

Series: Christ's Counter-Cultural Church

Sermon: A Better Mountain: New Testament Worship, Awe and Joy

Delivered by: Dr. Josh Moody, senior pastor; **Date: August 28, 2016**

Bible text explored: Hebrews 12:18–29

¹⁸For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.”^[a] ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and 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, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵See 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. ²⁶At 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.”^[b] ²⁷This 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. ²⁸Therefore 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, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire. [ESV]

^a Exod. 19:12-13; ^b Hag. 2:6

Review and application questions

One of two worship “mountains” we come to, according to Pastor Moody, will shape our worship experience.

1. What (vv. 18-21) made worship in the Old Testament model at Mount Sinai so intimidating and legalistic? (See also Deut. 5:22-27.)
2. What (vv. 22-24) turns worship in the New Testament model at the heavenly Mount Zion into a “festal gathering”? (See Rev. 5:11-12.)
3. How does adding “Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant” to “God, the judge of all,” make us part of the “assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven,” and add intimacy to awe in our worship? (See Rev. 20:12; 21:27.)
What “better word” does the blood of Jesus speak, adding to the justice and retribution of the blood of Abel?
4. How does identifying with the better mountain (v. 25) shift our emphasis in worship to listening?
5. What “shaken” covenant (vv.26-29) has been removed?
What kingdom remains and “cannot be shaken”?
6. Pastor Josh suggested that the King James Version of the Bible (1611) best translates verse 28: *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve acceptably with reverence and godly fear.* How should receiving God’s unmerited kindness be a key component of our worship?
7. Pastor Josh referred to “worship wars” in the contemporary church based on personal preferences. Why should the focus *not* be on personal preferences?
On what *should* our balance of fear and confidence be centered?