



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – January 20, 2024

The Lord be with you.

How do you picture God today? You see, God is smiling at you or is God frowning? For a long time, I pictured God as frowning at me, it's like I thought that God was always ticked off at me that I wasn't dedicated enough that I didn't pray enough, I didn't read my Bible enough. For you see sometime early in my Christian life, I got infected, infected by legalism, that is thinking that we are put right with God by what we do, legalism says, do but the gospel says, Done.

I wanna share with you a Scripture passage that I can remember the first time I read it. It was like God threw up and the windows got through, open the door, and God let grace rush into my life. I'm looking in Hebrews chapter 12 versus 18-24, and as I read it here in a moment. I want you to listen for how the Holy Spirit contrasts life under law with life under grace, how the Spirit contrast life under the Old Covenant of Law with life under the new covenant of grace. And this contrast between law and grace is going to be symbolized by two mountains, Mount Sinai representing the Law and Mount Zion representing grace. And so I read Hebrews 12:18 as it begin with Mount Sinai and the giving of the law in the Book of Exodus, that it says, "You have not come to something like Mount Sinai, that can 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 herods beg that not another word be spoken to them, for they could not endure the order that was given that if even an animal touches the mountain it shall be stoned to death. Indeed, so terrifying was a sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear". That was Mount Sinai and the giving of the law. And the Spirit says here that You have not come to that mountain. But then it says, "But you have come to Mount Zion. So you hear the contrast, you have not come to Mount Sinai, that was frightening, unapproachable because of the holiness and majesty of God, but you have come to Mount Zion. And to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable angels in festal gathering. And to the assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made, perfect."

What a beautiful picture, and it lists six things that it means for us as we have come to Mount Zion as we have come to life under grace, first it says, that you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God. We have not yet come there in a physical sense, but this is our position. We are where God is. We are at Mount Zion, the city of the living God, as we are brought into the very holy presence of God. Our Father is there, Jesus is there. Our home is there. Everything that is important is there. I like how the Apostle Paul puts it in Philippians chapter 3, verse 20, as he says that our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So check your passport. Your real citizenship is in Heaven. For as you come to Jesus Christ, you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Look at what comes next as it says, You have come to innumerable angels in festal gathering. Well, what he means is that the angels are having a party, they are celebrating all that God has done and what God is doing... In Luke Chapter 15:7, Jesus says that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who



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repents, and so we are coming where the angels are celebrating and they are rejoicing that God has brought you and me to himself. Next it says that as we come to Mount Zion, we come to the assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven. Now, what's this about? The assembly of the firstborn.

Well, in Bible times, guess who got the inheritance? It was the first born. And so by the grace of God, you and I have an eternal inheritance that's coming to us as Jesus shares with us, the riches of heaven. When we come to the assembly of the first born, he says, and who are enrolled in heaven? As a boy, I was raised on the old song, When the role is called up the yonder, I'll be there. And all of you who by faith have come to Jesus Christ, your name is on the roll, you'll be there... God's got a place in heaven reserved for you. And no one can take it from you.

Further, our text says that we have come to the Judge of all, this is a God is judge with a difference. God is not here to condemn us, do reject us for Jesus has taken our judgement, rather we appear before God as judged, because God wants to get judgment over and done with. Whereas the apostle Paul says in Romans Chapter 8 verse 33, Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Then on Mount Zion, we come to the spirits of the righteous made perfect. This is because Jesus by his life, death and resurrection, Jesus perfects us. Jesus perfects us as children of God.

Finally our text says that we come to Jesus. We come to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant. It is Jesus who brings us into this covenant of grace. Do you remember what the angel told Joseph? He said, You will name the baby Jesus for He will save. He will save His people from their sins. Charles Haddon Spurgeon is called the prince of preachers. He's thought perhaps to be the greatest preacher in the English language, as Spurgeon lay on his death bed, he said to friends who visited him, he said, My brothers and sisters, my theology has become very simple, it consists of four words, Jesus died for me. And that's why God is smiling today. It's because of what Jesus Christ has done for you and me. Legalism says do. The Gospel says, Done. And we have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God. I've so enjoyed sharing this good news with you today.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.