

HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

XXII. Our Greater Accountability Than Israel Under Moses

(Hebrews 12:18-29)

I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 12:18-29 shows that our position in Christ as Christians today makes us more accountable to heed God than Israel under Moses. We view the passage for our insight:

II. Our Greater Accountability Than Israel Under Moses, Hebrews 12:18-29.

- A. Since the Hebrew Christian readers were being tempted to leave the Christian faith and return to a Judaistic cult that likely idealized Israel's wilderness journeys in the Exodus (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 779), the Author's final warning about this temptation contrasts the experience of Israel in the wilderness at God's revelation at Mount Sinai with what Christian's positionally have in Christ, Hebrews 12:18a, 22a.
- B. To that end, the Author claimed his readers did not deal with God's dramatic actions at Sinai, Heb. 12:18-21:
 - 1. The readers did not deal with a Mount Sinai that could be physically touched, Hebrews 12:18a.
 - 2. They did not deal with a Mount Sinai that burned with fire, nor with the blackness, darkness and tempest as in the days of Moses and Israel during the wilderness journeys, Hebrews 12:18b ESV.
 - 3. They did not deal with the sound of a loud trumpet and a voice from God that made the hearers beg that no further messages from God be spoken directly to them, Hebrews 12:19 ESV with Exodus 20:18-19.
 - 4. Indeed, the people of Israel could not endure God's order that if even an animal touched the mountain with God's revealed presence on it that it was to be stoned to death, Hebrews 12:20 with Exodus 19:12-13.
 - 5. Though he was God's direct messenger to the people of Israel, Moses himself said that he had trembled with fear at God's terrifying demonstration of His glory, Hebrews 12:21 with Deuteronomy 9:19.
- C. Rather, the readers dealt with God's far greater activities in the spiritual heavenly Mount Zion, implying far more accountability to heed the Lord than even Moses and Israel faced at Mount Sinai, Hebrews 12:22-24:
 - 1. The readers dealt not only with the heavenly Mount Zion, far greater than Mount Sinai, but the heavenly Mount Zion was the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, God's permanent abode, Heb. 12:22a.
 - 2. They dealt with the heavenly city with its innumerable company of angels in joyful assembly, v. 22b NIV.
 - 3. They dealt with the heavenly city with the souls of deceased Christians in the Church age, people whose names are written in heaven, Hebrews 12:23a NIV.
 - 4. The readers dealt with God, the Judge of all men who abode in that heavenly Jerusalem, Hebrews 12:23b.
 - 5. They dealt with "the spirits of righteous men made perfect," an allusion to Old Testament saints like Moses, Hebrews 12:23c; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Hebrews 12:23.
 - 6. The readers dealt with Jesus Who also dwells in that heavenly city, He being the Mediator of a new covenant and the One Whose sprinkled blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel, Heb. 12:24.
- D. Therefore, the readers were not to refuse the Lord Who was speaking to them, warning them not to revert back to cultic Judaism from the Christian faith, for if Israel's people at Mount Sinai did not escape God's severe punishment for refusing Him Who warned them on earth at the physical Mount Sinai, much less will believers in Christ today escape severe divine punishment if they reject Him Who warns from heaven, Hebrews 12:25.
- E. At Mount Sinai, God's voice shook the earth with a great earthquake, but now God has promised that He will again shake not only the earth, but also the heavens in judgment, Hebrews 12:26-27. This second shaking refers to the fulfillment of Haggai 2:6 when God remakes the heavens and the earth after the Millennial Kingdom, producing the eternal state. (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 811; Revelation 20:11; 21:1)
- F. Consequently, believers in Christ need to be grateful for receiving an eternal kingdom that cannot be shaken, and accordingly offer to God acceptable worship in reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire Who can and will exercise severe judgment on sinners as He did at Mount Sinai in Moses' era, Hebrews 12:28-29.

Lesson: *Since the nation Israel under Moses at Mount Sinai was highly accountable to obey the Lord when He revealed Himself to Israel in His glory, so much more are we believers in Christ accountable to heed God since we are under God the Son and we must relate to God in His eternal abode in His heavenly city in its far greater glory.*

Application: *May we who believe in Christ realize that the grave accountability Israel had to heed God at Mount Sinai pales before our far greater accountability as believers today, that we then deeply revere and obey the Lord.*