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THE CHURCH CHRIST IS BUILDING

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 128
HEBREWS 12:22-23

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Let us get a corrected translation of verses 18-21.

Verse 18

"For you have not gone to the handling of the mountain and the burning fire of Mt. Sinai, nor to darkness, even gloomy darkness and a whirlwind storm."

Verse 19

"Also the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which when heard, they begged that no word should be added to them."

Verse 20

"For they could not keep on bearing what was commanded (that is, the Ten Commandments) even if an animal should touch the mountain, it will be stoned."

Verse 21

"Also so terrible was its appearance (Mt. Sinai) that Moses said, I am terrified and trembling."

HEBREWS 12:22 "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." We have studied Mt. Sinai and now we come to a study of Mt. Zion. Mt. Zion is the mountain of salvation and once we come to Mt. Zion, there is never any reason for us to double back to Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion is Mt. Sinai plus much more. Mt. Sinai represents legalism, ritualism, and a do-it-yourself kit. Now you must recover and get back to Mt. Zion.

The verse begins with the conjunction alla which sets up this strong contrast between these two mountains. They are as different in principle as two mountains could be. They are Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerrazim all over again, the mountains of cursing and blessing. We see how cursed we are at Mt. Sinai and we see just how blessed we are at Mt. Zion. Believers are to climb Mt. Zion, but if they climb Mt. Sinai instead, then they have missed the way. Mt. Zion is the mountain of grace.

Galatians 4:19-31 will give the contrast of these two mountains. Following this alla, the word of contrast, we have seven datives of indirect objects and they go with the verb pros erchomai and this is a perfect, active, indicative and means you have already been saved and will remain that way forever. They have already come to Mt. Zion for salvation and they should stay on Mt. Zion for blessing.

What Is Mt. Zion?

1. The literal Mt. Zion is spelled two different ways. It is spelled Mt. Sion in Greek and Zion in Hebrew. It is a rocky mound jutting up between two brooks. On this mount was built a fort and no one was able to take this fort for over 500 years. In 2 Samuel 5, we have the story of how David finally took Mt. Zion. He remodeled it according to Psalm 30. Zion became associated with the idea of great blessing. David lived there the first time when he was a young musician, playing for King Saul. Mt. Zion in some ways is a grace monument to David, and God's grace blessings to David.

2. Mt. Zion depicts God's great grace plan for believers. That is why the writer in this passage refers to the fact that we have already gone to Mt. Zion. This mount represents grace and people are saved by grace. Instead of taking a hike down to legalistic Mt. Sinai they should be climbing higher and higher on Mt. Zion to super grace. This whole passage is given to call attention to their inconsistency and it reminds them it is time for them to become consistent.
3. While those to whom this was addressed originally were Jews, it actually applies to all the family of God. Both Jews and Gentiles are faced with the same temptation to leave Mt. Zion and go on a hike to Mt. Sinai.
4. Therefore, Mt. Zion is defined in terms of Royal Family and the heavenly home which we possess right now. We will have a perfect mansion and we will live there forever. Mt. Zion was David's real home.

Look At The Seven Datives Of Indirect Object

- No. 1 THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD.
It is to our advantage to have a permanent home. We are Royal Family and what we have on earth is temporary. This is our heavenly Jerusalem.
- No. 2 AN INNUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGELS
These are serving angels. They take delight in serving. Service is glorious when it is willing service. People are happy when they render good service.
- No. 3 THE CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN
The record is in heaven. We will return to this and study it closely.
- No. 4 GOD, THE JUDGE OF ALL.
- No. 5 THE SPIRITS OF THE JUSTIFIED ONES.
- No. 6 JESUS CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT
- No. 7 THE EFFICACIOUS BLOOD
This blood speaks of better things.

We are now going to study these seven datives of indirect object.

- No. 1 UNTO MT. ZION
This word "and" means even. The word for city is polis. It is called the city of the living God. The word for living is the present, active, participle of zao, "Even to the city of the Living God."
Next we have the words "The Heavenly Jerusalem." So this first dative tells us that we have a permanent home, all paid for and it is run perfectly and the servants are already there waiting for our arrival. Miriads of serving angels.

No. 2 AN INNUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGELS

The word murios means 10,000 times 10,000. It means innumerable. Millions of angels. These are elect angels, recipients of grace. These are the angels who were on the right side of the angelic conflict and they will serve God forever. (And remember this--God is going to take us and we are nobodys, and make us greater than angels and cause them to serve us forever.) Christ has intensified the conflict and we live in the Royal Family age. We live in the time of the most intense opposition in the angelic conflict. We are fighting our last stand and each must have his own ammunition. The doctrine is no good to you until you get it up out of the Bible and get it into the inside of your mind. You cannot fight your battle with the ammunition of someone else. The ammunition cannot be interchanged. You are royalty, so remember to act like it!

Verse 22 says, "But you have come to Mt. Zion (that's grace) even to the city of the living God (Royal Family) the heavenly Jerusalem and to miriads of angels." There should not be any verse break here because the next phrase really goes with this verse. The first words of verse 23, "to the general assembly" come from paneguris and it means "a festive convocation, a great party celebration." So that last phrase of verse 22 actually says, "To miriads of angels in festive celebration." This word paneguris is derived from the verb panegurizo and it means one great blowout celebration. They have been having a two-thousand year party and they are just getting warmed up. They are celebrating the victory of Jesus Christ and these are the angels who are going to serve us.

No. 3 TO THE CHURCHTHE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH1. NOMENCLATURE AND DEFINITION

The word ekklesia is used many ways in the ancient world and used three ways in the Bible.

- a. It was used in classical Greek. It was the assembly of the greek citizens in running their government. This was their legislative assembly, their ekklesia.
- b. In Acts 7:38, we have it used for the Jews assembled in the wilderness.
- c. In Matthew 18:17, it is used for the Jews assembled in their synagogue. In Acts 19:25, it is used for an assembly of citizens, the government of a certain state. These are non-technical uses of the word and it should not be translated "church" when it is used in these ways.

Two ways this term is used.

The church universal. This includes all born again believers.

The church local. Members in a given locality.

The three great passages on the church universal are Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27 and Col. 1:17-18. This includes every believer who is in union with Christ. But the church on earth must have a classroom and that classroom is the local church. This is the classroom for the Royal Family. We read, "To the church at Corinth" (The shaky one) or "To the church at Philippi" (The mature stable one). The church in Jerusalem had so many members it probably had a dozen places where people assembled.

There must be a pastor-teacher in each local church to communicate the Gospel. Hebrews 13:7 and 17 speak of this relationship. The pastor must be trained to give doctrine to the members. The church must have administration and this is where the deacons and other officers come in.

2. DISPENSATIONAL ORIENTATION MOST IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE CHURCH.

The church is the age of mystery.

(Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:1-5, Col. 1:25-27)

This is the mystery concept. This is something that was unknown in previous dispensations and unknown in Old Testament scriptures. Never once mentioned in the Old Testament. The first prophet of the church was Jesus Christ. He talked of this in the Upper Room Discourse and the Gethsemane Discourse. All eschatology of Old Testament leads up to Christ and then jumps over the Church Age and picks up in the Millennium. Prophecy jumps over the Church Age and picks up after the church has been Raptured. It begins again with the Tribulation and Millennium and The Eternal Kingdom. This is why it is called mystery (Doctrine of an ancient fraternity called mystery). Moses, Abraham, Isaiah or any of the other Old Testament greats knew anything about this doctrine. The Church Age is not taught in the Old Testament.

3. THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH AGE.

The interruption of the Jewish Age had to be in order that there might be the calling out of the Royal Family. This gives us a clue as to when the Church Age begins. It begins at the point of interruption. The reason the Jewish Age was interrupted was the fact that Jesus Christ had just completed the strategic victory of the Angelic Conflict by being seated at the right hand of the Father. All Old Testament saints are members of the family of God, but there was no Royal Family to celebrate the seating of Jesus Christ after his resurrection and ascension and session. No Royal Family to celebrate or commemorate this victory. You see, our salvation and our dispensation commemorates strategic victory. The baptism of the Holy Spirit entered us into union with Christ who was seated at the right hand of the Father. The baptism of the Holy Spirit never occurred until this time. This was the Day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. It is a commemorative act. It commemorates his strategic victory. So in a way, you are a museum piece. And the only way we can be a commemoration is to be in union with Christ and this makes us Royal Family of God, not just family of God. So ours is a unique situation. The Jewish Age had to be interrupted for that very reason--if the Age of Israel had been completed, there would be no Royal Family. To have this commemoration, there had to be this interruption and the thing that signaled this was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Church Age did not begin in Abraham's tent. Jesus said to Peter, "On this rock I will build my church" and the word was future tense. When Jesus spoke those words, the church was still in the future. When Jesus spoke those words, the church was not in existence. "I will build" of Matthew 16:18 is future tense. Every time a person is born again in the Church Age, this baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place and it had never happened before. It never happened in Old Testament times. It will not happen in the Tribulation nor will it happen in the Millennium. Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is unique for the Church Age only. It is for the Royal Family of God and for none others.

Holy Spirit does five things for each believer.

(1) He regenerates him (2) Baptizes him with the Holy Spirit (3) Indwells him (4) Seals him forever (5) and gives him a spiritual gift.

Please notice that the Holy Spirit indwells the body of the believer. So the baptism of the Holy Spirit came for the first time to believers when the Church Age began. (Acts 1:5)

4. THE TERMINATION OF THE CHURCH AGE.

The Church Age began in June of 30 A.D. When will it end? Some say conditions in the Middle East will determine it. That is not true. (Conditions in the Middle East are uncertain now, but they have been this way often before.) They thought in the time of Napoleon that the end had come. Napoleon was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and when the Pope started to crown Napoleon, he jerked the crown out of the Pope's hand and said, "No one can crown Napoleon but Napoleon. I've earned it and I will crown myself." Many people thought he was the anti-Christ. And now today we have very similar conditions in the Middle East.

The termination of the Church Age is based on the imminence of the Rapture. Paul said that the Rapture could take place at any time and only God knew the time. Paul taught this doctrine so well to the Thessalonians that they thought Christ would come in their time. No one knows the day nor the time when this will take place. (There was a movement in Switzerland in the Middle ages that prepared people for the end time and they quit their jobs and got ready for it.)

The Rapture could occur tonight or it could be a thousand years from now. Only God knows when it will be and it is in his hand. This is classified information, top secret information. The Rapture is also called the Resurrection. Spoken of in 1 Cor. 15:51-57, Phil. 3:21 and 4:13-18 and in 1 John 3:1-2.

Number of born again believers equals the number of demons.

By comparing certain texts in the original greek, there is good reason to believe that the number of people in the church will equal the number of demons operating in the earth. Col. 2:14, Rev. 19:6-8 and Zech. 13:2 compared to 1 Thess. 3:13. It would seem that one person is to dump one demon off the earth. Remember that all fallen angels are not operational today. Some are in Tartarus because of disobedience at the flood and they are awaiting the judgment. The demons who operate today are unseen. This indicates that there will be an exact number of people in the Royal Family of God. The termination of the Church Age is unknown. No one can rush it up or change the time of its coming. Only God controls the timing of these events. At the time of the termination of the Church Age, the bride is prepared in heaven while the Tribulation is going on in the earth. This preparation includes a resurrection body, the removal of the old sin nature and the destruction of all human good. God will not have one act of human good that was done during the Church Age to be in heaven.

5. SOME SYNONYMS OF THE CHURCH.

There are seven of these in Scripture. Each one emphasizes some phase of Bible Doctrine.

- a. THE LAST ADAM--THE NEW CREATION.
Jesus Christ is the last Adam and the Royal Family of God is the New Unique Creation. This is taught in 1 Cor. 15:45 and 47, 2 Cor. 5:17 and Gal. 6:15. You must remember that the Church Age as Royal Family is absolutely unique. We are different from Moses and Elijah and all Old Testament saints.
- b. THE HEAD AND THE BODY.
Christ is the head and the church is the body. (Eph. 1:22-23, 4:4-5 and 5:23, Col. 1:18, 24 and 2:19) It is a very common synonym in scripture. The head directs the body and controls the body.
- c. THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.
This is found prophetically in John 10, Heb. 13:20, 1 Peter 5:4. We are totally helpless sheep and need every provision God has provided. Christ is called the shepherd for he provides for the sheep on the earth.
- d. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES OF JOHN 15
This is related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the uniqueness of the Church Age saints.
- e. THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE AND THE STONES OF THE BUILDING.
(Ephesians 2:20 and 1 Peter 2:4-8)
- f. THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.
We have studied this one so very extensively. Jesus the great High Priest and we as Royal Family make up the Royal Priesthood. (Heb. 7:25, 10:10-14, 1 Peter 2:5 and 9)
- g. THE GROOM AND THE BRIDE.
(2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25-27, Rev. 19:6-8)

These are the seven synonyms we have for the church.

6. THE UNIQUENESS OF BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCH AGE.

- a. The baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is the one thing that leads to the uniqueness of our royalty. In the earth, royalty comes and goes but this royalty is here to stay. It is based upon God's plan and is as stable as the character of God.
- b. Every member of the Royal Family is his own priest. This is called the universal priesthood of all believers. This is the basis for our fulltime Christian service.
- c. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells your body. (1 Cor. 6:19) This was never true before the Church Age began. The soul is where you have the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18, John 7:39) Holy Spirit reserved for royalty.
- d. The Royal Family is the first ones to have a completed Canon of Scripture and Royalty can read. God never speaks beyond the revelation in his book.

- e. A supernatural way of life and a supernatural means for executing this life. This is Church Age doctrine and the Holy Spirit furnishes the power. Each one is to be an ambassador for Christ.

7. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CHURCH

The objective is for each believer to grow in grace until you reach super grace.

This scripture says, "The church of the firstborn." The word "firstborn" is a descriptive genitive from prototokos. This presents the believer as being in union with Christ. We share all Christ is--royalty, election, destiny, priesthood, heirship, kingship.

The firstborn means the head of the family, the one who inherits the family estate and the one who is the priest of the family. (Esau lost all of this.) As the firstborn, Jesus is the ruler of the church. He is the head of the church and the future ruler of the world, replacing Satan at the time of his second advent. So we are called the church of the firstborn and that's exactly what we are.

Then we have the words "which are written in heaven." The word is apographo and this is a perfect, passive, participle and it means "registered in heaven." It is a past action that goes on forever. We are registered as Royal Family and this will last forever. This includes every believer. We have en and the locative of ouranos meaning "heaven."