

# Mediator of the New Covenant

Heb 12:14-15, 18-29  
SS Lesson for 11/19/2017

**Devotional Scripture:** Gal 3:13-29

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

*Key Verse: Heb 12:28-29*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

*Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

MEDIATOR OF PEACE AND HOLINESS (HEB 12:14-15)

*Peace*

Peace that is different from the world's peace (John 14:27)

Peace that comes from overcoming the world (John 16:33)

Peace that comes through justification (Rom 5:1)

Peace that is controlled by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:6)

Peace that is one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)

Peace that came from Jesus destroying the barrier to it (Eph 2:14)

*Holiness*

Holiness that comes from living as perfect as possible (Matt 5:48)

Holiness that comes from being purified (2 Cor 7:1)

Holiness that comes from living a life worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1:27)

Holiness that comes from being sanctified by God (1 Thess 4:3)

Holiness that comes from the grace of God (Titus 2:11-12)

MEDIATOR OF THE LAW OF GOD – MT SINAI (HEB 12:18-21)

*The Law is holy – Exod 19:12,16 (18)*

Holy because it is God's command (Rom 7:12)

Holy because it is perfect (Ps 19:7)

Holy because it is righteous (Ps 119:137)

Holy because it is spiritual (Rom 7:14)

Holy because it is good (1 Tim 1:8)

*God is present in the Law – Exod 19:19 (19)*

God's presence is everywhere (Ps 139:7-12)

God's presence brings rest (Ex 33:14)

God's presence brings joy (Ps 16:11)

God's presence is a hiding place of refuge (Ps 31:20)

God's presence brings is a light of guidance (Ps 89:15)

*The Law calls us to it – Exod 19:20 (20-21)*

God's calls are irrevocable (Rom 11:29)

God's calls are faithful (1 Thess 5:23-24)

God's calls are Holy (2 Tim 1:9)

God calls us into His Kingdom and glory (1 Thess 2:11-12)

God's calls are powerful (Rom 4:17)

MEDIATOR OF THE GRACE OF GOD – MT ZION (HEB 12:22-24)

*Grace allows access to heaven (22)*

Access through the gate (John 10:7-9)

Access through the way (John 14:6)

Access through the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18)

Access through faith (Eph 3:12)

Access through the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19-20)

Access through the sympathetic High Priest (Heb 4:14-16)

*Grace in judgment (23)*

Because God's judgment is based on truth (Rom 2:2)

Because God judges in righteousness and justice (Ps 9:7-8)

Because God is righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)  
Because God will judge the world through Jesus (Acts 17:31)  
Because God's judgment is right (2 Thess 1:5)

#### *Grace through Jesus' blood (24)*

Because of being justified by Jesus' blood (Rom 5:9)  
Because Jesus' blood cleanses consciences (Heb 9:13-14)  
Because Jesus' blood redeems (1 Peter 1:18-19)  
Because Jesus' blood provides confidence to enter the Most Holy Place (Heb 10:19-22)

#### MEDIATOR OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (HEB 12:25-29)

##### *Do not refuse the call of the kingdom (25)*

Do not refuse because it is unwise (Prov 8:33)  
Do not refuse because it leads to poverty and shame (Prov 13:18)  
Do not refuse because it leads to despising oneself (Prov 15:32)  
Do not refuse because it leads to following and serving other gods (Jer 11:10)  
Do not refuse because of stubbornness (Zech 7:11)

##### *Kingdom that can't be shaken (26-27)*

God's kingdom will endure all generations (Ps 145:13)  
God's kingdom is an eternal kingdom (Dan 4:3)  
God's kingdom will never end (Luke 1:32-33)  
God's kingdom will be reigned by Jesus for ever and ever (Rev 11:15)  
God's kingdom will be upheld and ruled with righteousness from now and forever (Isa 9:7)

##### *Serving the kingdom (28)*

Serve by being a servant (Matt 20:26-28)  
Serve by being eager to help (2 Cor 9:1-2)  
Serve by helping God's people (Heb 6:10)  
Serve faithfully (1 Cor 4:1-2)  
Serve by being God's fellow worker (1 Cor 3:8-9)

##### *Kingdom fire (29)*

A fire that devours (Ps 50:3)  
A fire that consumes foes (Ps 97:3)  
A fire that contains God's rebuke (Isa 66:15)  
A fire that comes with God's judgment (Heb 10:27)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

### *Conclusion*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY  
PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

## Introduction

### **Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson**

The lesson helps us understand Jesus' role as the **Mediator of the New Covenant**. The **study's aim** is to gain a greater appreciation for the central role of Jesus Christ in all of God's plans. The **study's application** is to serve God acceptably because of the covenant provisions made by Jesus Christ.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### **Key Verse: Heb 12:28-29**

*28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

### **Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary**

**12:12-13.** The author sensed the tendency to spiritual weakness in his readers, and in the light of the truths he had expounded he encouraged them to renew their strength. If they would do this and would pursue the **level paths** which real righteousness entails, the weakest among them (**the lame**) would not be further **disabled, but rather healed**. Their own strength would benefit weaker Christians.

**12:14. Peace with all men** as well as personal holiness must be vigorously sought since **without holiness (hagiasmos) no one will see the Lord**. Since no sin can stand in God's presence, Christians must—and will be—sinless when they see the Lord (cf. 1 John 3:2). That realization offers motivation for pursuing

holiness here and now. But the author may also have had in mind the thought that one's perception of God even now is conditioned by his real measure of holiness (cf. Matt. 5:8).

**12:15-17.** As a grim reminder of what can happen among believers, the writer warned that **one** who **misses the grace of God** may become like a **bitter root** whose infidelity to God affects others. Here the author had in mind Deuteronomy 29:18 where an Old-Covenant apostate was called a "root. . . that produces such bitter poison." Such a person would be **godless** (*bebēlos*, "profane, unhallowed, desecrated") **like Esau**, Jacob's brother, whose loose and profane character led him to sell **his inheritance rights as the oldest son** for the temporary gratification of **a single meal**. He warned the readers not to yield to transitory pressures and forfeit their inheritances. If some did, they would ultimately regret the foolish step and might find their inheritance privileges irrevocably lost as were Esau's. This would of course be true of one who ended his Christian experience in a state of apostasy, which the writer had continually warned against.

**12:18-21.** Vividly the writer pictured the situation at Mount Sinai where the Old Covenant was given and its awesomeness and fearful nature were described (cf. Ex. 19:9-23; Deut. 9:8-19).

**12:22-24.** The realities that pertain to New-Covenant people and to which they **have come** are even more impressive because they are **heavenly**. Not only is there the heavenly **city**, but there are also heaven-related beings, both **angels** and people, associated with it. The term **church of the firstborn** may mean the assembly of those whose inheritance rights are already won (since under the OT Law the "firstborn" was the primary heir; cf. v. 16). They have already gone on to the heavenly regions where the angels are. But above all, it is to **God, the Judge of all men**, that they have come—and there are some who indeed can stand His searching scrutiny of their lives (**the spirits of righteous men made perfect**; cf. 10:14; 11:40)—and to **Jesus the Mediator** (cf. 8:6; 9:15) **of a New Covenant** whose atoning **blood** does not cry for judgment as did Abel's but secures the acceptance of all New-Covenant persons. If the readers would contemplate these things properly, they would be awed by them and more inclined to fulfill their call to the highest privileges that the New Covenant can provide.

**12:25.** The contrast between the two covenants is now focused as a contrast between a warning given **on earth** and one that issues **from heaven** itself. Since those who refused the Old Covenant **did not escape**, how could those of the New Covenant who **turn away** expect to do so? (cf. 2:3) Here no doubt the author thought of the Speaker as none other than the Originator of the New Covenant who now sits "at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (1:3).

**12:26-27.** This is the divine **voice** which once **shook** only **the earth**, but will ultimately **shake not only the earth but also the heavens**. The reference to Haggai 2:6 was understood by the author as speaking of the ultimate remaking of the heavens and earth which will follow the millennial kingdom (cf. Heb. 1:10-12). What remains after this cataclysmic event will be eternal.

**12:28-29.** And such is the character of the **kingdom** which **we are receiving**. The words **let us be thankful** may be rendered "let us have [or, 'obtain'] grace" (*echōmen charin*) and are likely a final reference to the resources of grace available from the great High Priest (cf. 4:14-16). This is confirmed by the words **and so** (lit., "through which," *di'ēs* ' which remind the readers that this grace is required in order to **worship** (better, "serve," *latreuōmen*, also used in 8:5; 9:9; 10:2; 13:10) **God acceptably** within the New-Covenant community. Failure to do so should be deterred by the concluding solemn thought that **our God is a consuming fire** (cf. 10:26-27). A believer who departs from his magnificent privileges will invite God's retribution.

#### **Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary**

Hebrews 12:24 specifically states that Jesus is the "mediator of the new covenant." He is the only one who can bring God's salvation to us. In verse 28, we learn that in His mediatorial role, the Lord Jesus brings us into reception of a kingdom. Our salvation is not just an experience that happens to us one day. The Lord's role as our Mediator brings to us the forgiveness of sins, but it also welcomes us into the dominion of God—that kingdom that God is building in time and for all eternity. We receive much more than we might think. The first thing we need to stress is that this kingdom is received. It comes to us by grace. There is a heavy emphasis on grace throughout the Bible, and it is stressed here again. Our entry into the eternal kingdom of God is solely by grace. It is God's gift, received by faith in Christ. And this grace grants to us the precious gift of a kingdom that cannot be moved. In contrast to every merely human kingdom ever known, God's kingdom cannot be shaken or destroyed. We are given grace to belong to something that is eternal. The text thus outlines the exalted nature of God's plan of salvation. It includes a kingdom mediated

by Christ. Next we want to notice how powerful and holy this kingdom is. It comes from God, who is a "consuming fire." Without the mediatorial work of Christ, we could never approach this kingdom. No man can see God and live (Exod. 33:20). But through the work of Christ, God grants us pardon and makes us righteous in His sight. Thus we are able to draw near to God and be part of His kingdom. Given this holy and powerful truth, we ought to "serve God acceptably" within His kingdom. The writer of Hebrews uses the words "reverence" and "godly fear." These terms speak of a humble, pious devotion to God. We should be awestruck with wonder that we, sinful as we are, have been graciously brought into fellowship with God as He builds His glorious kingdom. What is the proper response to this? Only a humble surrender to do His will and to serve Him with wholehearted devotion. Are we serving God acceptably? Do we have a clear realization of the holy nature of His kingdom? Do we understand the powerful work our Mediator has done for us? Do we realize that everything has changed? All the promises of the new covenant are rooted in grace. The covenant is mediated by Christ. Should we be sluggish and complacent in the face of such truth? Or should we be zealous and obedient, ready and willing to serve such a God and such a Mediator? This wonderful covenant, mediated by the Lord Jesus, is what has sent missionaries around the globe. It is what has raised up churches in every town and city in the land. It is what has made ordinary people extraordinary in their service, devotion, and stewardship to God. Let us all determine to serve Him acceptably.

### ***Lesson Introduction and Background***

#### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

At one time or another, we wonder what it would be like to meet a great figure of the past. What would it be like to have breakfast with Abraham Lincoln during America's Civil War? How would we react in the presence of Winston Churchill or Catherine the Great? Chances are, such meetings would not be as pleasant as we would like them to be! After all, why would such leaders even acknowledge us? The only way such a meeting could happen (aside from solving the issue of time travel!) is if someone were to take us into the presence of such greatness. At Mount Sinai to approach God was forbidden. To that scenario we contrast the era of the new heavens and earth, when believers are welcomed into God's presence. Even now, we are encouraged to "approach God's throne of grace with confidence" (Hebrews 4:16). Something significant has changed that allows us into God's presence.

We do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews. One reason for this uncertainty is that the book, unlike most biblical letters, does not begin by identifying the author. Some Bible students think Paul wrote Hebrews. Various similarities between Hebrews and Galatians, one of Paul's letters, are seen to lend support to this proposal. One such similarity is the subject of this lesson: the contrast of Mount Sinai with the heavenly Jerusalem (see Galatians 4:24-26). There is less uncertainty regarding the original intended audience of the book of Hebrews: Christians of Jewish background who, in the face of persecution and doubt, wanted to abandon the church and return to the synagogue. By the time we get to the text of today's lesson, the author of Hebrews has painted the consequences for such a decision in stark terms: there is no escape for those who reject the Christian message of salvation (Hebrews 2:3). Forsaking the blessings of the Christian life (such as the Holy Spirit) leaves one with no options for repentance and restoration to God (6:4-6). The bottom line is not that the old covenant is bad; rather, it is that the old covenant is obsolete, having been superseded by a better covenant (Hebrews 8:13). And this new covenant did not arise from thin air. The Christian covenant was prophesied in the Old Testament (Hebrews 8:7-12, which quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34). The author of Hebrews uses vivid word pictures to support his points. The function of the Word of God is compared with that of a sword (Hebrews 4:12). Christian teachings are likened to categories of milk and solid food (5:12-14). The Christian life is compared with a foot race (12:1). Worship is described as "a sacrifice of praise" (13:15). Our lesson today relies on the imagination of the reader to picture Mount Sinai at the time of the reception of the law. It was a place of terrifying thunder and lightning and of a supernatural trumpet blast that caused the people to tremble. The mountain was filled with smoke and fire, and it shook violently (Exodus 19:16-19; lesson 6). This filled the hearts of the people with fear. We must keep this unique, awe-inspiring event from Israel's past in mind as we engage our lesson this week.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Mediator of Peace and Holiness (Heb 12:14-15)**

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

#### **Peace**

*Peace that is different from the world's peace (John 14:27)*

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

*Peace that comes from overcoming the world (John 16:33)*

33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

*Peace that comes through justification (Rom 5:1)*

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

*Peace that is controlled by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:6)*

6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

*Peace that is one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)*

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

*Peace that came from Jesus destroying the barrier to it (Eph 2:14)*

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

#### **Holiness**

*Holiness that comes from living as perfect as possible (Matt 5:48)*

48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

*Holiness that comes from being purified (2 Cor 7:1)*

7 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

*Holiness that comes from living a life worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1:27)*

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

*Holiness that comes from being sanctified by God (1 Thess 4:3)*

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

*Holiness that comes from the grace of God (Titus 2:11-12)*

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

### **Mediator of the Law of God – Mt Sinai (Heb 12:18-21)**

18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest,

19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.

20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.")

21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

### **The Law is holy – Exod 19:12,16 (18)**

*Holy because it is God's command (Rom 7:12)*

12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

*Holy because it is perfect (Ps 19:7)*

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

*Holy because it is righteous (Ps 119:137)*

137 Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right.

*Holy because it is spiritual (Rom 7:14)*

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

*Holy because it is good (1 Tim 1:8)*

8 We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.

### **God is present in the Law – Exod 19:19 (19)**

*God's presence is everywhere (Ps 139:7-12)*

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

*God's presence brings rest (Ex 33:14)*

14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

*God's presence brings joy (Ps 16:11)*

11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

*God's presence is a hiding place of refuge (Ps 31:20)*

20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues.

*God's presence brings is a light of guidance (Ps 89:15)*

15 Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.

### **The Law calls us to it – Exod 19:20 (20-21)**

*God's calls are irrevocable (Rom 11:29)*

29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

*God's calls are faithful (1 Thess 5:23-24)*

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

*God's calls are Holy (2 Tim 1:9)*

9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

*God calls us into His Kingdom and glory (1 Thess 2:11-12)*

11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

*God's calls are powerful (Rom 4:17)*

17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed — the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

### **Mediator of the Grace of God – Mt Zion (Heb 12:22-24)**

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

### **Grace allows access to heaven (22)**

*Access through the gate (John 10:7-9)*

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

*Access through the way (John 14:6)*

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

*Access through the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18)*

18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

*Access through faith (Eph 3:12)*

12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

*Access through the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19-20)*

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

*Access through the sympathetic High Priest (Heb 4:14-16)*

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

### **Grace in judgment (23)**

*Because God's judgment is based on truth (Rom 2:2)*

2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

*Because God judges in righteousness and justice (Ps 9:7-8)*

7 The Lord reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. 8 He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

*Because God is righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)*

17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

*Because God will judge the world through Jesus (Acts 17:31)*

31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

*Because God's judgment is right (2 Thess 1:5)*

5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

### **Grace through Jesus' blood (24)**

*Because of being justified by Jesus' blood (Rom 5:9)*

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

*Because Jesus' blood cleanses consciences (Heb 9:13-14)*

13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."

*Because Jesus' blood redeems (1 Peter 1:18-19)*

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

*Because Jesus' blood provides confidence to enter the Most Holy Place (Heb 10:19-22)*

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

## **Mediator of the Kingdom of God (Heb 12:25-29)**

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,

26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."

27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

### **Do not refuse the call of the kingdom (25)**

*Do not refuse because it is unwise (Prov 8:33)*

33 Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it.

*Do not refuse because it leads to poverty and shame (Prov 13:18)*

18 He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.

*Do not refuse because it leads to despising oneself (Prov 15:32)*

32 He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.

*Do not refuse because it leads to following and serving other gods (Jer 11:10)*

10 They have returned to the sins of their forefathers, who refused to listen to my words. They have followed other gods to serve them. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their forefathers.

*Do not refuse because of stubbornness (Zech 7:11)*

11 "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears.

### **Kingdom that can't be shaken (26-27)**

*God's kingdom will endure all generations (Ps 145:13)*

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

*God's kingdom is an eternal kingdom (Dan 4:3)*

3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

*God's kingdom will never end (Luke 1:32-33)*

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

*God's kingdom will be reigned by Jesus for ever and ever (Rev 11:15)*

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

*God's kingdom will be upheld and ruled with righteousness from now and forever (Isa 9:7)*

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

## **Serving the kingdom (28)**

*Serve by being a servant (Matt 20:26-28)*

26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

*Serve by being eager to help (2 Cor 9:1-2)*

1 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. 2 For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

*Serve by helping God's people (Heb 6:10)*

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

*Serve faithfully (1 Cor 4:1-2)*

1 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

*Serve by being God's fellow worker (1 Cor 3:8-9)*

8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

## **Kingdom fire (29)**

*A fire that devours (Ps 50:3)*

3 Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.

*A fire that consumes foes (Ps 97:3)*

3 Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side.

*A fire that contains God's rebuke (Isa 66:15)*

15 See, the Lord is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

*A fire that comes with God's judgment (Heb 10:27)*

27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Conclusion**

As we conclude this lesson, let me suggest a few major themes from our text and some of their implications.

*First, seeing isn't necessarily believing, but believing is seeing.* In chapters 3 and 4, our author has emphatically underscored the fact that the first generation of Israelites to leave Egypt – that generation who were participants in the drama that was played out at Mount Sinai – failed by reason of unbelief and disobedience. The empirical evidence could not have been piled higher or deeper, and yet they did not believe. Those who lived during the days our Lord ministered on this earth kept asking for signs, but these signs did not make believers out of most. Those who believed God's promises did so on the basis of God's Word, thus those who believed "saw" the unseen certainties of eternal blessings. Faith is not based upon sight, but it gives us sight.

16 Therefore we do not despair, but even if our physical body is wearing away, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison 18 because we are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, the tent we live in, is dismantled, we have a building from God, a house not built by human hands, that is eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this earthly house we groan, because we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed, after we have put on our heavenly house, we will not be found naked. 4 For we groan while we are in this tent, since we are weighed down, because we do not want to be unclothed, but clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. 6 Therefore we are always full of courage, and we know that as long as we are alive here on earth we are absent from the Lord – 7 for we live by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:7).

*Second, the spectacular and the sensational do not strengthen our faith and produce endurance as much as suffering does.* There are some today who seem to desire to live from one miracle to the next, always depending upon some miraculous event or spectacular experience to keep them going. Job did not have that luxury, nor did Asaph in Psalm 73, or Joseph in his years of suffering, to mention just a few. The point our author is making in our text is that while the spectacular does not tend to produce endurance and perseverance, suffering does. That is why the readers are exhorted to endure their afflictions as divine discipline. It is suffering that deepens and enriches our faith, thus producing endurance (Deuteronomy 8:2-6; Psalm 73:25-28; Psalm 119:67-72).

1 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of God's glory. 3 Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance, character, and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:1-5).

7 During his earthly life Christ offered both requests and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his devotion. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through the things he suffered. 9 And by being perfected in this way, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him (Hebrews 5:7-9).

This seems to be a lesson that Elijah needed to learn. Fire coming down from heaven at Mount Carmel was indeed spectacular, and it produced the appearance of momentary allegiance to God. But it didn't last, as Elijah soon realized. Elijah was ready to throw in the prophetic towel, but God sent him back to Mount Sinai, where he learned an important lesson:

11 The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. Look, the Lord is ready to pass by." A very powerful wind went before the Lord, digging into the mountain and causing landslides, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the windstorm there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake, there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire, there was a soft whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his robe and went out and stood at the entrance to the cave. All of a sudden a voice asked him, "Why are you here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:11-13)

In a sense, Elijah was allowed to relive the spectacular events that Moses and the Israelites witnessed at Mount Sinai. But when these spectacular events were repeated for Elijah, God did not speak through them. Instead, He spoke to him through a soft whisper. God is not always to be found in the sensational. Indeed, in the earthly life and ministry of our Lord, it seems as though He purposely avoided the sensational. Did Elijah wish to turn the nation around through this sensational event on Mount Carmel? It was not to be. God had another way: He would use another prophet (Elisha), and two very unspiritual men – Hazael and Jehu – to chasten Israel. Hazael would be king of Syria, and Jehu would become king of Israel. Who would have thought God would have used such unlikely instruments to deal with His people?

How does God make Himself known today? Occasionally God may do something spectacular, such as He did at Pentecost. But in these days, the amazing thing is that God has chosen to work by means of weak men and women, and means that appear to be unimpressive and unsensational:

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased to save those who believe by the foolishness of preaching. 22 For Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks ask for wisdom, 23 but we preach about a crucified Christ, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. 24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 26 Think about the circumstances of your call, brothers and sisters. Not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were born to a privileged position. 27 But God chose what the world thinks foolish to shame the wise, and God chose what the world thinks weak to shame the strong. 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, what is regarded as nothing, to set aside what is regarded as something, 29 so that no one can boast in his presence (1 Corinthians 1:21-29).

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that the extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us (2 Corinthians 4:7).

But he said to me, “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me (2 Corinthians 12:9).

How does God work today? I believe that we shall see how God normally works when we come to chapter 13, for there the Hebrew believers are instructed to persevere in their practice of showing brotherly love through entertaining strangers (13:2), identifying with those who are suffering for their faith (13:3), holding marriage in honor (13:4), and living lives in a way that is free from the love of money (13:5-6).

*Third, being certain of an “unshakable” kingdom gives Christians the basis for an unshakable faith, even in the midst of difficult days.* Our stability and security do not rest upon spectacular and sensational events, but on the assurance that we have an “unshakable” kingdom reserved for us in heaven, and this is based upon the Word and the work of our God in the person of His Son:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you, 5 who by God’s power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. 7 Such trials show the proven character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold – gold that is tested by fire, even though it is passing away – and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 because you are attaining the goal of your faith – the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:3-9).

What better reason to persevere than knowing that this life is short and that Mount Zion is eternal and unshakable? Added to this, we have been assured that the suffering and adversities we face in this life come from the hand of our loving Father, to strengthen our faith and promote perseverance.

*(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/32-unshakable-kingdom-hebrews-1218-29>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Isaiah 2:2 looks forward to the day when “the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established . . . and all nations will stream to it.” What a glorious promise! There will be a single place of worship that will unite believers of all nations in their service to the one true God. But which mountain is this? Is it Mount Sinai, the place of terror, the place of law? Or is it the mountain John sees in Revelation 21, a great high peak that has new Jerusalem dropped onto its top (Revelation 21:10)? Hebrews points us to this second mountain and does not require us to wait for it. It is available now. God shook the earth when he gave the law. When Jesus died and then broke the bonds of death, God shook the earth and the heavens. The old is passed away, for God has made all things new (Revelation 21:5). Let us go to the new mountain, the kingdom that will not be shaken.

***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary***

1. Some people will know God only through what they see in you (Heb. 12:14)
2. Guard against bitterness; it harms your relationship with other believers (vs. 15)
3. We see our wickedness and failure when we clearly see God's holiness, power, and love (vss. 18-21)
4. Through Christ, imperfect man can now draw near to a holy God (vss. 22-23)
5. Christians live confident and forgiven because Jesus has brought peace with God (vs. 24)
6. Those who reject the gospel of Jesus choose judgment over grace (vss. 25-29)