

### Hebrews 12 (18-29) – When Jesus Worships, pt.3

This is the third message where we have been examining what Hebrews 12:18-29 says about our worship as a local church body. And we have discovered that when we gather together to worship, even though we are physically on Earth, we are spiritually brought up into Heaven.

This is what the Tabernacle of Moses and Solomon's Temple were all about, copying the design of Heaven. But even though they were instituted and designed by God, and they were glorious, they were only a shadow. And because of Christ, we are brought up into the substance. Our New Testament reality far surpasses the Old Testament pictures. Praise God!

Transcendent worship is very clear in the book of Hebrews. And understanding this teaches you to move forward, instead of romanticizing the past. The point of the book of Hebrews is to demonstrate that Christ is superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6), the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13), and New Testament worship is superior to Old Testament worship (Hebrews 12:18-29). Amen.

We are examining Hebrews 12:18-29 like an investigative journalist, using the time-honored method of asking the questions, who, what, when, where, why, and how. In our first message, we asked who, what, and when. Who is involved? All of God's kingdom. What is going on? Worship. When is this taking place? Anytime God's people on Earth gather for worship, they become part of that gathered assembly in Heaven. Hallelujah!

Then, in our next message, we asked where. This transcendent gathering of all the saints, past and present, and all the angels, and God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, takes place in the throne room of Heaven. Because of Jesus our worship leader, when we gather together to worship, we enter into the Holy City, into the Holy Temple, inside the Holy Place, and in audience with our Holy God. We worship as part of the household of God. And all God's children are becoming God's house itself. It's awesome!

So that is who, what, when, and where. If you haven't yet heard those two messages, make sure you do, because they will help clarify and bring depth to this message. And for the next few messages, we will ask why.

Why is this taking place? Because Christ is superior to Moses, the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant, and New Testament worship is superior to Old Testament worship. Jesus is our worship leader.

**Christ is superior to Moses** (Hebrews 3:1-6) – This passage presents the comparison and contrast between Moses and Jesus. Moses was faithful as a servant of God. Jesus was faithful as the Son of God. Moses was pointing to the ministry of Christ. Jesus is the Christ.

Vs.1 says you should consider Jesus, God's Apostle – in other words, Jesus has brought God's word to us, because Jesus is God's word to us. And consider Jesus, God's High Priest – in other words, Jesus is the way to God. His sacrifice for your sin on the cross was once for all, bringing believers eternal life. The atoning work of Jesus, our High Priest, is a finished and all-sufficient work, because it has infinite worth as the work of God himself.

Vs.2 says that both Jesus and Moses were faithful in God's house, which is a picture of God's people. Vs.2 and 5 are quoting Numbers 12:6-8, which says – *Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD.* When it says *he beholds the form of the LORD*, it means that he was looking at God the Son, in other words, this was the preincarnate Jesus. Moses was faithful to God and God's people. But Jesus is God and Jesus is the creator of God's people.

Vs.3 says that Jesus is superior to Moses because Jesus made the house and Moses is part of the house. Vs.4 says that God is the builder. So, the conclusion is that Jesus, the Son of God, *is* God. Moses was great. Jesus is greater. Jesus is God. And Moses worshiped Jesus, before he was Jesus.

Vs.5-6 say that the difference between Moses and Jesus is that Moses was a servant and Jesus is a son. A son, by inheritance, owns the house, rules the house, and provides for the house out of his own wealth. But a servant doesn't own the house. A servant takes orders from the owner of the house. And a servant gets their provision from the owner of the house. So again, Jesus, God's Son, is superior to Moses, God's servant.

Look at the end of vs.6. *And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.* This isn't about losing your salvation; this is about being saved. The evidence that you are part of the household of God is that you don't throw away your hope. As Hebrews 10:35 says – *Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.* You become a Christian and live as a Christian the same way: by hoping in Jesus.

Jesus is the one who is your way to God. If you keep your eyes on him, you will have confidence that your sins are forgiven and you will persevere in faith and realize your heavenly calling. If you lack peace in your life, if you lack joy in your life, the answer is not about doing more for God. The answer is to *consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.* Jesus is joy, and to focus on the Prince of Peace is the way to peace.

You may want some sort of physical, tangible, extraordinary feeling when you worship. And you might think of all the sights and sounds of the Bible days gone by. But don't dismiss what this passage says about the spiritual reality of our worship right now. And what Jesus says about worship now.

To see that, let's turn to the gospel of John, chapter 4, and vs.19-24. Jesus is talking to a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. The woman wanted to know the place where the true worship was happening. The Samaritans and Jews had rival temples, one on Mt. Gerizim and one at Jerusalem. And both the Samaritans and Jews believed their place was the right place of worship.

Look how Jesus answers her question. In vs.21, Jesus says that a change is coming. Now, in vs.22, Jesus does tell the Samaritan woman that the Temple

in Jerusalem was where he was to be worshiped. However, as Jesus says in vs.23-24, this will no longer matter. Soon, the true worshipers of God will no longer worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. Instead of worshiping at the physical Temple, true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth.

The change and difference between Old Testament and New Testament worship is about the person and work of Christ. Vs.24 says *God is spirit*; this means not only that God is invisible and divine but also that he is life and life-giving. Jesus says that his death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven mean that true worshipers will no longer worship in Jerusalem but in spirit and truth because God is spirit. Jesus is saying that the true worshipers will no longer worship at the earthly copy of the real Temple. Rather, they will now worship God at the real Temple itself! We walk by faith, not by sight.

In spirit and truth; this is what God says is happening when we worship today as a corporate body. That's what is acceptable to the one true God. And as Hebrews 12:25 says – *See that you do not refuse him who is speaking.*

Look at vs.26-27. Back in the days of Moses, God shook the mountain, and the people feared. But now, God is going to shake everything. And only the unshakable will remain. Then you will know that all is well in God's unshakable kingdom. And as vs.28-29 say – *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.*

If you want to be a true worshiper, you need to come to Jesus in faith and he will give you his Spirit, and place you in God's true temple. Then you will have direct access to the Father, you will be able to boldly come before the throne of grace to find mercy and grace when you need it, and you will be lifted up with you brothers and sisters to worship in spirit and truth. Amen.