

We then discussed what role the Law now plays in our life as New Testament Christians (pages 47-64) -

- We discussed the **indicative** and **imperative** modes of the Law and the Gospel (pages 48-51) – The Gospel comes with **promises** as well as imperative **commands**.
- We discussed **Legalism, License, Liberty** - (pages 51-56)
- We discussed matters of **conscience** and **discernment** by a brief **exposition of Romans chapter 14** - (pages 57-64)
 - **Guided by Love** – the fulfillment of the Law
 - **Not to judge** our brother in disputable matters
- Provided a **list of principles of discernment** on matters of conscience and liberty (page 64)

Hebrews 12 Contrast

Lastly I would like to take a brief look at the passage in **Hebrews 12:18-24** to highlight the way the **New Testament** holds forth a **huge contrast** between the **Old** and **New Covenants**. The writer to the Hebrews has in the previous eleven chapters described the massive differences between the **weakness** and **inability** of the Old Covenant to provide sufficient reconciliation to God (see pages 31-32), and the **utterly sufficient** Person and Work of Christ as God-man, Mediator, High Priest and once for all Sacrifice to reconcile us completely, finally and eternally to God. He has given stern warnings in the book to the Hebrews not to rely or trust in the Old Covenant system but instead to put their trust fully in Christ, the only sufficient and divinely ordained means of salvation from sin and death. He has shown the clear **abrogation** of the **Ceremonial Law**, including the Levitical Priesthood, the temple sacrifices, the washings and consecrations and the other outward and ceremonial rites related to it. The Ceremonial aspects of the Law were only **temporary** and **ineffectual**. More than this, see that Christ is the actual long awaited **substance** of God's ultimate plan in history that was only a **shadow** in the Mosaic Covenant (Heb 10:1). It was Christ who provided a perfect mediation between God and man as the divinely appointed **High Priest**, whose once-for-all sacrifice is **effectual** to atone for sins to the uttermost, and whose Priesthood is **eternal**, for *"He ever lives to make intercession for us."* (Heb 7:25). In Christ a **New** and **better covenant** has dawned which stands on better promises and provides complete atonement and eternal forgiveness for *"those who draw near to worship God through Him."*

In summing up his letter, there is a glorious text in Hebrews 12:18-24 presenting the contrast between the Old and New Covenants. In the text, these are represented by two mountains which show forth the nature of the Old and the New. Let us see in these how to understand that **the Old Covenant has fulfilled its place in redemptive history**, and has given way to the glorious NEW, effectual, and eternal purpose of God which is now proclaimed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In verses 18-21 you have language which describes the nature of the **OLD** Covenant like **Mount Sinai**, as filled with judgment, *"fire and darkness and gloom,"* and this with much **terror** and **dread** and its people **afraid** and unable to bear the demands it imposes, so that even the man of God is *"full of fear and trembling."* Similarly the **OLD** is described throughout the New Testament as only filling a **temporary** place in history (Gal 3:19-22), and being **opposed** and

hostile to us (Col 2:13-14), bringing **God's wrath** and **killing** and **condemning us** (Rom 4:15, 7:9-12) as the very **power of sin** (1 Cor 15:56). See here in this text why the hymn writers would speak of the terrors of the holy Law and dread its deadly consequences. Moreover the OLD is presented as the earthly and natural shadow of heavenly and supernatural reality of the NEW.

Hebrews 12:18-21 - 18 For you have not come to **a mountain that may be touched** and to a **blazing fire**, and **to darkness and gloom and whirlwind**, 19 and to **the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words** which sound was such that **those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken** to them. 20 For **they could not bear the command**, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." 21 And **so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."**

But consider how this text in Hebrews 12:22-24 contrasts the OLD with the NEW. This language refers to **Mount Zion** as the "*city of God*," and the "*heavenly Jerusalem*," where God dwells in **heavenly supernatural** glory with "*myriads of angels*" having assembled His people near Him, who have been reconciled and their names "*enrolled in Heaven*." He is their Judge, but presides over the finished work of His "*mediator of a NEW covenant, Jesus*," who has made people's "*spirits perfect*" by His "*sprinkled blood*." The sprinkled blood of Jesus, unlike the OLD Testament animal sacrifice of Abel, satisfies God's holy Law and brings about joyful perfection and reconciliation with God and men, so that he can dwell near them and with them eternally in His holy city. This text is loaded with Old Testament imagery and nuance that we do not have sufficient time to cover, but the contrast between the OLD and NEW sticks out very brightly.

Hebrews 12:22-24 - 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to **the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**, and **to myriads of angels**, 23 to the general assembly and **church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven**, and **to God, the Judge of all**, and to **the spirits of righteous men made perfect**, 24 and **to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant**, and to **the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel**. NASB

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Mount Sinai	Mount Zion
Earthly, Natural	Heavenly, Supernatural
to a mountain that may be touched	the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,
blazing fire & darkness and gloom and whirlwind	myriads of angels
the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words	church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven
those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them	God, the Judge of all
they could not bear the command	the spirits of righteous men made perfect
so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."	Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant
	the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

See in this text a **comparison** of the **OLD** and the **NEW** in a **vivid picture**. At Sinai God is an angry, unapproachable being surrounded with fire, terror and doom. At Zion, He is a Judge satisfied by the Mediator Jesus, having gathered in much joy with all the angels and righteous people made perfect, in heavenly victory in a city made by Him, in that place of Jerusalem where He will eternally dwell with His people. Consider how God would have a Jewish apostle write to Jewish believers during the era of transition between OLD and NEW Covenants, and describe in such contrast the **weak, obsolete** and **temporary** nature of the **OLD** Covenant in comparison to the **eternal, perfect** and **sufficient** nature of the **NEW** Covenant offered in and through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, the Jewish God-man Messiah. Glorious indeed!