



December 18, 2020

Entering in Through the New Covenant

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 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. (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." And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 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, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. -

(Hebrews 11:18-24)

This theme of the invisible and the visible worlds is taken up again by the writer of the book of Hebrews, where we are given another glimpse of the grand reality of heaven. In his defense of the superiority of the new covenant of grace over the old covenant with its laws and regulations, the author contrasted the fearful experience of Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai with what is available to followers of Christ.

That passage speaks to the reality of heaven! It is where we stand, with God at the center, surrounded by all his perfect and perfected beings, those who have come to God through Jesus, the Lamb of God whose blood does not call out for judgment and condemnation, but for mercy, forgiveness, and the fullness of the grace of God! Indeed, it calls for a "festal gathering" —a grand, eternal, joyous party of praise to the God who makes it all possible!

In the new covenant that Jesus initiated, we are given a foretaste of this reality. The phrase "innumerable company of angels" suggests that there are more angels than there are numbers. Think about how many numbers there are. Actually, you can't do that, since there are innumerable numbers! When you compare the number of human beings to how many numbers there are, there are immeasurably more numbers, right? So when the writer mentioned "innumerable" angels, he was attempting to express the overwhelming abundance of this world in which God exists at the very center, and which he calls us to draw from so we may know a life without lack.

Now consider how you might respond if you were told that God was in the next room and that anyone who wanted to do so could just go in and see him, especially if we saw a bright light coming from around the door and the walls were shaking? But that's what was going on, Mount Sinai was trembling like a massive rocket just before launch. The Israelites were filled with fear and wanted to keep a great distance between themselves and God. Except for Moses. He went right up to where God was and spent forty days in God's presence (Ex. 24:18; 34:28). When Moses came down from the mountain, he was glowing. His face was so bright that it was like looking into a 300-watt lightbulb.

Practice: *From my own experience, I can often talk fervently about how I want to be close to the Lord, but if I saw light and smoke coming out from around the door and the walls shaking, I would be tempted to say, "Maybe this is a little too big for me, this may not fit into my plans."*

Q) Spend some time reflecting on how God is preparing you to be a person that would fit yourself into his glorious plans, instead of settling for the often frustrating experience of trying to fit Him into your own plans?