

Bible Study Guide - Hebrews 12:18-29

Bellevue Church of Christ – Fall / Winter 2017-2018

The Greater Response (Chapters 11 to 13)

The Duties of Faith (Chapters 12 & 13)

Contrasts (18-24)

Mount Zion (22-24)

-One of hills upon which the city of Jerusalem is built
 -Sometimes stands for Jerusalem - Mt 21:5
 -Here it stands for the city that is the home of God's people
 -"Jerusalem above" or "new Jerusalem"
 Gal 4:26
 Rev 3:12, 21:2,10
 -"the true tent" (8:2)
 -"the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (11:10)
"enrolled in heaven"
 -All those who are citizens of heaven
 Rev 21:27
"blood of Abel"
 Abel's blood signals only condemnation
 Gen 4:10-11

Caution (25-27)

-The children of Israel failed to live up to what God commanded (Dt 5:29)
 -If they didn't escape from this rejection of God, why should we expect to escape if we reject the message of God through Christ?
 2:3; 3:7-4:14

Consuming (28-29)

God has accepted us into His kingdom that cannot be destroyed.
 In response to that, we owe Him:
 -Thanks
 -Worship (with Reverence and Awe)

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.**

Who will be there?

- Innumerable angels
- God, the judge of all
- Assembly of the firstborn
- Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant (8:6)
- Spirits of the righteous made perfect
- Sprinkled blood (10:19-22)

God is speaking to us through Christ!

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.**

"things that cannot be shaken" - The new heavens and new earth are things that will remain (Isa 66:22). Similarly, those who share in God's holiness (Heb 12:10) will endure.

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.**

<- Deut 4:24 - God is not to be trifled with.

Mount Sinai (18-21)

"what may be touched"

-Mount Sinai

Ex 19:12-22; 20:18-21

Dt 4:11-13; 5:23-27

"sound of a trumpet"

-The trumpet blast caused the exodus generation to shake in fear

Ex 19:16,19; 20:18

"voice whose words"

- God's voice from the fire on the mountainside spoke the 10 commandments
Ex 19:19; 20:1

Dt 4:11-13

-They asked that they should hear God's voice no more

Ex 20:19

Dt 5:24-27

"If even a beast..."

-The people of Israel were commanded to avoid touching the mountain, which was God's dwelling place
Ex 19:12-13

"tremble with fear..."

-In Deut 9:19, Moses expresses his fear at being in God's presence when He was angry at Israel after the golden calf incident

Ex 32:1-6

<- Haggai 2:6

"voice shook...earth"

Sinai is recalled...

Repeatedly we are told that the earth shook

Ex 19:18; Jud 5:4-5; Ps 68:8; 77:18; 114:4, 7

"Yet once more..."

God has promised a future time when He will again shake the heavens and the earth on the day of judgment.

Hebrews Chapter 12 - Questions for Discussion

What “burned with fire?” What is being described here? (vv. 18-19; Exodus 19:12-22)

What did the people beg for at this mountain? Why? (vv. 19; Deut 5:23-27)
What did Moses think of the sight at the mountain? (vv. 21; Deut 9:19)

What mountain have we come to? (v. 22)

Who are “registered” or “written” in heaven? (v. 23)

How does the blood of Christ “speak better things than that of Abel?” (v. 24)

What happened to those who refused to listen to “Him who spoke on earth?” Who is this referring to? (v. 25)

Why is it impossible escape “Him who speaks from heaven?” (v. 25)

Whose voice shook the earth? When will He shake the earth again? (v. 26-27; Hag 2:6)

What is the “removal of those things that are being shaken?” (v. 27)

How are we “receiving a kingdom?” (v. 28)

Can the kingdom of Christ be shaken? (v. 28)

With what attitude are we to serve God? (v. 28)

What is the motivation for serving God? (v. 29)

Teacher's Notes

Mount Sinai

Exodus 19:12–22 (ESV)

¹² And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. ¹³ No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." ¹⁴ So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. ¹⁵ And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman."

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. ¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰ The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

²¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish. ²² Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."

Exodus 20:18–21 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin." ²¹ The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Deuteronomy 4:11–13 (ESV)

¹¹ And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. ¹³ And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

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Deuteronomy 5:23–27 (ESV)

²³ And as soon as you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. ²⁴ And you said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. ²⁵ Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we shall die. ²⁶ For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? ²⁷ Go near and hear all that the LORD our God will say, and speak to us all that the LORD our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.’

“blazing fire”

Exodus 24:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.

“sound of a trumpet”

Exodus 19:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Exodus 19:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

Exodus 20:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off

“voice whose words”

Exodus 19:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

Exodus 20:1 (ESV)

¹ And God spoke all these words, saying,

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Exodus 20:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.”

Deuteronomy 4:11–13 (ESV)

¹¹ And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. ¹³ And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

Deuteronomy 5:24–27 (ESV)

²⁴ And you said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. ²⁵ Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we shall die. ²⁶ For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? ²⁷ Go near and hear all that the LORD our God will say, and speak to us all that the LORD our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.’

“If even a beast...”

Exodus 19:12–13 (ESV)

¹² And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. ¹³ No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.”

“tremble with fear...”

Exodus 32:1–6 (ESV)

¹ When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” ² So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” ³ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O

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Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.”⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Deuteronomy 9:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also.

Mount Zion

Matthew 21:5 (ESV)

⁵ “Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’ ”

Galatians 4:26 (ESV)

²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

Revelation 3:12 (ESV)

¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

Revelation 21:2 (ESV)

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

Hebrews 8:2 (ESV)

² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

Hebrews 11:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

“enrolled in heaven”

Revelation 21:27 (ESV)

²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

“blood of Abel”

Genesis 4:10–11 (ESV)

¹⁰ And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.

Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant

Hebrews 8:6 (ESV)

⁶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

Sprinkled blood

Hebrews 10:19–22 (ESV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The children of Israel failed to live up to what God commanded

Deuteronomy 5:29 (ESV)

²⁹ Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!

If they didn’t escape from this rejection of God, why should we expect to escape if we reject the message of God through Christ?

Hebrews 2:3 (ESV)

³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,

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Hebrews 3:7–4:14 (ESV)

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,

⁹ where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.

¹⁰ Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known my ways.’

¹¹ As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest.’ ”

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

¹⁵ As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

¹ Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. ² For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest,’ ”

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” ⁵ And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

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⁶ Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷ again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.

⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

“voice shook...earth”

Exodus 19:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

Judges 5:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ “LORD, when you went out from Seir,
when you marched from the region of Edom,
the earth trembled
and the heavens dropped,
yes, the clouds dropped water.

⁵ The mountains quaked before the LORD,
even Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel.

Psalms 68:8 (ESV)

⁸ the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.

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Psalm 77:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
your lightnings lighted up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.

Psalm 114:4 (ESV)

⁴ The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.

Psalm 114:7 (ESV)

⁷ Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,

“Yet once more...”

Haggai 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.

“things that cannot be shaken”

Isaiah 66:22 (ESV)

²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
that I make
shall remain before me, says the LORD,
so shall your offspring and your name remain.

Hebrews 12:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

Consuming Fire

Deuteronomy 4:24 (ESV)

²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.