

I. Wrapping Up A Great Sermon

A. The Pastor's Concerns against backsliding

1. Unbelief
2. Valuing Judaism/the Law over Christ
3. Temptation to renounce the faith under persecution and struggle
4. Attractiveness of the world

B. The Pastor's Response to backsliding – Christ

1. God
 - a. Creator and sustainer of the universe
 - b. The full and definitive representation of the glory of God
2. The Word made flesh
 - a. Fulfillment of the prophets/Scripture
 - b. The true Tabernacle
3. The founder of our salvation
 - a. The Great and Final Sacrifice for our sins
 - b. The Superior Priest/High Priest
 - c. The one who gives us entrance into the Holy of Holies
4. The one who mediated the New Covenant and promises us eternal life
 - a. The one who intercedes for us before the throne of heaven
 - b. The Trailblazer – the one who walks before us and leads the way
 - c. Our Anchor and Forerunner – the one who keeps us steady in the storms and leads us safely home
 - d. The Perfecter of our faith
5. Superior to the angels
6. Greater than Moses

II. The Bottom Line for Believers

- A. I am not afraid of death, but of dying
- B. How can I endure through difficult times, epic struggles, loss, pain, sorrow?

III. Do You Understand Who God Is? He Has Not Changed!

A. He is a Consuming Fire

1. Deuteronomy 4:23 “Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.”
2. Hebrews 12:29b “Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.”

B. He is a God of words and truth

1. The “Ten Words” given on Mount Sinai
2. A God of Prophets revealing His words to us

3. A God of Scripture revealing His truth to us
4. John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
5. Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

IV. Do You Understand Who You Are in Christ and Where You Are?

A. The Church of the Firstborn

1. What is the firstborn? – The one receiving the double portion of the inheritance
2. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:20 "But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
 - b. Colossians 1:18 "He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."
3. He is our representative and entrance into eternal life and membership into the Church of the Firstborn
 - a. We are beloved by the Father
 - 1) 1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
 - 2) 1 John 4:19 "We love because he first loved us."
 - b. We are called into the Church of the Firstborn by God – Romans 8:29-30 "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."
 - c. We were born into this inheritance through Christ – John 1:12 "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God."
 - d. We are redeemed by the blood of the Firstborn Son – "Romans 5:8 "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 - e. We are reconciled to God by the Firstborn Son – Colossians 1:19-20 "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."
 - f. We were raised to life by the Firstborn Son and the work of the Holy Spirit
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:21-23 "For as by man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ."
 - 2) Romans 8:11 "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

B. The Festal Assembly of All Believers and God's angels

1. "Boundaries of time and space and even death are meaningless to those who are in fellowship with Jesus. The communion of the saints is a reality. The invisible world is a present delight." (Jones, p. 145-146)

2. We are part of the Church of the Firstborn, and “by virtue of our union with Him, we are also firstborn. We are co-heirs with Christ”, and part of the great body of Christ (The Church Militant here on earth, The Church Triumphant in heaven). (Hughes, p. 192)
3. “Hebrews affirms that the greatest expression of reality is God and the assembly of those who gather in His presence.” (Lane, p. 169)

V. A Picture of Two Mountains By Way of Explanation

Mount Sinai	Mount Zion
The Mediator is Moses	The Mediator is Christ
Sinai is a place of infinite distance and deadly barrier to access – to touch is instant death, to touch an animal or person too close is death (this is actually a grace from God to keep us from being destroyed by our sin in His presence)	Zion is a place of worship with joy <u>in God’s presence</u> . Hebrews 10:39 <u>But we are not those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.</u> ” Because Christ has born our sin in our place.
Sinai was overwhelmed by holiness - fire, clouds and darkness, lightning, storm, loud noise, earthquake. It was terrifying, even the author says, to Moses. The Divine voice is overwhelming and unapproachable.	In Zion the gloom and smoke are gone. We will someday see the City of God. Ezekiel 48:35 “The circumference of the city shall be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, ‘The LORD is There.’” Divine voice invites and is accessible – Revelation 22:14, 17 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates... The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”
God’s people meet the Judge of All the Earth and shrink back in fear.	God’s people meet the Judge of All the Earth, but Jesus is also present, our Mediator, our Sacrifice, and Savior, and we draw near with confidence.
You can “see” the power of God and His holiness, but you cannot overcome your sin.	You cannot “see” the power of God and His Holiness, but your sin has been overcome.
You have not come to what may be touched (Hebrews 12:18)	You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God. (Hebrews 12:22)

VI. A Proper Response

- A. To Those Who Worship With Us and Do Not Know Christ
 1. The *a fortiori* argument (from the lesser to the greater)
 - a. The disobedience of the Exodus generation to follow God, led to their death in the desert, outside the Promised Land.
 - b. The disobedience to Jesus’ message of grace leads to death eternally
 - c. Do not show contempt for the blessing of the New Covenant. You are rejecting the Speaker – God Himself.

B. To Those Who Believe

1. "When we come to worship, we must keep both mountains in view – the approachable Zion with its consuming love, and the unapproachable Sinai, with its consuming fire – and then come in reverent boldness." (Hughes, p. 203)
 - a. "The imagery of God as raging fire speaks of his holiness and the reverent fear with which we must always treat him. God can never be taken lightly. Even when the threat of his wrath has been removed by the cross of Christ, he himself is not a tame God. He is always dangerous." (Phillips, p. 582)
 - b. "The fire on Sinai is a thing of the past, but the blazing fire of God's holy, jealous and righteous love will never be extinguished. The believer knows that in the presence of that bright light all his sins are exposed. He also rejoices that mercifully, in its refining flames, they can also be consumed." (Brown, p. 247)
2. Listen and obey the One who speaks.
 - a. You have greater privileges because of the cross, and also bear greater responsibility to listen and obey.
 - b. Grace and love do not allow flagrant disobedience, sin, and unbelief
3. Remember we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)
 - a. John 20:29b "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
 - b. 1 Peter 1:8-9 "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls."
4. The One who shook the earth at Sinai will someday shake all earthly things away
 - a. Haggai 2:6-7 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Yet in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.'"
 - b. 2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed."
5. Heavenly things cannot be shaken away
 - a. The New Covenant, the true Temple, the Great High Priest are indestructible. Someday the shadows will be shaken to their core and disappear. But the heavenly will remain, and it will be the end of shadows and the complete fulfillment of the new and eternal heaven and earth.
 - b. Hebrews 1:10-12 "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." (quoting Psalm 102: 25-27)
 - c. Psalm 125:1 "Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever."
 - d. Isaiah 33:20 "Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken."

6. Stop listening to those who would take you back to Sinai. Drop the “mini-Sinai” (Hughes, p. 190) in your life, the legalism/laws that reduce your relationship to God to a check list.
7. Stop listening to those who would take you away from the faith into the world. 2 Peter 3:17-18 “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”
8. Struggles in this life are tests – opportunities to trust in Him and in that way glorify Him
 - a. “1 Peter 1:3-7 “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
9. Struggles in this life are tests – opportunities to worship Him and in that way glorify Him
 - a. Romans 12:1 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” “Believers regard every aspect of their lives as an expression of their devotion to Him.” (O’Brien, p. 500)
 - b. Hebrews 12:28-29 “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, for our God is a consuming fire.”

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Temptation of Christ. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Jump to navigation Jump to search.Â "Despite the difficulties urged, against the historical character of the three temptations of Jesus, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, it is plain that these sacred writers intended to describe an actual and visible approach of Satan, to chronicle an actual shifting of places, etc., and that the traditional view, which maintains the objective nature of Christ's temptations, is the.Â In Judaism, "the practice of fasting connected the body and its physical needs with lessÂ It stresses the completeness and finality of Jesus's triumph over his adversary.â[31] These are the same three temptations one renounces at baptism: the World, the Flesh and the Devil.[citation needed]. The persecution of Christians can be historically traced from the first century of the Christian era to the present day. Early Christians were persecuted for their faith at the hands of both the Jews from whose religion Christianity arose and the Romans who controlled many of the lands across which early Christianity was spread. Early in the fourth century, a form of the religion was legalized by the Edict of Milan, and it eventually became the State church of the Roman Empire.