

SECTION TWELVE

IT IS URGENT THAT WE NOT DEPART FROM THE MOUNTAIN OF THE NEW COVENANT

1. TEXTS

a. **Hebrews 12:4 – 13:17.**

b. **Complementary relevant texts**

- (1) **Haggai 2:1-9**—“I will shake all nations, and I will fill this house with glory ...”
- (2) **Galatians 4:21-31**—“But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother” (v 28).
- (3) **Revelation 21:1-10**—“Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

2. TRANSITION FROM PREVIOUS SECTION TO THIS SECTION

a. **Hebrews 11:13-16**—“God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”

- (1) The city they sought was not the city of an earthly rest, or the material Jerusalem.
- (2) It was the city of the new covenant of faith, toward which those faithful patiently pressed.

b. **Hebrews 12:1-3**—“Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus ...”

- (1) We need to be patient and continue toward the goal, to finish the race that we started.
- (2) We can reach the goal if we keep Jesus in our sights.

3. SIXTH WARNING AGAINST APOSTASY (12:4 – 17)

a. **The discipline of God the Father**

- (1) Perspective: in their community, none has yet had to shed blood (in death) in order to resist persecution.
- (2) Suffering is a sign not only of the wickedness of those opposed to God, but of God’s own fatherly love.
- (3) They are being disciplined by God, that they may share in, be drawn to, His holiness.
- (4) Of course, no discipline is pleasant at the time it is being undergone—pain hurts, humiliation is shameful!
- (5) But it can later be seen to have produced a good result, provided the child responds to it in the right way.

b. **A word of encouragement to exercise: “... strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees ...”**

a. **Final warning from consideration of some who failed**

- (1) Strive toward peacefulness and holiness, for without holiness no one will see God.
- (2) Do not tolerate—personally or in the community—a defiling strain of immorality.
- (3) Nor allow godlessness, such as was evident in Esau, who placed so little value on the lifelong quality of his inheritance as the firstborn son that he sold it for a single meal, to his later bitter regret.
- (4) Godlessness is expressed not only in immorality, but in failure to take the **longer** view, a failure such as would be evidenced by one who tuned away from the new covenant to return to the old.
- (5) The decisions that we make in our lives, whether good or bad, have consequences, and some of those may be eternal and disastrous!

4. TWO MOUNTAINS (12:18 – 29)

a. They had not come to the mountain of the old covenant of law

- (1) At the time the covenant was made and the law given, the mountain was a terrifying sight.
- (2) Even Moses, in his desperate intercession for the disobedient people (**Deuteronomy 9**), was frightened.

b. Instead, they *had come* to the mountain of the new covenant of faith

- (1) These people to whom this discourse was delivered were *already there*.
- (2) How the mountain and the gathering to which they had come was variously described
 - (a) Mount Zion, the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.
 - (b) Thousands upon thousands of angels in festal assembly/all around (*panegyris*).
 - (c) The church (*ekklesia*) of those who are accorded the status of firstborn and thus enrolled in heaven.
 - (d) God, the judge of all.
 - (e) The spirits of righteous people which have been perfected.
 - (f) Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to His blood, which speaks louder and more perfectly than the blood of Abel (*cf. Hebrews 11:4*).

c. Continuation of the warning against apostasy

- (1) Thus, do not refuse the admonition of Jesus, which He gives through His blood.
- (2) Those who refused to listen to warnings they received concerning the earthly covenant (*cf. Hebrews 10:28*) were duly punished, and so we cannot expect to escape destruction if we reject the word from heaven.
- (3) At the time of the giving of the Law of Moses His voice shook the earth, but He promised to shake both heavens and earth (**Haggai 2:6**), so that the only thing that will remain is that which cannot be shaken-- removed.
- (4) The kingdom which we have received is one of those things which cannot be shaken or removed, unlike the relationship of the old covenant, which is being removed by divine judgment.
- (5) Our God will burn up, in judgment, all those things which, having become old, are like dry tinder.
- (6) They must not leave the new city, which cannot be shaken, to go back to the old city, which is being destroyed.

5. A FEW PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF LIVING UNDER THE NEW COVENANT (13:1-17)

a. Social behavior

- (1) Practice love and hospitality.
- (2) Continue to keep vows of marriage.
- (3) Do not fall prey to covetousness or the love of money.
- (4) Do not forsake God, for He will not forsake you.
- (5) Give proper regard to leaders, and be persuaded by them.

b. Continuing to secure the benefits of the atonement of Christ

- (1) We can eat the priestly portion from an altar which the priests of the old covenant cannot access.
- (2) The bodies of the sacrificial animals under the old covenant were taken outside the camp.
- (3) Thus did Jesus suffer outside the camp, and outside the old city, which is in the process of being destroyed.
- (4) **Leave the old earthly city! (Matthew 24:15-20)**. Go to Jesus outside the camp of the old city.
- (5) Our faces must be toward the new city, the city of the new age, in which we live.