



Lasting Worship: Hebrews 12v18-29

There are two kinds of mountain in this passage: one is inaccessible, frightening and life-threatening (Mount Sinai); the other is accessible, glorious and life-giving (Mount Zion), and has us 'trembling' with awe and delight.

What do you feel is significant and will stand the test of time?

1) Unapproachable Presence (v18-21)

These verses describe the presence of the Lord coming down on the top of Mount Sinai (see Exodus 19v16-20). Only Moses could approach the top of the mountain. By the end of the book of Exodus, God's relational presence and glory have moved down to the tabernacle, and even Moses cannot enter there. These things show us that the presence of God is set apart above anything else. His heart and love for his people are pure and passionately jealous: our 'God is a consuming fire' (12v29, Deuteronomy 4v24). He is not to be trifled with.

2) Joyful Celebration (v22-24)

But the breath-taking message of Hebrews is that we do not need to be afraid because God has opened the way into his presence and made his heart approachable (remember 10v19-22).

You have already come to Mount Zion, to the presence of God, to joyful celebration in which the angels participate (v22), to the assembly of the children of God (v23), and to the presence of Jesus who gives us these better, new covenant promises (v24). This life of worship is the life of the only kingdom that will remain unshaken (v28). It has begun already and is waiting to be fulfilled. Recall the CN tower illustration: God has raised us up to life in his presence, and there's rejoicing and celebrating, eating and drinking with him. The barrier of our sin has been taken away: that loving forgiveness and unrestricted access into his presence moves us at the deepest level to reverence and awe (Psalm 130v4, ESV).

3) Lasting and Pleasing Worship (v25-29)

And so, God says in v25, 'See that you do not refuse me speaking'. We do not want to fall short of this astonishing privilege and grace (12v15). In Haggai 2, God promises his glorious presence and the judgement of other kingdoms (Hebrews 12v26). Only the life of worship in his kingdom will last and remain unshaken (v27). Therefore, since we are already receiving this kingdom (v28), since we are already in the relational, loving presence of God (v22-24, 10v19-22), let's make worship our priority. Verse 28 describes worship as awe-filled response to the grace and heart of God. It is pleasing to God, it delights him. It is the trembling, joyful response of love meeting the amazing love God pours out on us.

