountain. It was a terrifying sight: blazing fire, billowing smoke, strong winds and a loud trumpet blast indicating that God was there.

6. What pictures come to mind when you think about God's presence?

Read Hebrews 12:29 and Exodus 33:17–23. What do these verses tell us about God's presence?

The sight at Mount Sinai was meant to teach the people of Israel that God is a holy God and set apart from sinful people. They were commanded at Sinai to not even touch the mountain or they would die. As a matter of fact, even if one of their animals touched the mountain, it would be put to death. This might seem harsh and a tad intense to say the least, but it was all supposed to teach us that God detests sin and that he is Holy, set apart from all things, including His people.

Seeing God's presence like this had a way of teaching the people about who God is and their relationship to Him without a sacrifice — without a Savior.

7. Why is it important for you to understand that God is holy and that He detests sin?

GET THIS!

This might seem harsh and a tad intense to say the least, but it was all supposed to teach us that God detests sin and that he is Holy — set apart from all things, including His people.

Day 3

Today's Theme: Mount Zion — Promise and Peace

Read Hebrews 12:22–24

In contrast to Mount Sinai, verse 22 says that we have come to Mount Zion. The difference between these two mountains couldn't be more extreme. One invoked fear while the other offers confidence and hope. One shows wrath while the other offers forgiveness. One showed that God was separated from His people; the other invites His people into His presence.

GET THIS!

It's a real, heavenly city — the homeland that Abraham, Moses, and the rest of those in Hebrews 11 were seeking and the city God's people seek today.

Zion is a place that is referred to a lot in the Bible and over time, became synonymous with Jerusalem as being the city of God. As Jesus neared the end of His life and ministry on earth, He began telling His disciples that He needed to go to Jerusalem where He would suffer and die at the hands of the Jews. It was there, in the city of Jerusalem that Jesus finished His redemptive work by sacrificing Himself on the cross, not as a sinner, but as a perfect sacrifice. He said in Matthew 5:17, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not to abolish them but to fulfill them.”*

By referring to both Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, the author of Hebrews has drawn attention to the place where God's law was first given and the place where God's law was fulfilled. That means that “God's people no longer identify with the place that God's law was given, but with the place that God's law was fulfilled.”¹

8. Why did Jesus not come to abolish the Law? Why was it necessary that He *fulfill* the Law?

Hebrews isn't just dealing with an earthly city though. Verse 22 says that it's a “heavenly Jerusalem.” That doesn't mean it's just some made-up, fairy-tale city that has peppermint candies for trees and bushes. It's a real, heavenly city, the homeland that Abraham, Moses, and the rest of those in Hebrews 11 were seeking and the city God's people seek today. We don't seek an earthly city because earthly cities can be destroyed. We seek a heavenly city because that city is unshakeable.

9. What does it mean for us to live by faith, seeking this Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, today?

¹ Mohler, R. Albert. *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary)* (p. 209). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Day 4

Today's Theme: Unshakeable Kingdom — Worship and Respect

Read Hebrews 12:25–29

“The verb *reject* is important to note. Our modern cultural context as well as general lack of attentiveness to the text often cause us to present the gospel in terms of consideration rather than command. This verse, though, helps us see that the gospel is never presented solely as an offer to be considered. It is presented as an ultimatum, as something to be either received or rejected. Presenting the gospel always produces a response. One either hears the gospel and believes it unto salvation or hears the gospel and rejects it unto eternal judgment.”²

10. How can you be sure you have not rejected “Him who warns from heaven”?

Then in verses 26–27 it starts talking about this “shaking” that has happened before and is going to happen again. Basically, what the shaking is referring to is God’s judgement. Imagine an earthquake struck Illinois. How would you know which houses and buildings were built properly and strong? They’d be the only ones left standing when it was over. That’s what this passage is saying, at the end of the day there will only be two types of people: the redeemed and the reprobate. In other words, when God judges the world, there will only be those who are saints, saved by Jesus and sinners sentenced to eternal destruction.

Because we are found in Jesus, we will not be shaken on that day, but not because of our own strength, but because of the strength and security we have in Jesus. That’s why verse 28 says we should be grateful and worship God with reverence and awe because we know He is a just God, but He is also loving and merciful.

GET THIS!
Because we are found in Jesus, we will not be shaken ... because of the strength and security we have in Jesus.

11. What does it look like to worship God in gratitude with reverence and awe?

² Mohler, R. Albert. *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary)* (p. 215). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition. This study was compiled, and questions were written, by Pastors Mario Arindaeng and Jeremy Anderson. www.villagebible.church/students