

Hebrews 12:18-29, Bible Devotions

❑ Monday - Covenant Contrasts.

Hebrews 12:18-24

The Old Covenant was symbolized by Mt. Sinai upon which God descended in fire and “darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. . . . And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, ‘I am full of fear and trembling’” (Heb. 12:18-21). Under the Old Covenant, no one could approach God under penalty of death, except the High Priest once a year. But the New Covenant is symbolized by Mt. Zion, “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven” (Heb. 12:22-24). O what a privilege to live on this side of the cross in redemptive history. The difference is “Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant” (Heb. 12:24), for “He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises” (Heb. 8:6).

Read Hebrews 7:18-19

❑ Tuesday - Citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Hebrews 12:23

God’s people are called the “the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (Heb. 12:23). Yes “our *citizenship* is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20). “Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow *citizens* with the saints, and are of God’s household” (Eph. 2:19).

Read 1 Peter 1:3-4

❑ Wednesday - Let Us Draw Near.

Hebrews 12:24

If the New Covenant truly is a “better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises,” as the Book of Hebrews boasts (Heb. 8:6), then it ought to produce a better, closer walk with God, than the Old Covenant, and this is exactly what we see. Whereas closeness to God spelled danger under the Old Covenant (Ex. 19:9-25, Heb. 12:18-24), it is actually the highlight of the New Covenant. And so, the writer of Hebrews exhorts his New Covenant readers: “Let us therefore *draw near* with confidence to the throne of grace (4:16); for “there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we *draw near* to God” (7:19); and “He is able to save forever those who *draw near* to God through Him” (Heb. 7:25); therefore, “let us *draw near* with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (10:22). Christian, “*Draw near* to God and He will *draw near* to you.”

James 4:8

❑ Thursday - Reverence & Awe.

Hebrews 12:28

The unbeliever should fear God’s wrath (Rom. 2:5, Rom. 1:18-20), but the Christian need never have that kind of fear (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; 1 John 4:17-18). For the Christian, the fear of the Lord is a sincere reverence and awe toward God (Heb. 12:28). One hundred years ago, to call someone a “god-fearing” man or woman was a supreme compliment. Dear Christian, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” and it is the starting point of authentic Christianity. Selah, pause and meditate.

Read Philippians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 2:17

❑ Friday - Our God is a Consuming Fire.

Hebrews 12:29

“Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). “The twin graces of love and fear should be jointly active in the believer. The first is to prevent despair from considering God’s ineffable purity and inflexible justice; the latter is to check a presumptuous irreverence” (Pink). “Even those who stand highest in the love and favor of God, and have the fullest assurance there of, ought, notwithstanding, to fear Him as a sin-avenging God and a consuming fire” (Hopkins).

Read Psalm 103:17-18; Proverbs 14:26-27