

God Speaking From Heaven Hebrews 12:18-29.

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the contrast between the law and grace, highlighting the importance of responding to God's current dealings through Christ's finished work.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:18

Topics: "Righteousness", "Grace"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, illustrating how God is currently dealing with humanity in grace rather than judgment. He explains that while the law reveals our sinfulness, it is through Christ's completed work that we find righteousness and hope. Darby warns against the danger of rejecting God's grace, highlighting that true conviction comes from recognizing our inability to meet God's standards on our own. He encourages believers to embrace the grace offered through Christ, who speaks from heaven, assuring us of our justification and eternal life. The sermon calls for a response to God's grace rather than a retreat into self-righteousness.

Transcript

The apostle here contrasts Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, and points out what the present testimony is. It is a mistake that we very often make that we are so many responsible persons going on to judgment and there must give an account of ourselves. That is true of us, but that is very far from all. There has been a dealing of God with man, and He is now dealing with them for the last time; that makes it the more solemn.

It is now a question of good and evil in us. What the Lord presents to our souls now is, that the question is all settled; "there is none righteous, no, not one;" that is the way He is dealing now. If His grace is refused, judgment is pronounced upon their state; that is what I mean by settled. Now, He comes either in judgment or in warning, and if that is slighted, there is condemnation. The contrast between the two mounts is exceedingly striking. People do not believe that they are in this state of condemnation. There the law is exceedingly useful in awakening - if they judge of good and evil, they cannot judge of what is beyond themselves. Man's judgment is no higher than the evil he has done. A man brought up in dirt sees nothing in dirt; so with the natural mind, it judges according to its own state. God brings in His estimate of what man ought to be. That is what the law is - as a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. Therefore, "Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake." "Felix trembled," not that he was saved, but the word of God was awakening his conscience, because conscience was there. God has dealt probably with every heart here. The word breaks us up, and shews us we are not what God wants; but that is not the will being

converted. The flesh abuses everything. God gave the law to convict of sin; man takes it to work out righteousness. But God is not leaving you to the day of judgment; He is dealing with you now, and this is the day of grace.

When the word of God comes home to man - what man really ought to be - who could "answer him one of a thousand"? Wherever the word reaches the conscience, it is a present dealing; not put off to the day of judgment, because it reaches it now. Man knows perfectly well he cannot meet it. You know you have not loved God with all your heart today; you have not loved your neighbour as yourself one day in your life. My conscience tells me the law is right - though I may kick against it. You must not have any thought of your own righteousness in the day of judgment, because you have not got any.

The young man in Matt, 19:16, did not say, "What shall I do to be saved," but, "that I may have eternal life;" and the Lord's answer perfectly and entirely meets the question that was asked Him. "This do and live." The young man said, "This I have done, and what lack I yet?" "Sell all, and come, follow me." This tested him, for his heart was set on his possessions; he went away from grace. So, in John 8:9, one by one they went away from grace, because they dreaded the eye that could detect them. That is what people do still - they cannot bear conviction. It is getting away from God, because the heart and conscience cannot bear that which comes out of the presence of God. What a terrible thing that is, if your only hope of comfort is to keep away from God - to keep out of His sight!

Verse 22 - We are come, - not to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion. Zion is a word of immense import, if we read it spiritually. Zion was not simply mercy and patience. The ark was the only possible means of intercourse with God that Israel had, and they sent it away; so have we - so to speak - looking at our natural state. The importance of Zion was, that Israel had been already tested and had failed. Eli was a godly man, and when he found the ark was taken, and that all was over, we read that he fell backward and died.

You have to be brought to the conviction, like Eli that it is all over. Then God comes in, not merely in mercy and patience - that he had been all through - but God comes in, as He did then, when all the responsibility was closed by the total failure of man, taking the ark out of the hands of the Philistines, and placing it on Mount Zion, by David, as now by Christ, David's seed.

Verses 22, 23. - The whole scene of millennial glory on earth and in heaven is exceedingly interesting, but I do not speak of that now.

Verse 25. - How does Christ speak from heaven? It is not, There is a day of judgment, and you must prepare yourself for it; but He comes and speaks to man, and deals with man on the ground of His being a man in heaven. If He speaks from heaven, He speaks not merely of mercy, but of grace, on the ground of an accomplished work. He appeals to our hearts upon the ground of what He is and what He has done. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, because He has nothing more to do as to making out a righteousness for us. As to the question of righteousness, that work that He has finished is the righteousness that brings us into glory, who through grace, have believed in Him. I get these two things - the place that Christ speaks from, and the work that brings the people in. He does not reproach you. He comes and tells you, You must not think I am ignorant of what sin is, I bore it. He knows what the consequence is as none other can know it. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Are you learning God in the presence of grace? The hearts of the sons of men are wholly set in them to do evil. Man's history is a terrible one.

Because Christ humbled Himself in grace, man profited by the occasion, in order that He should be despised and rejected of men. And is there not a rejection of Him now? Do not some of you reject Him; do not people know that they are sinners, and yet go on sinning? That is despising it. But where the heart has been brought down, what do I find? Suppose I am coming to God by Him, why, He tells me I am in heaven because your sins are put away. And what can God say if Christ, who bore my sins, is in the presence of God? The thing before me is not judgment, but Christ. If I come to God as a judge, why, Christ is there. He cannot but own that my sins are all put away - Christ appearing in the presence of God is the witness of it.

The judgment day would be according to my works, but the present day is according to the efficacy of Christ's work; so we see what a great thing it is for Him to speak to us from heaven. It is an appeal that ought to put to shame and confusion everyone that does not bow to it. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." That is the only faith God will have. Christ is so perfectly glorified that he says, I won't have any other. If I own Christ, I am nothing; that is the thing that is wanted. Do you want to have a share of your own pretension in the presence of a dying Saviour? If you could get in a bit of your own righteousness, it would be like the dead flies, causing the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour. Thank God, that voice, if it is in the soul, is eternal life; it is God's way of communicating life.

Now, have you all taken this ground that God has taken with you, telling you that you are all lost - still telling it in grace? Beloved friends, He is not waiting for the day of judgment, when judgment will be executed. He is speaking to you from the right hand of the majesty on high, where he sat down when He had by Himself purged our sins. Are you going to refuse Him that speaks? I know our hearts drag us down, and the things around us are contrary to us, but it is Christ who has come and presented Himself before our eyes. Remember how He speaks; and are you going to refuse to hear Him, like the deaf adder? Are you going to take God in judgment, when you have despised Him in grace?

The Lord give us to see the truth, and taste the unspeakable love of Him who gave Himself for us, of Him who will with Him freely give us all things!

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