

Hebrews 12:22-24 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST
 Click chart to enlarge
 Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission
 Swindoll's Chart, Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews, Another Chart

The Epistle to the Hebrews				
INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18			EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25	
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST

DOCTRINE	DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD	

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible](#)

Hebrews 12:22 But you have [come](#) to [Mount Zion](#) and to the [city](#) of the [living God](#), the [heavenly Jerusalem](#), and to [myriads of angels](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [alla proseleluthate](#) (2PRAI) [Sion orei kai polei theou zontos](#), (PAPMSG) [Ierousalem epouranio](#), [kai muriasin aggelon](#), panegurei

BGT ἄλλ' προσεληλθατε Σιὼν ὄρει καὶ πόλει θεοῦ ζῶντος, ἐρουσσαλήμ πούραν, καὶ μυριάσιν ἁγγέλων, πανηγυρεῖ

Amplified: But rather, you have come to Mount Zion, even to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless multitudes of angels in festal gathering, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: 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,

NKJ But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

NET But you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, **to the assembly**

CSB Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels **in festive gathering**,

ESV But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels **in festal gathering**,

NIV But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels **in joyful assembly**,

NLT: No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to thousands of angels **in joyful assembly**. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: No, you have been allowed to approach the true Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have drawn near to the countless angelic army,

Wuest: But you have come to Mount Sion, even to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable multitude of angels

Young's Literal: But, ye came to Mount Zion, and to a city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of messengers,

- **You have come** - Ps 2:6; 48:2; 132:13,14 Isa 12:6; 14:32; 28:16; 51:11,16; 59:20 Isa 60:14 Joel 2:32 Ro 11:26 Ga 4:26 Rev 14:1
- **City** - Heb 13:14 Ps 48:2, 87:3 Mt 5:35 Php 3:20 Rev 3:12, 21:2,10, 22:19
- **Living God** - He 3:12, 9:14, 10:31 Dt 5:26 Jos 3:10 2Ki 19:4 Ps 42:2, 84:2, Jer 10:10 Da 6:26 Ho 1:10 Mt 16:16 Ro 9:26 1Th 1:9 Rev 7:2
- [Hebrews 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Psalm 2:6 "But as for Me, I have installed **My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.**"

Hebrews 11:10+ for he was looking for the **city** which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:16+ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a **city** for them.

Matthew 6:21+ (OUR TREASURE IS IN MT ZION!) for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Hebrews 13:14+ For here (ON EARTH) we do not have a lasting **city**, but we are seeking the city which is to come (Heb 12:22).

Ephesians 2:19+ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are fellow citizens with the saints**, and are of God's household,

Deuteronomy 33:2+ (INNUMERABLE ANGELS) He said, "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And **He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones**; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.

Deuteronomy 5:26+ (STRIKING CONTRAST) 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the **living God** speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

Daniel 7:10+ "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; **Thousands upon thousands were attending Him**, And **myriads upon myriads were standing before Him**; The court sat, And the books were opened (TO SEE WHO WAS "ENROLLED" IN HEAVEN - cf Heb 12:23 "enrolled").

Revelation 5:11+ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was **myriads (urias) of myriads (urias), and thousands of thousands**,

HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

ANOTHER MOUNT A BETTER MOUNT!

[Radmacher](#), nicely summarizes this section noting that "In these verses, the author of Hebrews contrasts the Mosaic covenant with the New Covenant by contrasting two mountains: Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. At Mount Sinai, the Israelites received the Law from God with fear and trembling, for God displayed at that time His awesome power (see Ex 19:10-20:26). In contrast, Christian believers have come to a heavenly Jerusalem on Mount Zion through Jesus' blood. This mountain is a celebration of the Holy One, attended by angels, believers, and righteous people. The author makes the contrast between the two covenants vivid, and then once again exhorts his readers not to reject Christ's offer of salvation (see Hebrews 12:25-29). (Online - [The Nelson Study Bible](#))

But ([alla](#)) is strong term of contrast usually introduces a radical "change of direction." What's the change? The writer's point is that instead of returning to **Mount Sinai** (cf Judaism, Temple worship, which is something they can physically see as the Temple is still standing), the Hebrew audience is urged to continue their approach to **Mount Zion**, (something that can only be seen by faith not sight as it is future and spiritual) the spiritual mountain and city where the **living God** dwells and reigns. **On Mt Sinai God is a consuming fire, whereas on Mt Zion He is consuming love.** O amazing grace. How great is our salvation! (Heb 2:3).

You have come ([proserchomai](#)) **to Mount Zion and to the city of the living** ([zao](#) present tense - continually living) **God** ([see note](#)), **the heavenly** ([epouranios](#)) **Jerusalem, and to myriads** ([urias](#)) **of angels** ([aggelos](#)) - Whereas Mt Sinai was visible but not touchable, Mt Zion is invisible (in this present earthly life) but is "touchable" (so to speak)! The writer uses the perfect tense for **you have come** which views this heavenly possession of Mt Zion as already attained by those who have believed the new covenant and emphasizes that this heavenly possession is their possession **forever**. Believers have already come to Zion by faith, though not yet in full sight. This is the 'already-not yet' tension of the new covenant." In spirit they (and we) were residents of the city **already**, though in body they were strangers and aliens on earth (1Pe 2:11+, Php 3:20,21+). That there is yet to be an earthly manifestation of the city is clear from the later reference in Hebrews 13:14+ to "the city which is yet to come."

As someone has well stated "We have **already** arrived in principle where in full reality we shall be forever. The future is already the present. In today we possess tomorrow. On earth we own Heaven." This is an example of the tension between "[Already-Not Yet](#)."

*Every good thing is
enhanced in value by its opposite.*

Spurgeon - Every good thing is enhanced in value by its opposite. Light is all the brighter to eyes that have wept in darkness; food is all the sweeter after you have known hunger; and Zion is all the fairer because of Sinai. The contrast between free grace and law makes grace appear the more precious to minds that have known the rigor of the commandment.

The future is already present for us in the sense that in today and the blessings that we have in Jesus Christ, we possess the things that will be ours in the future.

S Lewis Johnson on **you have not come** (Heb 12:18+) and **you have come** (Heb 12:22) - Notice the two words ([proserchomai](#)); they are exactly alike in the original text, "**You have not come** ([proserchomai](#))."⁺ That, of course, with the negative. And then, Hebrews 12:22, "**You have come**." without the negative. So "**You have come** ([proserchomai](#))," "**You have not come** ([proserchomai](#))."⁺ So he's talking about what they have **not** come to [and] what they have **now** come to. The **former**, the Sinaitic revelation is the revelation of the sheer majesty of God, the absolute inapproachability of God, the sheer terror of the presence of the Lord God apart from the blood of sprinkling of the Cross of Calvary. That's so important for us to remember because it's a marvelous picture of how our sin and our judgment, and the fact that apart from Jesus Christ we should experience the loss of eternal life, of eternal judgment....But, here he says, "**You have come to Mount Zion**." Now, when, I think, about this "**you have come**" (perfect tense) and to "**the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**" the very fact that he puts it this way that we "**have come**" would let me know that he's not talking about what we have in *experience* now, but what we have by *position* being in Christ. So we have in *principle* **come** to this *position* before the Lord God. We have **come** to Mount Zion. We are as if we have come to **Mount Zion**. We are as if we have come to the **city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**, because it's so certain that we will experience these things. The future is already present for us in the sense that in today and the blessings that we have in Jesus Christ, we possess the things that will be ours in the future. One of the interesting things about this word, that's used twice in verse 18 and verse 22, "**you have come**." Verse 18 with the negative, "**you have not come**." But the same word, same verb, "**you have come**," is in a tense ([perfect tense](#)) that ordinarily refers to something in the past, the results of which continue, at least, to the present. So, in other words, it's not "you came," but "**you have come**," and you now stand in this position of being possessed in reality of **Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**, the church of the firstborn and all of the other blessings that are set forth here. This is our permanent status, so to speak. We say "our position" before the Lord God....(see his [sermon for lengthy illustration](#))...That's what we are. We're not misers, I hope. But we are just like that. No one ever really knows what we have, without investing in the Stock Market, without ever reading The Wall Street Journal, without anything like that. We "**have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the angels, the general assembly, the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven and to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant**." What a marvelous position we have. How rich we really are. ([Sermon](#)) (ED: DO YOU BELIEVE PASTOR JOHNSON?)

John MacArthur on **Mt Sinai** versus **Mt Zion** - Sinai symbolizes law and Zion symbolizes grace. No man can be saved by the law, but any man can be saved by grace. The law confronts us with commandments, judgment, and condemnation. Grace presents us with forgiveness, atonement, and salvation.(See [Hebrews Commentary - Page 413](#))

Temper Longman on Hebrews 12:22-24 - These verses form one long sentence, which begins with the strongly contrasting clause **But you have come to** and continues with a series of nine descriptive phrases identifying the place and the people that represent the Christian's true destination (In the Greek, each of the nine phrases is introduced by "and" except for "the heavenly Jerusalem," which stands in apposition to "the city of the living God." The first three phrases identify the place, while the remainder speak of its inhabitants). For **have come to** ([proserchomai](#)) as a term for the relationship with God that results from Christ's saving work, see Heb 4:16+; Heb 7:2+, and cf. Heb 10:22+; Heb 11:6+. It is important to note that the author speaks not merely of a future hope (as he did when speaking of the patriarchs in Heb 11:10, 13-16) but of a **salvation already achieved**—"you have come"; those who belong to Christ are already citizens of **Mount Zion**. The author is calling them not to a new status but to appreciate and enjoy what is already theirs. (Ed: This begs the question beloved - do we understand our new status? Do we truly give thanks to God for our new status? We can hardly do so if we don't comprehend this aspect of what Jesus accomplished for us). (See [Hebrews - Revelation](#))

MT. ZION CONSUMING LOVE

Mount Zion (see [dictionary notes on Zion](#)) is the site of **Mt Moriah** (means "the place where Yahweh sees") where Abraham sacrificed Isaac and corresponds to the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount. Many scholars feel that the Temple Mount area is in the approximate site of **Mt Moriah** where Abraham offered Isaac his "only son" whom he loved. Centuries later Mt Moriah was the site of the threshing floor of **Ornan** which David purchased for Solomon's temple (1Chr 21:18ff, 2Sa 24:24, 25, 2Chr 3:1] And nearby is another "mount" of sacrifice known as **Golgotha** (Jn 19:17+) also called **Calvary** (in same range as **Moriah** but slightly NW) on

which God the Father offered up His only Son, the Son Whom He loved (Jn 3:16, 3:35+). Yes, our God is consuming love, but don't forget that He is still a consuming fire. Lord, give us a healthy, holy fear of Who You really are, and may that reverential awe motivate us to godliness and holiness. Amen (See study of JERUSALEM PICTURED IN 6 PROPHETIC "PEAKS")

Simon Kistemaker on **Mt Zion - Mount Zion** is the highest elevation in the city of Jerusalem. As a fortress it was fiercely defended by the Jebusites, who were defeated at last by David. In time, the fortress, including the surrounding area, was called the city of David, but poets and prophets used the name Zion and designated it God's dwelling place (see, for instance, Ps. 2:6; 20:2; 99:2; 135:21; Isa. 4:3–5; Jer. 8:19). The writer of Hebrews employs the adjective heavenly to signify that the place he mentions is not the southeast corner of Jerusalem, but the heavenly Zion where God dwells with all the saints (Rev. 14:1; 21:2). The citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem are known as sons and daughters of Zion. It is the place where "God himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21:3). The heavenly Jerusalem excels its earthly counterpart, for sin and death are banished eternally in heaven; the city has no need of sun or moon, "for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp" (Rev. 21:23). The living God lives among his people forever. What an honor to live in that city! Consider this: Moses was given the honor of climbing Mount Sinai and being with God for forty days and forty nights (Exod. 34:28). We shall be with him in heaven always. Mount Sinai is a windswept, uninhabited mountain; the new Jerusalem is a city populated by the saints who dwell permanently in Zion with their living God (Gal. 4:26; Phil. 3:20). (Borrow [Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews page 384](#))

Temper Longman on **Mt Zion - Mount Zion** echoes a frequent OT name for Jerusalem (especially the temple hill), which is also used for the people of God whose life and worship is centered on his city; the name therefore has strong covenantal associations. In the NT it is used elsewhere only in OT quotations except for Revelation 14:1, where the Lamb is seen standing on Mount Zion among his redeemed people. Its use here in contrast with Mount Sinai reminds us that, despite the "obsolescence" of the old covenant, the people of God redeemed by Christ are in continuity with those of the OT. (See [Hebrews - Revelation](#))

Mount Zion was also the location of the Jebusite stronghold that David captured (2Sa 5:7) and made the religious center of his kingdom by bringing to it the golden Ark of God representing God's presence with His people. This is the site on which Solomon later built the Temple and installed the Ark (1Ki 8:1).

Zion is synonymous with **Jerusalem** and thus this holy place became the earthly dwelling-place of God. In the new Covenant, believers are the earthly dwelling place of God in Christ (1Co 3:16+, 1Co 6:19+)

John MacArthur contrasts Sinai with Zion - Whereas Sinai was forbidding and terrifying, Zion is inviting and gracious Sinai is closed to all, because no one is able to please God on Sinai's terms—perfect fulfillment of the law. Zion is open to all, because Jesus Christ has met those terms and will stand in the place of anyone who will come to God through Him. Zion symbolizes the approachable God. Sinai was covered by clouds and darkness; Zion is the city of light. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth" (Ps. 50:2). Sinai stands for judgment and death; Zion for forgiveness and life, "for there the Lord commanded the blessing—life forever" (Ps. 133:3). (See [Hebrews Commentary - Page 413](#))

Paul distinguished between the earthly and heavenly **Jerusalem** in his allegorical exposition on Hagar (and Ishmael, born according to the flesh) and Sarah (and Isaac, born according to the Spirit) "Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (Galatians 4:25-26+)

Comment: The phrase **Jerusalem which is above** was familiar to the rabbinical teachers, who conceived the heavenly Jerusalem as the archetype of the earthly. On the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, the heavenly archetype would be let down to earth, and would be the capital of the messianic theocracy.

And so as depicted allegorically by **Paul** in **Galatians 4+**, the Law (the Old Covenant) had its **Mount Sinai** but faith has its **Mount Zion** which is the same city which Abraham and the patriarchs sought, the writer of Hebrews recording that by faith (not sight) Abraham "was looking for the **city** which has foundations, Whose Architect and Builder is God. (Heb 11:10+)...But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a **city** for them (Heb 11:16+).

John saw this city in his vision recording - And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev 21:1-2+)

As [discussed above](#) while we have **ALREADY** come to this city (in spirit, by faith), it is a city that is **YET** to come (see Hebrews 13:14+, "but we are looking for the city that is to come"). In Ephesians we see a similar **ALREADY-NOT YET** pattern for example Paul describes the heavenly position of believers in Ephesus explaining that God has "raised us up with Him (Christ), and seated us (PAST TENSE) with Him (Christ, Who is at the right hand of the throne of God) in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6+) Many days I hardly feel like I am seated with Him in the heavenlies! The Biblical truth is that Christians on earth are citizens of the heavenly city. Paul explains "our **citizenship** is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior the Lord Jesus Christ." (Php

THOUGHT - Believers are now spiritually present at **Mount Zion** by virtue of being **in Christ**. The writer's use of the perfect tense in the phrase "**you have come**" (Hebrews 12:22) underscores a completed action with ongoing results—we have already been brought into this heavenly reality, and our citizenship in Heaven is permanent and secure (cf. Philippians 3:20+).

Because of this unshakable position in Christ, the seemingly endless miles of life's marathon and the inevitable heartbreak hills (see [Boston Marathon](#)) along the way should not discourage us from pressing onward and upward (Phil 3:13,14+). We are exhorted to run with endurance (Heb 12:1+), knowing that the finish line is already assured (See "[have come](#)"). We are both **in Zion positionally** and yet **marching toward Zion experientially**, living on earth with hearts and hopes are anchored in Heaven (Heb 6:18,19+, cf Mt 6:21+). In other words, our race is not toward uncertain hope (the world's "*hope so*") but toward a promised "sure hope!" Each step of faith brings us one day closer to our heavenly Mt Zion. Rejoice as you sing the lively old hymn "[We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion.](#)"

C H Spurgeon - You have come to the land of pardon, peace, and promise: you are in the home of life, love, and liberty. You have come to the Lord of adoption, acceptance, and glory. Do not, I ask you, construe the acts and dealings of God with your soul after the mean and slavish manner that unbelief suggests to you, but believe your God in the teeth of all you hear, or see, or feel. The Lord has come to prove you, to put His fear before your face, and to keep you from sin; why look for sweet fruit from the bitter tree of your present grief, and flee not from your God.

Brian Bell - When David took the city of Zion from the Jebusites, he brought the Ark of the Covenant there for its new home, thus making this place the place where God dwelt with His people. If you are a believer you already are a citizen. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil.3:20+) We are citizens of Mount Zion who have left Mount Sinai and marching toward our new home (Zion) That new city Jerusalem will have beauty unfathomable; food delectable; fellowship incredible; joy unbelievable; and a love inconceivable. ([Sermon](#))

THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

And to the city (polis) of the living (zao present tense - continually living) God (see note) - He was also "**living**" at Mt Sinai, but unapproachable so that any living being would soon be dead if they touched the mountain. At Mt Zion the ever **living (Eternal) God** can be approached, as the result of God's redeeming grace given to sinners. What a contrast is this heavenly city with the pagan cities of men that were filled with idols, lifeless "gods" (Ps 115:4–7). The **city of the living God** is our eternal abode where we will experience living fellowship, where everything pulsates with the life of God and where nothing decays or dies.

THOUGHT - Ultimately, this **city of the living God** finds its consummation in Revelation 21, where the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven. There, God Himself dwells with His people forever and ever, fulfilling the long-awaited hope of the redeemed of all the ages, perfect communion with the **living God** in a holy **city** that will never fade, never fall, and never again be defiled by sin or death.

John writes "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:2–4+). (Listen to the amazing performance of [The Holy City - Jerusalem](#) and sing along as you anticipate your soon coming homecoming dearly beloved of the King)!

Kenneth Wuest - **The city of the living God** is rightly restored by TNIV to its place after "Mount Zion"; it is another way of describing the same place. We have heard in Heb 11:10, 16 of the "**city**" promised to the wandering patriarchs, and the same vision is set before Christian believers in Heb 13:14. The presence of "**the living God**" (see Heb 3:12) sets this city apart from all its earthly foreshadowings. The phrase has special force here, following the account of the Sinai theophany, since the people's fear there derived from their hearing the voice of "the living God" (Dt 5:26) ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

Harry Ironside on **to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem** - This is not to be confounded with the earthly city of the great King, which will yet be the joy of the whole earth (**ED: [HE IS DESCRIBING THE MILLENNIUM](#)**), for our portion is not to be in this world even when Christ Himself reigns, but we are to reign with Him from the heavenly Jerusalem above. This, of course, is the **New Jerusalem**, the Bride, the Lamb's wife of Rev. 19 and Revelation 21. It embraces all the heavenly saints, that is, all those who

have died in faith throughout the centuries, all who in every dispensation believed God and were therefore quickened by His Spirit. **The heavenly Jerusalem** is preeminently the Home of the Church and therefore is designated as the bridal city; but saints of all other dispensations who have passed through death and entered into resurrection life will, as one has expressed it, be upon its "Burgess roll." This **heavenly Jerusalem** will be the throne seat of the entire universe of God.

Steven Cole on city of the Living God - Hebrews mentions the *city* more than any other New Testament book. This is "the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10). It's the city that God prepared for the Old Testament saints who died in faith without receiving the promises (Heb 11:13, 16). And while we now dwell in it spiritually, there is a sense in which it is yet "to come" (Heb 13:14). *City* conveys a sense of orderliness and security against the enemy. It's a place where needs for food and water are met, and where there is fellowship with others. But this is not any city; it's the city *of the living God*. In Hebrews 3:12, the author warned us, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from *the living God*." In Heb 9:14, he wrote that the blood of Christ would "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve *the living God*." As opposed to ritualistic, legalistic religion, through Christ we enter into an abiding relationship with the living God. ([Sermon](#))

City of the Living God - The writer has already used the phrase **Living God** three times in this letter (see [note](#) for all uses in Scripture)...

Heb 3:12 Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the **living God**.

Heb 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the **living God**?

Heb 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the **living God**.

ANGELS, ANGELS EVERYWHERE!

And to myriads ([murias](#)) of angels ([aggelos](#)) - **ESV** = "innumerable angels" **NIV** = "thousands upon thousands." **Myriads** ([murias](#)) is in the plural and indicates a number that cannot be counted (see Da 7:10+). Believers do not worship the angels of God—we worship God with the angels! Take a moment to ponder that future scene of worship if your heart needs fresh excitement and encouragement (may I suggest you prayerfully read Revelation 4:1-11+ and Revelation 5:1-14+ for a "preview of coming attractions"!). This world is not our home (Play [This World Is Not My Home](#)), for we are only passing through. We live for a short time within the boundaries of time, but soon—yes, very soon (play [Soon and Very Soon](#))—we will step into eternity to meet our King, into the presence of the Living God, surrounded by countless numbers of worshipping angels. O, what a day it will be!

[Brian Bell](#) - Oh the glory of singing and worshipping with these terrific beings that have ministered to us, watched over us, passing in and out of our lives (Heb 1:14+).

Wuest feels that "The **angels** are introduced here because they are the usual accompaniment of God's glory and ministers of His will." ([Hebrews](#))

C H Spurgeon on **angels** - Some of those bright beings are called [seraphim](#), or burning ones, for they come and go like flames of fire. It must have been terrible to look up to Sinai and see it casting forth its flames, but it is with delight that we look toward the angels who excel in strength, and spend that strength in the service of the Lord and His people. These are a wall of fire round about us.

Temper Longman - "Thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly" (NIV) reminds us of the great tableau of the worship of the angelic host in Rev 4 and 5 (cf. also the myriads of angels in Dt 33:2; Da 7:10), but the addition of "in joyful assembly" adds a note of festivity and celebration—the term was used for great celebratory gatherings, both religious and secular. The angels, whom we have seen in Heb 1:14 to be under the authority of the Son, are gathered in heaven to celebrate his triumph. (See [Hebrews - Revelation](#))

The **myriads** ([murias](#)) of **angels** ([aggelos](#)) are referred to several times in Scripture. For example Moses records a "sighting" with which most of his Jewish readers would have been familiar "And he said, "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them. (Dt 33:2+)

Comment: Evidently there were myriads of holy ones with God on Mount Sinai as His right hand wrote the commandments for Israel on tables of stone.

Angels were present at the giving of the law Luke recording "you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep

it." (Acts 7:53+)

In a another "angelic passage" Paul asks "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been **ordained through angels** by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. (Galatians 3:19)

Comment: The account of the giving of the law through Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19:9-25 makes no mention of angels. However as noted above Deuteronomy 33:2 does mention **holy ones** which is almost assuredly a reference to angels through whom the Law was ordained. See also Psalm 68:17

And earlier in **Hebrews** the writer reminded his readers of "the **word spoken through angels** (which) proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense (Heb 2:2+)

And as the writer of **Hebrews** asked rhetorically in the first chapter "Are they (referring to angels) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb 1:14+) These angels are mighty flaming spirits passing in and out of our lives, moving around us and over us just as they did saints of old.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: A FESTAL GATHERING

To the general assembly ([paneguris](#)) - The **NAS** has the **general assembly** in Heb 12:23 whereas other versions place it at the end of Heb 12:22 = **ESV** = "innumerable angels **in festal gathering**." **CSB** = myriads of angels **in festive gathering**, **NET** = " to myriads of angels, to the assembly." **NLT** = "in a joyful gathering" The **NAS** has a marginal note on Heb 12:22 "angels in festive gathering, and to the church." The difference in the translations depends on where one places a comma, the word assembly or its equivalent is taken either with angels or with "the church of the firstborn" in the next verse. "Editors of Greek New Testament editions put a comma after the word angels and therefore show that the expression assembly ought to be part of the following verse. These translations have adopted the punctuation of the Greek editions of the New Testament: KJV, NKJV, RV, ASV, NASB, GNB, NEB, and Phillips. Translators of the R.S.V., NAB, JB, MLB, NIV, and Moffatt, however, take the term assembly or festal gathering (or a variant) with the phrase thousands upon thousands of angels." ([Kistemaker](#)) [See discussion below](#) regarding interpretation of general assembly.

Have come ([4334](#)) (**proserchomai** from **prós** = facing + **erchomai** = come) means literally to come facing toward and so to approach or come near. It could refer to physical or relational approach to a person or place (Acts 8:29, Mt 8:2). To come to visit or associate with. It describes the approach to or entry into a deity's presence. In the **Septuagint (LXX)** **proserchomai** was the verb used to describe the approach of the priests to Jehovah for worship and to perform of their priestly (Levitical) functions (Lev 21:17), a job they did with reverence but also undoubtedly an element of trepidation. But here in Hebrews, under the New covenant, all seven uses of **proserchomai** refer to believers possessing the privilege of access to God the Father through Christ the Great High Priest. In each of these, **proserchomai** is not merely about physical proximity, but about spiritual access—a relational nearness to God made possible by the atoning work of Christ. The use of **proserchomai** in Hebrews emphasizes that access to God is no longer restricted to a select few under the old covenant. Through Jesus, all who believe may draw near—not in fear, but in confidence and joy. This nearness is not earned by human effort, but granted by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ. It is a present spiritual reality and a foretaste of eternal communion with God.

PROSERCHOMAI IN HEBREWS:

Hebrews 4:16+ Let us therefore **draw near** with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Comment: "Let us..." emphasizes that this privilege is always available to those under the New Covenant. Do we really comprehend and avail ourselves of the profundity of this privilege?

Hebrews 7:25+ Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who **draw near** (present tense = emphasizes continual activity) to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 10:1+ For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who **draw near**.

Hebrews 10:22+ let us **draw near** with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 11:6+ And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who **comes** (drawn near) **to God** must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 12:18+ For you have not **come** (drawn near) **to** a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,

Hebrews 12:22+ But you have **come** (drawn near) **to** Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels

City (4172) **polis** literally, as an enclosed and usually fortified town, a city, city-state Mt 8:33; Lk 10:8, 10; Jn 4:8, 28, 30. A population center in contrast to a relatively uninhabited or rural area. The dominant use of the word in the New Testament is the literal sense of an enclosed settlement. Size, either of acreage or of the population, apparently was not a factor in determining city status. Capital city, main city Acts 8:5; Lk 8:27. The heavenly city, the New Jerusalem Heb 11:10, 16; Rev 21:2, 10, 14–16, 18f.—Fig., city for its inhabitants Mt 8:34; Mk 1:33; Lk 4:43; Acts 14:21; 21:30. (See [Dictionary Definitions of "CITY"](#)) To the cultured men of the first century, the polis—the city—was the crown of civilization, representing the height of human order, culture, and progress. Nothing served so well as the pattern of the ideal community. Against this backdrop, the writer of Hebrews elevates the vision of a divine city, not built by man but by God Himself (Heb 11:10; 12:22; 13:14).

POLIS IN HEBREWS - Heb. 11:10; Heb. 11:16; Heb. 12:22; Heb. 13:14

Hebrews 11:10 for he was looking for the **city** which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a **city** for them.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

Hebrews 13:14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

Heavenly (2032) **epouranios** from **epi** = upon + **ouranos** = heaven) means celestial, what pertains to or is in heaven, that is, upon heaven or existing in heaven (RWP), not the heavenly body of human beings or angels

Friberg - (1) as an adjective, with reference to heaven as the dwelling of God and what belongs there heavenly (Heb 12:22), opposite *evpi,geioj* (earthly); (2) substantively; (a) *hoi` epouranioi* - dwellers in heaven, heavenly beings (Phil 2:10); (b) *ta epourania* - what is derived from God = heavenly things, divine or spiritual things (Jn 3:12); (c) *ta epourania* = as the dwelling place of God heaven, the heavenly world, the heavenly places (Eph 3:10); (3) as an adjective, with reference to the sky as the realm of the sun, moon, and stars in the sky, celestial (1Co 15:40) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

NIDNTT ([SEE 9 page discussion online on word group = ouranos, ouranios, epouranios](#)) - Classic literature - *ouranos*, heaven, possibly related to an Indo-European root meaning water,rain, means that which moistens or fructifies. The related adj. *ouranios* means what is in heaven, comes from heaven, or appears in the heavens, i.e. heavenly. But it can also mean what is appropriate to a god, i.e. divine, and can even stand for god or the deity. On the other hand, it can mean simply that which belongs to the firmament or sky. *epouranios* means in heaven, belonging to the divine heaven.

EPOURANIOS - 17V - Jn. 3:12; 1 Co. 15:40; 1 Co. 15:48; 1 Co. 15:49; Eph. 1:3; Eph. 1:20; Eph. 2:6; Eph. 3:10; Eph. 6:12; Phil. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 3:1; Heb. 6:4; Heb. 8:5; Heb. 9:23; Heb. 11:16; Heb. 12:22

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a **heavenly** calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

Hebrews 6:4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the **heavenly** gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

Hebrews 8:5 who serve a copy and shadow of the **heavenly** things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

Hebrews 9:23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the **heavenly** things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Hebrews 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a **heavenly** one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the **heavenly** Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

Myriads (3461)(**murias** from **murios** = very many, innumerable) means a myriad (an indefinitely great number) or ten thousand or simply a number that cannot be counted. **Murias** is a group of ten thousand, the highest Greek numerical term in ordinary usage. Literally, as a number myriad, ten thousand (Acts 19:19) In the plural, in a more general sense of very large numbers myriads, countless thousands (Rev 5:11)

MURIAS - 7V - Lk. 12:1; Acts 19:19; Acts 21:20; Heb. 12:22; Jude 1:14; Rev. 5:11; Rev. 9:16

Angels (32)(**aggelos/angelos** possibly from **ago** = to bring) literally means a messenger (one who bears a message - Lk 1:11, 2:9, etc or does an errand). Most of the NT uses refer to heavenly angels (messengers) who are supernatural, transcendent beings with power to carry out various tasks. All uses of **aggelos** that refer to angels are masculine gender (the feminine form of **aggelos** does not occur.) **Vine** adds that **aggelos** refer to "an order of created beings, superior to man, Heb 2:7; Ps. 8:5, belonging to Heaven, Mt. 24:36; Mark 12:25, and to God, Luke 12:8, and engaged in His service, Ps. 103:20. **Angels** are spirits, Heb. 1:14, i.e., they have not material bodies as men have; they are either human in form, or can assume the human form when necessary, cp. Luke 24:4, with Lk 24:23, Acts 10:3 with Acts 10:30."

AGGELOS/ANGELOS IN HEBREWS - 13x/12v - Heb. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; Heb. 1:6; Heb. 1:7; Heb. 1:13; Heb. 2:2; Heb. 2:5; Heb. 2:7; Heb. 2:9; Heb. 2:16; Heb. 12:22; Heb. 13:2;

Hebrews 1:4 having become as much better than the **angels**, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the **angels** did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?

Hebrews 1:6 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE **ANGELS** OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

Hebrews 1:7 And of the **angels** He says, "WHO MAKES HIS **ANGELS** WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

Hebrews 1:13 But to which of the **angels** has He ever said, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"?

Hebrews 2:2 For if the word spoken through **angels** proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

Hebrews 2:5 For He did not subject to **angels** the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

Hebrews 2:7 "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE **ANGELS**; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the **angels**, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:16 For assuredly He does not give help to **angels**, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of **angels**,

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained **angels** without knowing it.

Related Resources

- [What does the Bible say about angels? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What do angels do? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Questions about Angels & Demons \(All\) | GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [What is the concept of "already but not yet"? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - The theological concept of "already but not yet" holds that believers are actively taking part in the kingdom of God, although the kingdom will not reach its full expression until sometime in the future. We are "already" in the kingdom, but we do "not

yet” see it in its glory. The “already but not yet” theology is related to [kingdom theology](#) or [inaugurated eschatology](#).

The “**already but not yet**” paradigm was developed by Princeton theologian Gerhardus Vos early in the 20th century. In the 1950s George Eldon Ladd, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, argued that there are two meanings to the kingdom of God: 1) God’s authority and right to rule and 2) the realm in which God exercises His authority. The kingdom, then, is described in Scripture both as a realm presently entered and as one entered in the future. Ladd concluded that the kingdom of God is both present and future.

The “**already but not yet**” theology is popular among the [Charismatics](#), for whom it provides a theological framework for present-day miracles. “Already but not yet” is officially embraced by the [Vineyard Church](#) and underpins many of their teachings.

There *is* a sense in which God’s kingdom is already in force. Hebrews 2:8–9 says, “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death” (ESV). In this passage, we have a “now” (we see Jesus crowned with glory), and we have a “not yet” (not everything has been subjected to Christ). Jesus is the King, but His kingdom is not yet of this world (see John 18:36).

Also, in 1 John 3:2, we read, “Dear friends, **now** we are children of God, and what we will be has **not yet** been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Again, we have a “**now**” (we are the children of God), and we have a “**not yet**” (our future state). We are children of the King, but we must wait to see exactly what that entails.

Add to this the facts that Romans 8:30 says we are “glorified” and Ephesians 2:6 says we are seated with Christ “in the heavenly realms” as if these were completed acts. We don’t feel very glorified, most of the time, and our surroundings do not much resemble “heavenly realms.” That’s because the present spiritual reality does not yet match up with the future, physical reality. One day, the two will be in sync.

So, there is a biblical basis for the “**already but not yet**” system of interpretation. The problem comes when this paradigm is used to justify the [prosperity gospel](#), [name-it-claim-it](#) teachings, and other heresies. The idea behind these teachings is that Christ’s kingdom is in full operation and that prayer can make it “break through” into our world. Evangelism is thought to “advance the kingdom.” And people are told they never need be sick or poor because the riches of the kingdom are available to them right now.

The Bible never speaks of “advancing the kingdom,” however. The kingdom will come (Luke 11:2). We must receive the kingdom (Mark 10:15). And the kingdom is currently “not of this world” (John 18:36). Jesus’ parables of the kingdom picture it as yeast in dough and a tree growing. In other words, the kingdom is slowly working toward an ultimate fulfillment. It is not sporadically “breaking through” to bring us comfort in this world.

The King Himself offered the kingdom to the Jews of the first century, but they rejected it (Matthew 12:22–28). One day, when Jesus returns, He will establish His kingdom on earth and fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 51:3, “The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.” Until then, Jesus is building His church (Matthew 16:18) and using us for the glory of His name.

David Guzik lists the contrasts - Consider the contrasts between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. ([Hebrews 12](#))

1. Mount Sinai was marked by fear and terror—Mount Zion is a place of love and forgiveness.
2. Mount Sinai is in the desert—Mount Zion is the city of the Living God
3. Mount Sinai spoke of earthly things—Mount Zion speaks of heavenly things.
4. At Mount Sinai, only Moses was allowed to draw near to God—at Mount Zion, an innumerable company, a general assembly is invited to draw near.
5. Mount Sinai was characterized by guilty men in fear—Mount Zion features just men made perfect.
6. At Mount Sinai, Moses was the mediator—at Mount Zion, Jesus is the mediator.
7. Mount Sinai brings an Old Covenant, which was ratified by the blood of animals—Mount Zion brings a New Covenant, which is ratified by the blood of God’s precious Son.
8. Mount Sinai was all about exclusion, keeping people away from the mountain—Mount Zion is all about invitation.
9. Mount Sinai is all about Law—Mount Zion is all about grace

CONTRASTS BETWEEN TWO MOUNTAINS IN THE BIBLE

Feature

Mount Sinai

Mount Zion

Feature	Mount Sinai	Mount Zion
Location	Wilderness of Sinai (Exodus 19)	Heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22)
Covenant	Old Covenant (Law)	New Covenant (Grace)
Mediator	Moses	Jesus Christ
Atmosphere	Fear, trembling, judgment	Joy, worship, fellowship
Access	Restricted—people kept at a distance	Open—believers beckoned draw near through Christ
Symbolizes	God's holiness and man's sin	God's grace and redemption
Message	"Spoken with thunder" Law cries "Do and live!"	"Written in Blood" Grace cries "Live and do!"
Experience	Terror and separation	Celebration and communion
Key Passage	Exodus 19:12–25; Hebrews 12:18–21	Hebrews 12:22–24; Revelation 14:1, Revelation 21-22

The Living God

28 times in the NASB...

Dt 5:26 'For who is there of all flesh, who has heard the voice of the **living God** speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

Josh 3:10 And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the **living God** is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

1 Sam 17:26 Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the **living God**?"

1 Sam 17:36 "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the **living God**."

2 Ki 19:4 'Perhaps the LORD your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the **living God**, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the remnant that is left."

2 Ki 19:16 "Incline Thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open Thine eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the **living God**."

Ps 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the **living God**; When shall I come and appear before God?

Ps 84:2 My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the **living God**.

Isa 37:4 'Perhaps the LORD your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the **living God**, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the remnant that is left."

Isa 37:17 "Incline Thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open Thine eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the **living God**."

Jer 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; He is the **living God** and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

Jer 23:36 "For you will no longer remember the oracle of the LORD, because every man's own word will

become the oracle, and you have perverted the words of the **living God**, the LORD of hosts, our God.

Dan 6:20 And when he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the **living God**, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Dan 6:26 "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the **living God** and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever.

Hosea 1:10 Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And it will come about that, in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the **living God**."

Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the **living God**."

Mat 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the **living God**, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

Acts 14:15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a **living God**, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.

Rom 9:26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE **LIVING GOD**."

2 Cor 3:3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the **living God**, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.

2 Cor 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the **living God**; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

1 Tim 3:15 but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the **living God**, the pillar and support of the truth.

1 Tim 4:10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the **living God**, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

Heb 3:12 Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.

Heb 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the **living God**?

Heb 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the **living God**.

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the **living God**, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

Rev 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the **living God**; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

QUESTION - [What is Zion? What is Mount Zion? \(Watch video\)](#)

ANSWER - The word *Zion* occurs over 150 times in the Bible. It essentially means "fortification" and has the idea of being "raised up" as a "monument." Zion is described both as the city of David and the city of God. As the Bible progresses, the word *Zion* expands in scope and takes on an additional, spiritual meaning.

The first mention of Zion in the Bible is 2 Samuel 5:7: "David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David." Zion was originally an ancient Jebusite fortress in the city of Jerusalem. After David's conquest of the fortress, Jerusalem became a possession of Israel. The royal palace was built there, and Zion/Jerusalem became the seat of power in Israel's kingdom..

When Solomon built the [temple in Jerusalem](#), the meaning of *Zion* expanded further to include the temple area (Psalm 2:6; 48:2, 11–12; 132:13). This is the meaning found in the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:6, "Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God." In the Old Testament *Zion* is used as a name for the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 40:9), the land of Judah (Jeremiah 31:12), and the nation of Israel as a whole (Zechariah 9:13).

The word *Zion* is also used in a theological or spiritual sense in Scripture. In the Old Testament *Zion* refers figuratively to Israel as the people of God (Isaiah 60:14). In the New Testament, *Zion* refers to God's spiritual kingdom. We have not come to Mount Sinai, says the apostle, but "to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). Peter, quoting Isaiah 28:16, refers to Christ as the [Cornerstone](#) of Zion: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame" (1 Peter 2:6).

Mount Zion as a geographical area is currently the center of much dispute. The Bible is clear that, one day, Zion will be the sole possession of the Lord Jesus, and Zion—the nation and the city—will be restored. "Awake, awake, / Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; / Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, / O Jerusalem, the holy city; / For the uncircumcised and the unclean / Will no longer come into you" (Isaiah 52:1). And "the children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; / all who despise you will bow down at your feet / and will call you the City of the LORD, / Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 60:14).

ZION IN THE BIBLE - 162X/162V - 2 Sam. 5:7; 1 Ki. 8:1; 2 Ki. 19:21; 2 Ki. 19:31; 1 Chr. 11:5; 2 Chr. 5:2; Ps. 2:6; Ps. 9:11; Ps. 9:14; Ps. 14:7; Ps. 20:2; Ps. 48:2; Ps. 48:11; Ps. 48:12; Ps. 50:2; Ps. 51:18; Ps. 53:6; Ps. 65:1; Ps. 69:35; Ps. 74:2; Ps. 76:2; Ps. 78:68; Ps. 84:5; Ps. 84:7; Ps. 87:2; Ps. 87:5; Ps. 97:8; Ps. 99:2; Ps. 102:13; Ps. 102:16; Ps. 102:21; Ps. 110:2; Ps. 125:1; Ps. 126:1; Ps. 128:5; Ps. 129:5; Ps. 132:13; Ps. 133:3; Ps. 134:3; Ps. 135:21; Ps. 137:1; Ps. 137:3; Ps. 146:10; Ps. 147:12; Ps. 149:2; Cant. 3:11; Isa. 1:8; Isa. 1:27; Isa. 2:3; Isa. 3:16; Isa. 3:17; Isa. 4:3; Isa. 4:4; Isa. 4:5; Isa. 8:18; Isa. 10:12; Isa. 10:24; Isa. 10:32; Isa. 12:6; Isa. 14:32; Isa. 16:1; Isa. 18:7; Isa. 24:23; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 29:8; Isa. 30:19; Isa. 31:4; Isa. 31:9; Isa. 33:5; Isa. 33:14; Isa. 33:20; Isa. 34:8; Isa. 35:10; Isa. 37:22; Isa. 37:32; Isa. 40:9; Isa. 41:27; Isa. 46:13; Isa. 49:14; Isa. 51:3; Isa. 51:11; Isa. 51:16; Isa. 52:1; Isa. 52:2; Isa. 52:7; Isa. 52:8; Isa. 59:20; Isa. 60:14; Isa. 61:3; Isa. 62:11; Isa. 64:10; Isa. 66:8; Jer. 3:14; Jer. 4:6; Jer. 4:31; Jer. 6:2; Jer. 6:23; Jer. 8:19; Jer. 9:19; Jer. 14:19; Jer. 26:18; Jer. 30:17; Jer. 31:6; Jer. 31:12; Jer. 50:5; Jer. 50:28; Jer. 51:10; Jer. 51:24; Jer. 51:35; Lam. 1:4; Lam. 1:6; Lam. 1:17; Lam. 2:1; Lam. 2:4; Lam. 2:6; Lam. 2:8; Lam. 2:10; Lam. 2:13; Lam. 2:18; Lam. 4:2; Lam. 4:11; Lam. 4:22; Lam. 5:11; Lam. 5:18; Joel 2:1; Joel 2:15; Joel 2:23; Joel 2:32; Joel 3:16; Joel 3:17; Joel 3:21; Amos 1:2; Amos 6:1; Obad. 1:17; Obad. 1:21; Mic. 1:13; Mic. 3:10; Mic. 3:12; Mic. 4:2; Mic. 4:7; Mic. 4:8; Mic. 4:10; Mic. 4:11; Mic. 4:13; Zeph. 3:14; Zeph. 3:16; Zeph. 3:18; Zech. 1:14; Zech. 1:17; Zech. 2:7; Zech. 2:10; Zech. 8:2; Zech. 8:3; Zech. 9:9; Zech. 9:13; Matt. 21:5; Jn. 12:15; Rom. 9:33; Rom. 11:26; Heb. 12:22; 1 Pet. 2:6; Rev. 14:1

HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION - The little girl was happily humming a hymn as she dusted the furniture to help her mother.

"Mommie, will I be dusting God's chair when I get to heaven, the way the hymn says?" she asked.

Mother looked up with surprise,

"Which hymn, honey?"

"And dust around the throne," her little girl quoted.

It took a while before the mother learned that she was quoting a line from the hymn "Marching to Zion," with the phrase, "and thus surround the throne"!

A Philadelphia law firm sent flowers to an associate in Baltimore upon the opening of its new offices. Through some mix-up, the ribbon that bedecked the floral piece read "Deepest Sympathy." When the florist was informed of his mistake, he let out a cry of alarm. "Good heavens," he exclaimed, "then the flowers that went to the funeral said, 'Congratulations on your new location!' Heaven will be a wonderful new location."

A. Maclaren, D.D. - The Two Mounts.—There, on the right hand, are the flowery slopes of the mount of blessing; there, on the left, the barren, stern, thunder-riven, lightning-splintered pinnacles of the mount of cursing. Every clear note of benediction hath its low minor of imprecation from the other side. Between the two, overhung by the hopes of the one, and frowned upon and dominated by the threatenings of the other, is pitched the little camp of our human life, and the path of our pilgrimage runs in the trough of the valley between. And yet, might I not go a step further, and say that above the parted summits stretches the one overarching blue, uniting them both, and their roots deep down below the surface interlace and twine together?—

Thoughts Of Heaven - Cartoonists often depict those who have gone to heaven as white-robed, ghostly forms floating among the clouds or sitting on golden stairs playing harps. What a far cry from the picture we find in the Bible!

In 1 Corinthians 15, we read that our resurrection bodies, although not subject to death, will be real and tangible—not mere

apparitions. And Revelation 21:1-5 tells us that God will bring about "a new heaven and a new earth." He will bring down "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22), and set it upon the new earth as the "New Jerusalem." It is described as having streets, walls, gates, and even a river and trees (Revelation 22:1-5).

Life in that city will be wonderful, free from all the debilitating effects of sin. There will be no more death, sorrow, mourning, and pain, for God will make "all things new." But best of all, He Himself will come to live among us, making possible a new level of intimacy with Him.

It's difficult to envision such an existence, but what an exciting prospect! It is all possible because of what Jesus did when He died for us on the cross. This should motivate us to worship Him, live godly lives, and tell others how they too can be assured of a glorious future. —Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The more we love Jesus the more we'll long for heaven.

F B Meyer - Our Daily Walk - OUR HERITAGE AND OUR GOAL- Heb 12:22-24.

WE ARE far from being perfect. When in our deepest moments, we ascend into the Holiest, on the wings of faith and prayer, we pass through a vast host of sympathetic spirits, all of whom are devoted to the same Lord and Master, and are joining in the same act of worship. Many of them have known and helped us in our earthly life, and they have been sent forth to minister to us, and to help us on our way. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."

We are also come unto God, the Judge of all. When Moses stood before God on the Mount, he said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." But we may come with boldness to the footstool of the Eternal Throne, though our God is a consuming fire, for in Christ Jesus we stand accepted. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and His Blood speaks better things than that of Abel. That blood cried against Cain. But the Blood of Jesus cries on our behalf; it has opened the way into the Holiest; has cleansed us from our sins; has ratified the New Covenant, and is the Pledge of our redemption.

Therefore, although we realise our sinfulness and imperfection, let us arise into the unseen, and join with the One Church of the Redeemed in heaven and on earth. We are come to it in the purpose of God, and by the all-sufficing work of Christ our Lord, but let us see to it that we come also in our spiritual realization, communion, and fellowship.

We are members of the Church Universal, citizens of the Heavenly City. Heirs of that precious Redemption, which has severed us from things that are seen, and made us part of that blessed throng that no man can number—"the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven." Neither life, nor death, nor rite, nor church-order, can divide those who are for ever one with each other because they are one with Christ. Nothing but sin and obtuseness of soul can exclude us from living fellowship with saints of all communions and sects, denominations and ages.

PRAYER - Accept our thanks, O God, for this foretaste of the bliss of Paradise. To Thee we would pour forth our tribute of adoring love, and join with angels and the spirits of the Redeemed in worship. Unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing and honour, glory and dominion, for ever. AMEN.

Invisible Companions

You have come to . . . an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly. —Hebrews 12:22-23

One Sunday morning while traveling in West Virginia, we visited a small church in a tiny village. Only 15 people were present, yet they radiated joy as they sang. And the pastor preached from the Bible with enthusiasm. But I couldn't shake a feeling of sympathy for him and his people. With little chance for growth, it looked like a discouraging ministry.

But the testimony of a young seminarian showed me how wrong I was! Assigned to minister in a small village chapel, he was dismayed when only two people stayed for the communion service. As he read from the liturgy, he came to the words: "Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we worship and adore Thy glorious name." That sentence changed everything for him. In his heart he said, "God forgive me. I did not know I was in that great company."

When we came to Christ in faith, we joined an invisible host of companions, what the writer of Hebrews says is an "innumerable company of angels," and "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (12:22-23). Keep this amazing reality in mind as you worship God. It will give great meaning to every service, whether thousands of fellow worshipers are present, or just two or three. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Glory to God, and praise and love
Be ever, ever given
By saints below and saints above,
The church in earth and heaven.
—Wesley

When Christians worship here on earth, the hosts of heaven are worshipping with them.

Hebrews 12:23 to the [general assembly](#) and [church](#) of the [firstborn](#) who are [enrolled](#) in [heaven](#), and to [God](#), the [Judge](#) of [all](#), and to the [spirits](#) of the [righteous made perfect](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [kai ekklesia prototokon apogegrammenon](#) (RPPMPG) [en ouranois, kai krite theo panton, kai pneumasi dikaion teteleiomemon](#), (RPPMPG)

BGT ἄλλ προσεληθᾶτε Σιὸν ὄρει καὶ πλεῖθεοζῆτος, ἑρουσαλήμ πούραν, καὶ μυρίσιν ἄγγλων, πανηγυρίων
23 καὶ κλήσιν πρωτοτόκων πογεγραμμῶν ἐνοράνοσ καὶ κριτθεπύτων καὶ πνευμασὶ δικαίων τετελειωμένων

Amplified: And to the church (assembly) of the Firstborn who are registered [as citizens] in heaven, and to the God Who is Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous (the redeemed in heaven) who have been made perfect, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV 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, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

NKJ But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

NET But you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the assembly 23 and congregation of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous, who have been made perfect,

CSB Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels in festive gathering, 23 to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to God who is the Judge of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect,

ESV But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

NIV But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,

NLT: You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of the redeemed in heaven who have now been made perfect. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: the great assembly of Heaven and the Church of the first-born whose names are written above. You have drawn near to God, the judge of all, to the souls of good men made perfect

Wuest: to a festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men who have been brought to completeness, ([Hebrews](#))

Young's Literal: to the company and assembly of the first-born in heaven enrolled, and to God the judge of all, and to spirits of righteous men made perfect,

- **General** - Ps 89:7, 111:1 Ac 20:28, Eph 1:22, 5:24, 25, 26, 27 Col 1:24 1Ti 3:5
- **firstborn:** Ex 4:22, 13:2 Dt 21:17 Ps 89:27 Jer 31:9 Jas 1:18 Rev 14:4
- **Enrolled** - Ex 32:32 Ps 69:28 Lk 10:20 Php 4:3 Rev 13:8, 20:15

- [Hebrews 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 10:20 “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that **your names are recorded in heaven.**”

Philippians 4:3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose **names are in the book of life.**

Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone **whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb** who has been slain.

Revelation 20:15 And if anyone’s name was **not found written in the book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

THE HEAVENLY CITY OF THE REDEEMED

Having described the joyful access believers now have to Mount Zion (Hebrews 12:22), the writer continues to unfold the glorious realities of our heavenly citizenship. We have not come to a mountain of fear and fire (Sinai), but to a spiritual assembly of grace, glory, and worship—the heavenly Mount Zion, the dwelling place of God and the redeemed.

To the general assembly ([paneguris](#)) and church ([ekklesia](#)) of the firstborn ([prototokos](#)) who are enrolled (apographo) in heaven ([ouranos](#)), and to God, the Judge ([krites](#)) of all, and to the spirits ([pneuma](#)) of the righteous ([dikaios](#)) made perfect ([teleioo](#)) - Here the writer shifts focus to the inhabitants of that city, those who share this divine fellowship. There we see the “**general assembly and church of the firstborn**,” ([See discussion of general assembly](#)) believers whose names are enrolled in heaven, gathered around God the Judge of all, together with the spirits of the righteous made perfect. The **general assembly** is a festive gathering, not merely a metaphor, but a spiritual reality that contrasts with the terrifying scene at Mount Sinai (Heb 12:18–21). Instead of fear and distance, believers now come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, where they are welcomed into a joyful, eternal assembly of angels and all the saints of all the ages!

General assembly ([paneguris](#)) is both a present spiritual reality (experienced by faith in Christ) and a future consummation (fulfilled at His return). This is a picture of the church triumphant, the redeemed in heaven, gathered in worship before the Living God. What an awesome, breathtaking glimpse of the final unity of God’s redeemed family—Old Testament saints, New Testament believers, and heavenly hosts—gathered in joyful worship before the throne. What began in faith and struggle on earth finds its perfect completion in glory. And will endure forever. Hallelujah ([allelouia](#))!

THOUGHT - Dearly beloved (1Th 1:4+) of the King, when you are having a "down day" (and we all have them in this sin-saturated world!), let me suggest you take the divine "tonic" of considering Jesus, the King of kings (Rev 19:16+) and the certainty that you will one day (soon) celebrate with all the saints and angels in His glorious presence. [O Glorious Day!](#) May God’s Spirit use this eternal, unchanging truth to undergird your faith and strengthen your heart as you ponder the sure hope that is part of your everlasting inheritance in Christ. Amen. Hallelujah!

General assembly ("festal assembly" = ESV) - note that in the Greek text [paneguris](#) is the last section of Hebrews 12:22 (see there) and its place in that verse in the ESV but is placed in Heb 12:23 in the NASB. This would lead to associating [paneguris](#) with angels and describing a festive gathering. These differences in translation lead to two different interpretations, but I favor associating [paneguris](#) with angels, which seems to be the predominant interpretation as shown below:

(1) ASSOCIATED WITH ANGELS

Thus **John MacArthur** feels "the general assembly ([paneguris](#), "a gathering for a public festival") refers to the **myriads of angels**, rather than to the **church of the first-born**. (See [Hebrews Commentary](#))

Homer Kent agrees writing "Difference of opinion centers on whether [paneguris](#) should go with "angels" or with "church." Conclusive criteria are not available, but on the whole the construing of the term with "angels" seems preferable. The sense then is myriads of angels in festal gathering." ([Borrow](#))

Grant Osborne favors "Thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly" (v. 22): I love this picture, for it tells me that right now, I am surrounded by the angels of heaven as I serve the Lord. At Sinai these angels had the solemn task of mediating the law (Heb 2:2), but now they are engaged in joyous celebration of the

Lord with us. This is a festal gathering like the Feast of Tabernacles, with everyone dancing and singing with joy at the harvest celebration. Exaltation is the emotional response. The absolute joy of heaven becomes a present anticipation as we reflect with the myriads of angels on all God has done and is doing in our lives. (See [Hebrews Verse by Verse - Page cxxiv](#))

Simon Kistemaker - it appears that the translation “thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly” is preferred because the author of Hebrews “perhaps intended to offset any thought that angels were angels of judgment.” Angels were commissioned to deliver the law at Mount Sinai (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; cf. Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17); by contrast, they constitute a joyful assembly at Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem (see Rev. 5:11–13). In heaven angels rejoice when they see that one sinner repents (Luke 15:10). They are sent out to serve all those who inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). ([Borrow](#))

Donald Guthrie - There is some dispute whether the word for festal gathering (*panēgyris*) should be restricted to the angels (as in RSV), or whether it refers to a joint gathering of angels and believers. The former is the more probable and is perhaps intended to offset any thought that the angels were angels of judgment (as in the apocalypse). ([Borrow Hebrews Commentary page 206](#))

Kenneth Wuest writes that “The words “**general assembly**” are the translation of *paneguris*, “a festal gathering of the whole people to celebrate public games or other solemnities” (classical meaning). Here it refers to a festal gathering of the holy angels, and to the saints of God, living and dead. ([Hebrews](#))

Spurgeon on festal gathering and church - I suppose he speaks of all the saints after the death and resurrection of our Lord and the descent of the Holy Ghost. He refers to the whole church, in the midst of which the Holy Spirit now dwells. We are come to a more joyous sight than Sinai, and the mountain burning with fire. The Hebrew worshiper, apart from his sacrifices, lived continually beneath the shadow of the darkness of a broken law. He was startled often by the tremendous note of the trumpet—which threatened judgment for that broken law—and thus he lived ever in a condition of bondage.

Steven Cole - Most scholars understand “**general assembly**” (NASB) to be connected with the **myriads of angels**. The Greek word *paneguris* was used of a festival or celebration. It points to the angels joyously worshipping God, and the fact that we join their chorus of praise. This, too, is something to which already we have come, and yet the full experience remains in the future. We have come to it in the sense that when we worship God in the joy of our salvation, the angels join with us (1Pe 1:12). But in the future, as John saw (Rev. 5:11-12+), “*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”* While we cannot begin to experience anything that glorious on earth, I challenge you to work at your worship. Apathetic, ho-hum, “worship” is sin! It shows that we don’t understand the majesty of our God, and we are not focused on His great salvation that He lavished on us by His grace. Shake off your apathy and ask God to fill your heart with His joy. You’re joining the angels in chorus as you gather with the saints to worship! ([Sermon](#))

(2) ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHURCH

If one uses the NASB reading the **general assembly** would not refer to angels and the festal assembly but to all Christians of all times as its members.

And church (*ekklesia*) of the firstborn (*prototokos*) - The **church (*ekklesia*)** - ek + *kaleo*) literally means “called-out ones” ultimately “called (*kaleo*) out of darkness and into His marvelous light” (1Pe 2:9+, cf Col 1:13+). Most writers feel that **church** in this context is most likely a reference to NT believers, viewed as still on earth but with their names enrolled in Heaven. Jesus of course is the unique **firstborn**, the “firstborn of all creation” (Col 1:15) and “the **firstborn** from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.” (Col 1:18) In these verses, *prototokos* refers to Jesus’ preeminence, not merely chronological birth order. Jesus is the supreme Heir, the First to rise from the dead never to die again, and the Head of the redeemed family of God. The readers as **the firstborn (*prototokos*)** all share with Jesus in the privileges of **firstborn** (Col 1:18+) because they are “heirs of God and coheirs with Christ” (Ro 8:17+). To say it another way, through adoption, believers are brought into the family of God, not as second-class members, but as co-heirs, fully included in the blessings of the covenant. Believers share in the title and privileges of the Firstborn, not because we are equal to Christ, but because we are united to Him by faith.

ESV Study Bible on firstborn - **Firstborn** is plural in Greek and modified by “**who are enrolled.**” Jesus was previously called *the firstborn* Son (Heb 1:6); here his followers are also granted an inheritance as if they too were **firstborn** sons (Heb 1:14; 2:10; 9:15; 12:5-8). ([Borrow ESV Study Bible page 2384](#))

*In the Christian church all the heirs are placed on the same footing.
Such a company is not only especially distinctive, but unparalleled.*

Donald Guthrie on **church** ([ekklesia](#)) - The word translated assembly (*ekklesiá*) is elsewhere rendered as 'church', and some association with this more normal meaning must be intended here. The only other use of the word in this epistle is in Heb 2:12 where it occurs in an Old Testament (Septuagint) quotation and is rendered 'congregation'. First, the company in mind are described as the **first-born** (*prōtotokoi*). There is here a marked distinction between the church and the patriarchal age when the **first-born** was restricted to one for each household (cf. Esau in verse 16). In the Christian church all the heirs are placed on the same footing. Such a company is not only especially distinctive, but unparalleled. We should note that for Paul there is only one [prototokos](#), i.e. Christ (Col. 1:15). There is some connection with the thought here, if the *prōtotokoi* are those reborn through Christ. (Borrow [Hebrews Commentary page 262](#))

Temper Longman - **The church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven** again reminds us of Revelation, where in Rev 7 the worship of the angels is swelled by the uncountable throng of the redeemed from all nations. (For the "**names written in heaven**," cf. Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27.) Elsewhere in the NT, "**firstborn**" is used as a title of Christ himself (see in this letter Heb 1:6), not of his people, but it recalls the OT description of Israel collectively as God's "firstborn son" (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9). Here it may well be intended to include God's true people of both OT and NT eras. The **firstborn** is the heir, the most precious child, and the church (or "assembly"—*ekklesiá*; it need not carry here its developed Christian sense; cf. Heb 2:12, its only other use in this letter) consists of those whom God has appointed as his heirs (Heb 1:14; 6:12, 17) and who have not, like Esau, bartered away their birthright (Heb 12:16–17). (See [Hebrews - Revelation](#))

C H Spurgeon - The term "**firstborn**" often meant, in Scripture, the most excellent, the chief. Jesus Christ, because of the excellence of His character, is said to be "the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29+), "the firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15+), and "the firstborn from the dead, so that in he himself may become first in everything" (Col 1:18+). So, although believers are, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others (Eph 2:3+), yet after Christ has renewed them, they become the excellent of the earth in whom should be all our delight. But the term "**firstborn**" has a second meaning in Scripture. The **firstborn**, under the old Mosaic economy, were chosen by God for Himself. When He smote the **firstborn** of Egypt, He set apart for Himself all the **firstborn** of Israel. He might have selected the youngest of the family, or the second, if He had chosen to do so, for God does as He wills, and "he will not answer all a person's words" (Job 33:13).

Brian Bell on **first-born** - In ancient days the kings kept a register of their faithful citizens (like king Ahasuerus having the Book of Records, read to him, & ran across the faithful citizen Mordecai) Firstborn – all rights of inheritance go to the Firstborn, to us who are co-heirs with Christ. Bishop Westcott says, we are a society of eldest sons of God. [there are no 2nd, 3rd, 4th sons & daughters in the church] ([Sermon](#))

Who are enrolled ([apographo](#)) **in heaven** ([ouranos](#)) - **Enrolled** ([apographo](#)) is the verb used in Greek and in Lk 2:2,5 to record the **CITIZENS** of a locale! Think about that for a moment. What does Paul say about believers in Php 3:20? "Our **citizenship** is ([huparcho](#) - exists - present tense - continually exists) in heaven." It is significant to note that [apographo](#) is in the perfect tense indicating these reader's names had been "enrolled" (or "registered") as "citizen" in Heaven at some point in time in the past and that this record endures or is permanent (Which is another point that would strongly argue against the teaching that one can lose their salvation -- their enrollment is permanent!) Note that some versions render **who are enrolled** as "whose names are written in heaven" (Heb 12:23NIV, Heb 12:23NLT). So where are the names of these saints **enrolled**? Undoubtedly they are enrolled in the **Book of Life** (See discussions of the [Ultimate Purpose of the Book of Life](#); [When are Names Written?](#); What is meaning of [Names Blotted Out?](#))

THOUGHT - The writer is assuring his Jewish readers, who are genuine believers, that they will all partake of the blessings of the new covenant because their names permanently recorded. It is done deal! It is a permanent record written in "indelible" divine ink (so to speak)! This is true of your name dear reader, if you have repented and believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Your future is secure! You cannot lose what you could never have gained by your own power. You can mark it down in indelible ink if you did not achieve salvation by your effort, you cannot forfeit it by your failure. What is received by grace is kept by grace. To say it another way, our salvation is not maintained by human merit but secured by divine mercy. If God's power brought you into His family, that same power will keep you there (cf. John 10:28–29; 1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6).

General assembly ([3831](#)) (**paneguris** from **pás** = all, + **águris** = an assembly from **agora** = public square, marketplace) is used only here in the NT (hapax legomenon = appearing only once) to describe a solemn assembly convened for purposes of a happy, joyous festivity. The Greeks used *paneguris* to describe a festal gathering of the whole people to celebrate public games, national festivities or other solemnities, often of a religious nature, where the people gathered to celebrate, worship and honor a deity (or a

king). The verb form **panegurizo** is used in Isaiah where God declares "Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her (**Septuagint** translates the Hebrew with the verb **panegurizo** = to celebrate a public festival), all you who love her; Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her (Isaiah 66:10)

Theologically, panēgyris points to the eschatological hope of the Christian faith: the final, joyful union of all believers in the presence of God. It anticipates the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6–9), where the redeemed will celebrate the consummation of God's kingdom.

Gilbrant - In the New Testament panēgyris is found only in Hebrews 12:23 where it describes the joyful praise and celebration in the heavenly Jerusalem. There is some dispute whether panēgyris should be restricted to the angels (as in RSV, NIV, etc.) or whether it refers to a joint gathering of angels and believers (cf. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Hebrews*, pp.375f.). The former meaning is more probable because kai, "and," separates it from the word "church" and is perhaps intended as a contrast with the angels at Sinai who did not appear in festal assembly (see Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Herschel Hobbs in *Preaching Values from the Papyri - Turning to the meaning of panēgyris* Marcus Dods (*Expositor's Greek Testament*) suggests three possible connotations. (1) "General assembly [panēgyris] and church of the firstborn" may be in apposition with "an innumerable company [myriads] of angels." Thus it would mean a festive gathering in heaven composed of angels and the glorified saints in heaven. (2) A new particular or group may be introduced with the words "and to the church of the firstborn" as separate from "angels." (3) A new particular may be seen in "to myriads of angels, to a festal gathering and assembly of the firstborn." Dods favors the first possibility. However, there is much to be said for the second and/or third or a combination of both. If we examine the remainder of the passage several things seem likely which would separate the "angels" from "the church of the firstborn." Their names are "written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23; cf. Luke 10:20; Phil. 3:20, "conversation" is "colony," Moffatt; 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 20:11–15). They are to appear before God for judgment (Heb. 12:23). They are there through the blood of the new covenant (Heb. 12:24). None of these applies to angels, which, of course, no one holds. But this does seem significant when we endeavor to determine whether or not panēgyris is to be related to "myriads of angels" or to "the church of the firstborn." In the Greek text this word joins the two phrases. But to which does it refer? It is of interest to note that one manuscript ("D") reads "myriads of saints, a festal assembly, and the church of the firstborn." But this most likely is not a true reading. Westcott raises an interesting question. Should "angels" be related to "myriads" or to "festal assembly"? He says that the rhythm of the sentence naturally relates it to "myriads." If so, then he notes that panēgyris standing alone is a "harsh" construction. But is not this exactly what the author intended? If so, this word carries with it the idea of an exclamation, an announcement, the blast of a trumpet calling the people to the festal assembly, and the joyful shouts of those who rejoice and sing (cf. Rev. 19:1, 4–7). Let us note also in this passage the conjunction "and" (kai). But this word may also be translated "even." If this be followed, the entire passage may well read, "But ye are come to mount Zion, even to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels; to a festal assembly! even to the church of the firstborn, the ones having been written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the justified ones having been made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling ..." (Heb. 12:22–24). However one relates panēgyris the thought is that of a festal assembly in heaven when all of the true church shall be gathered in the presence of God. This is in contrast with the assembly of Israel before God at Sinai which was characterized by fear and quaking (v. 21). But before "mount Zion" (v. 22) there will be joy and gladness. No matter about the judgment before the God of all! For in our Mediator of the new covenant we will have been judged, justified, and made perfect. It will be a "festal assembly" indeed as we sit at the marriage feast of the Lamb (cf. Rev. 19:6–9), and as "a bride adorned [in God's righteousness] for her husband" (Rev. 21:2–4) we go out "to meet the bridegroom" (Matt. 25:1ff.). It will be a "festal assembly" indeed! A "festal assembly! even to the church of the firstborn having been enrolled in heaven!"

Heaven (3772) ([ouranos](#) - etiology is not certain - possibilities include oros = a relatively high elevation or horos = boundary + ano = above thus "the boundary above" - see also use of "**Heavenly** - [epouranios](#)" in Heb 12:22) It is interesting that one English word derived from ouranos is "uranium." In light of the fact that Revelation has 50 uses of "heaven" if you wanted to have a better sense of the meaning of ouranos, observing each of these uses for associations would be a profitable study. Strong's summary - (1) the vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it 1a) the universe, the world 1b) the aerial heavens or sky, the region where the clouds and the tempests gather, and where thunder and lightning are produced 1c) the sidereal or starry heavens (2) the region above the sidereal heavens, the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God dwells and other heavenly beings. See another discussion on heaven ([ouranos](#)) for additional information.

OURANOS IN HEBREWS - Heb. 1:10; Heb. 4:14; Heb. 7:26; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 9:23; Heb. 9:24; Heb. 11:12; Heb. 12:23; Heb. 12:25; Heb. 12:26

Hebrews 1:10 And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE **HEAVENS** ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the **heavens**, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 7:26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the **heavens**;

Hebrews 8:1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the **heavens**,

Hebrews 9:23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the **heavens** to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into **heaven** itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Hebrews 11:12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF **HEAVEN** IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.

Hebrews 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in **heaven**, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Hebrews 12:25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from **heaven**.

Hebrews 12:26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE **HEAVEN**."

Friberg has a good summary of a very big topic - heaven, as a part of the universe (Mt 5:18), opposite ge (earth); **(1)** as the atmosphere directly above the earth sky, air, firmament (Mt 6:26; Lk 17:24); **(2)** as the starry heaven firmament, sky (Mt 24:29a); **(3)** as the dwelling place of God (Mt 5:16), the angels (Mt 22:30), and the righteous dead (2Co 5:1, 2) heaven; **(4)** by metonymy, as synonymous with God or the inhabitants of heaven (Lk 15:18; Rev 12:12 [possibly personification]); **(5)** plural ο ορανοι heaven, the heavens, a Jewish concept, originally found in the Septuagint, that heaven is comprised of several spheres, with God dwelling in the highest heaven (2Co 12:2; Eph 1:10) (BORROW [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), PAGE 288)

NIDNTT ([SEE 9 page discussion online on word group = ouranos, ouranios, epouranios](#)) - Classic literature - ouranos, heaven, possibly related to an Indo-European root meaning water,rain, means that which moistens or fructifies. The related adj. ouranios means what is in heaven, comes from heaven, or appears in the heavens, i.e. heavenly. But it can also mean what is appropriate to a god, i.e. divine, and can even stand for god or the deity. On the other hand, it can mean simply that which belongs to the firmament or sky. epouranios means in heaven, belonging to the divine heaven.

Church ([1577](#)) (**ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out (but see note by Louw-Nida below) and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were called out from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Wuest** writes that "The word *assembly* is a good one-word translation of ekklesia." ([Hebrews](#))

EKKLESIA - 2X IN HEBREWS - Heb 2:12, Heb 12:23

Hebrews 2:12 saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE **CONGREGATION** I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE."

Louw and Nida adds that "Though some persons have tried to see in the term ekklesia a more or less literal meaning of 'called-out ones,' this type of etymologizing is not warranted either by the meaning of **ekklesia** in NT times or even by its earlier usage. The term **ekklesia** was in common usage for several hundred years before the Christian era and was used to refer to an assembly of persons constituted by well-defined membership. In general Greek usage it was normally a socio-political entity based upon citizenship in a city-

state and in this sense is parallel to demos (a group of citizens assembled for socio-political activities). For the NT, however, it is important to understand the meaning of **ekklesia** as 'an assembly of God's people.' [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament](#)

First-born (firstborn) (4416)(**prototokos** from **protos** = first, foremost, in place order or time; rank dignity + **titko** = beget, to bear, bring forth) can mean **first-born chronologically** (Lk 2:7), but refers primarily to position, rank, priority of position and emphasizes quality or kind, not time with the idea of "preeminence".

PROTOTOKOS - 8v - Lk. 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15; Col. 1:18; Heb. 1:6; Heb. 11:28; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 1:5

Prototokos in 4/8 uses refers to Jesus -- Colossians 1:18+, Romans 8:29+, Hebrews 1:6+, and Rev 1:5+ Each of these references to Christ as prototokos are in somewhat different contexts so be careful not to be confused. Vine helps untangle these uses by pointing out that in Colossians 1:18+ and Revelation 1:5+ **firstborn** refers to His resurrection, in Romans 8:29+ to His position in relationship to the Church, in Hebrews 1:6+ to His Second Advent when the word "again" is place in the right place (the Authorized Version gives a wrong translation, making the "again" seem to introduce a quotation, instead of signifying the second time when God will bring His Son into the world).

In both Greek and Jewish culture, the **first-born** was the son who had the right of inheritance. He was **not** necessarily the first one born chronologically. Although Esau was born first chronologically, it was Jacob who declared the "**first-born**" in regard to the blessing from Isaac (Jacob speaking to Esau said "First swear to me"; so he swore to him, and sold his **birthright** (Septuagint translates Hebrew with Greek word **prototokos**) to Jacob." [Gen 25:33]).

The nation of **Israel** was figuratively called God's **first-born** in Exodus 4:22+ (see also comments on Ex 13:15) and Jer 31:9+ (Ephraim [ISRAEL] is My firstborn). Though Israel clearly was not the first people born, they held first place or the place of pre-eminence in God's sight among all the nations (cf Deut 7:7).

Solomon was the preeminent son of David, although he was not the actual first born ("Sons were born to David at Hebron: his **first-born** [Septuagint translates with Greek **prototokos**] was Amnon" 2Sa 3:2)

In Ps 89:27, God says of the Messiah that He "shall make him My **first-born**" then defines what He means —"the highest of the kings of the earth."

In Revelation 1:5+, Jesus is called **the first-born of the dead** even though He was not the first person to be resurrected chronologically. He was the first to be resurrected to never die again! Of all ever raised, He is the preeminent One. Romans 8:29+ refers to Him as the **first-born** in relation to the church. In all the above cases, **first-born** clearly means **highest in rank**, not first created.

Enrolled (registered) (583) **apographo** from **apo** = from + **grapho** = to write)) is used here literally of citizens enrolled or registered, e.g., as occurred in an official registration in tax lists. Enter on a list. It occurs frequently in papyri finds, noting official census papers. Also used in Luke 2:3, Luke 2:5. In (Heb. 12:23+ the writer states that Christians have come to **the general assembly and church of the firstborn** who are registered {enregistered, enrolled, written} in heaven. It is notable that apographo in Heb 12:23 is in the perfect tense indicating the souls had been "enrolled" (or "registered") in Heaven at some point in time in the past and that this record endures or is permanent (another passage that would strongly argue against the aberrant teaching that one can lose their salvation. Their enrollment is permanent!) In English an **apograph** is a copy or transcript.

Agographo translated: census be taken(1), enrolled(1), register(1), register for the census(1). One use in Pr 22:20.

Apographo refers to the action of registration or enrollment, specifically denoting the process of being put on an official list. It can describe a census or tax register that involves enumerating both persons and property. This practice was frequently documented in official census papers, and registration typically had to occur at a person's town or region of origin. The census was such a significant event that it was often used as a historical marker for tracking time. Biblically, a notable example is the census during Quirinius' governance of Syria, which is mentioned in Luke 2:2. During this time, a decree from Caesar Augustus required people to travel to their ancestral towns to be registered. For instance, Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem to comply with this registration requirement. Etymologically, the term comes from a combination of Greek words meaning "to write off" a copy or list, with the specific purpose of enrollment or taxation.

- **God** - He 6:10-12, Heb 9:27, Ge 18:25, Ps 50:5,6, 94:2, 96:13, 98:9 Mt 25:31-34 Jn 5:27 2Th 1:5-7 1Pe 2:23
- [Hebrews 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE JUDGE OF ALL

And to God the Judge (*krites*) of all - Earlier the writer had reminded his readers of this certainty explaining that there is no reincarnation but "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes **judgment.**" (Hebrews 9:27+) The phrase **of all** refers to every soul ever born, "both the living and the dead," respectively, the saved and the lost (2Ti 4:1+). The saved of course will stand at the Bema of Christ to receive rewards and a crown of righteousness (2Ti 4:8+), while the lost will stand the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15+) to receive their "rewards" of eternal death and eternal separation from God (2Th 1:7-9+). It is interesting that God is called **Judge** in this context, sandwiched in the midst of three descriptions of those He will Judge as justified or declared righteous. What a contrast with God as Lawgiver at Sinai when He declared the Law making everyone guilty of sin against Him and headed for eternal punishment if they remained outside of Christ.

THOUGHT – The same God Who once thundered judgment from Sinai now welcomes His people at Zion through the blood of the Mediator Jesus Christ. At Sinai, the His Law condemned; at Zion, His grace justifies. What once produced fear now fills the heart with joy and confident access to the Father through Christ our Righteousness. (Ro 8:1+) For those who trust in Christ, the Judge has become our Father, and the courtroom has become a place of grace. We no longer tremble at Sinai, but we rejoice at Zion, where the Judge has become our Justifier (Ro 3:26). We no longer stand under the curse of the Law and its condemnation. In fact as the writer has already stated "God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints." (Heb 6:10+)

But for those who reject Jesus' sacrifice and insult His Spirit of grace there remains no hope but instead "a **terrifying expectation of judgment** and **THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES** (Hebrews 10:27+)..."For we know Him Who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL **JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.**" It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:30, 31+).

By faith we see God, the Judge of all. No longer do darkness and gloom conceal Him, for to faith's vision His glory is transcendent. These believers do not come to a literal mountain on earth, but have been granted the unspeakable privilege of entering God's holy sanctuary in heaven. Even now—by faith—they and we approach God in adoration, confession, praise, and prayer. Unlike Aaron and the Old Testament high priests, who could enter the Holy of Holies only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16), we have continual access to the holiest place through our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus. God no longer warns, "Stay at a distance," but in glorious contrast, He tenderly beckons, "Draw near with confidence." Truly, this is amazing grace!

To reiterate, without exception, all humans must stand before God the righteous Judge. But the glory of the gospel is that believers may stand before Him without fear, since Jesus, Who Himself is the Amen assures us "Amen, Amen, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24+) This relief from the fear of judgment (cp Heb 2:15+) is an enormous blessing to those who know themselves to be (saved) sinners in thought, word and deed.

Judge (2923) *krites* from *krino* = to judge) is a noun meaning "a judge" or "decider". It refers to someone who one who decides, the one who makes decisions based on examination and evaluation, who passes judgment, which can include various contexts such as: - An arbiter , A Roman procurator administering justice, God passing judgment on men, Leaders or rulers of the Israelites. The word comes from the common Greek word that means "a judge" and is related to terms like kríma, krino, and krisis. A related form "kritikos" means "able to judge or discern," and appears in the New Testament in Hebrews 4:12, which describes the Word of God as "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart". Etymologically, the word derives from the Greek "krinein," meaning "to separate, pick out, decide, judge," and is connected to an Indo-European base meaning "to separate." It is cognitively related to the Latin "cernere," which means "to separate, sift, distinguish, discern, understand, and decide".

Krites is used of of human beings (Mt 5:25; Lk 12:14, 58; 18:2.Ac 24:10). Krites is used of God (Heb 12:23; Jas 4:12; 2 Ti 4:8; Acts 10:42; Jas 5:9) **Krites** was a leader of the people in the period of the Judges (Acts 13:20). **BDAG** - (1) one who has the right to render a decision in legal matters (2) one who rules in a special sense in the accounts of Israel's theocratic period (borrow [BDAG](#)).

Gilbrant -In classical Greek this noun generally means "judge, umpire," frequently in a competitive context (i.e., "the judges in the poetic contests," cf. Liddell-Scott). In the Septuagint *kritēs* is also used in a special

sense referring to the leaders God raised up in the period between Joshua and King Saul, the time of the “judges.” When outlining the history of the Jews, Paul preached, “And after that he gave unto them judges” (Acts 13:20). These leaders did act as judges over lawsuits, so “judge” is not an inappropriate title for them, but this was only one of their functions. In later Greek *kritēs* was more frequently used to designate a “judge” in a court of law. Both the Septuagint and New Testament use *kritēs* in this sense referring to both men and God. Jesus taught, “Agree with thine adversary quickly ... lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge” (Matthew 5:25). And in the parable about a woman’s persistent prayer, Jesus began, “There was in a city a judge” (Luke 18:2). It is also used of God in many places. An example is in Hebrews where it says “to God the Judge of all” (Hebrews 12:23). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

KRITES - 17V - Matt. 5:25; Matt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19; Lk. 12:14; Lk. 12:58; Lk. 18:2; Lk. 18:6; Acts 10:42; Acts 13:20; Acts 18:15; Acts 24:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:4; Jas. 4:11; Jas. 4:12; Jas. 5:9

AND TO THE SPIRITS OF RIGHTEOUS MEN MADE PERFECT: *kai pneumasi dikaiou teteleiomēnon* (RPPMPG)

- **Spirits** - He 11:4,40 Eccl 12:7 1Co 13:12, 15:49,54, 2Co 5:8 Php 1:21, 22, 23, Php 3:12-21, Col 1:12 Rev 7:14, 15, 16, 16, 17
- [Hebrews 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Hebrews 11:40+ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

THOSE SAINTS ALREADY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

And to the spirits (*pneuma*) of the righteous (*dikaios*) made perfect (*teleioo*) - Some writers feel this refers to OT believers (F F Bruce) whereas other think it refers to NT believers (Bengel). I favor it as a reference to all believers, as all are **righteous** for all have the same spiritual life in Christ, whether they are from the OT or NT.

Simon Kistemaker sees **the spirits of the righteous made perfect** as encompassing "all believers of both Old Testament and New Testament times, who have been translated to glory, are declared righteous. They have been made perfect on the basis of Jesus' work; he is "the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2)." ([Borrow](#))

Ray Stedman feels **the spirits of the righteous made perfect** "likely looks back to Hebrews 11:40 and the Old Testament saints who would be made perfect "together with us." Since it is their spirits which have been made perfect and not their bodies, it suggests that these saints, who lived before the Cross, are waiting with us for the resurrection to come. Jesus spoke to the Jews of "other sheep [Gentiles] that are not of this sheep pen." "They too," he added, "will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16). As we have already noted, when the heavenly Jerusalem comes to earth, as John sees it in Revelation 21:2+, these words will be fulfilled. Its gates are named for the twelve tribes of Israel, and its foundation stones bear the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." ([Hebrews 12:18-24 Blessings Now Possible](#))

Philip E Hughes agrees with **Kistemaker** (and not Stedman) arguing that "the point of Heb 11:40 is that the Old Testament saints, imperfect though their situation formerly was, now share with us the perfection which has been procured by the incarnate Son's all-sufficient sacrifice, the effect of which reaches back to include them no less than it reaches forward to include us who belong to the post-advent era. It was "for every one," them as well as us, that Christ tasted death, so that he might deliver "all those" (them as well as us) "who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb 2:9, 15). It is preferable, therefore (with Owen, Delitzsch, Alford, Westcott, Teodorico, etc.), to understand "the spirits of just men made perfect" as an inclusive designation, comprehending all who through faith have been accounted righteous by God (Heb 10:38) from the beginning of the world onward (ch. 11) and who now, their earthly pilgrimage completed, have experienced for themselves that Jesus is not only the pioneer but also the perfecter of their faith (Heb 12:2). Absent from the body, they are at home with their Lord (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21, 23). ([A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews](#))

MADE PERFECT

Grant Osborne on **made perfect** - Behind the idea of "the righteous made perfect" is primarily Christ, whose "one sacrifice" has "made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb 10:14) but also the saints, depicted in Heb 11:40 as part of the process

("together with us would they be made perfect")—meaning that the final destiny of the saints of the old covenant is intertwined with us new covenant people. The point here is that even now the saints in heaven celebrate with us. We together are the "righteous" who belong to God (10:38). We and they have both experienced God's complete work in their lives and belong to him fully. (See [Hebrews Verse by Verse - Page cxxv](#))

The **KJV Bible Commentary** is similar to Osborne writing that "Since they are **spirits**, they are those who have died but have not yet been resurrected. Since they are just men **made perfect**, certainly they refer to the Old Testament saints who could not be made perfect before Christ's time (Hebrews 11:40+); but now, they have been made perfect through His one sacrifice (Hebrews 10:14+). ([KJV Bible Commentary](#) online)

The OT saints, who were saved by the gospel by grace through faith just as are NT saints (see Ge 15:6, Hab 2:4, Gal 3:8) waited for centuries for the perfection we received when we trusted Christ, because that came only with Christ's death and His finished, perfecting work on the Cross, "For by one (sacrificial) offering He has **perfected** (perfect tense = speaks of the permanent effect of this offering) for all time those who are **sanctified** (present tense = being daily, continually set apart from the world and unto God, so called present tense salvation - see Three Tenses of Salvation)." (Hebrews 10:14+).

R Kent Hughes on **made perfect** - We share the same secrets as Abraham and Moses and David and Paul. Here is an amazing thing—they died millennia before us, but God planned, according to Heb 11:40, "that only together with us would they be made perfect." They waited for centuries for the perfection we received when we trusted Christ, because that came only with Christ's death—"by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb 10:14). Because of Christ's work we....are all equal in righteousness! (See [Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul](#))

John MacArthur on **made perfect** - They had to wait a long time for the perfection that we received the instant we trusted in Christ. In fact, they had to wait for us (Heb. 11:40), in the sense that they had to wait for Christ's death and resurrection before they could be glorified. In heaven we will be one with them in Jesus Christ. We will not be inferior to Abraham or Moses or Elijah, because we will all be equal in righteousness, because our only righteousness will be our Savior's righteousness. (See [Hebrews Commentary - Page 416](#))

Spirits (4151) **pneuma** from **pneo** = to breath) primarily means wind, breath or spirit. Theologically **pneuma** is rich in meaning and contextually flexible, but its core idea revolves around invisible, life-giving force or presence. In contrast to the **sarx** (flesh), which represents fallen human nature, **pneuma** often represents the new life and power given by God the Spirit as in the classic "confrontation" in (Gal 5:16+) This shows that pneuma is not merely a force but a divine Person who leads and transforms.

Summary - Speaking of the human spirit it describes the rational (and relational), immaterial part of man that enables relationship with God (1Co 2:11). Unlike animals, humans are spiritual beings made in the image of God, capable of worship, moral reasoning, and eternal destiny (Eccl 12:7). The Holy Spirit third Person of the Trinity (Mt 28:19). Demonic spirits, non-material evil beings, personal, non-physical beings opposed to God's purposes. (Lk 8:2). Disposition or attitude indicating a person's inner disposition or mindset (Gal 6:1) In summary, pneuma encompasses the breath of life, the human spirit, demonic spirits, and most gloriously, the Holy Spirit. It reveals the unseen realities of both divine and human nature and is central to understanding the Christian life in the Spirit.

[Click for an in depth 20 PAGE discussion of PNEUMA](#) in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament

Made perfect (5048) (**teleioo** related to **teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, consummate soundness, idea of being whole) means to accomplish or bring to an end or to the intended goal (telos). It means to be complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness or in good working order. It does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out to the full finish which is picked up in the translation "perfected". In sum the fundamental idea of **teleioo** is the bringing of a person or thing to the goal fixed by God. **Teleioo** signifies the attainment of consummate soundness and includes the idea of being made whole. Interestingly the Gnostics used **teleios** of one fully initiated into their mysteries and that may have been why Paul used teleios in this epistle. In He 12:2+ Jesus is designated as "the author and perfecter of faith" where perfecter is teleiotes, the Completer, the One Who reached the goal so as to win the prize so to speak.

Wuest has this note on the NT word group (telos, teleioo, teleios, teleiosis, teleiotes) - **Teleios** the adjective, and **teleioo** the verb. The adjective is used in the papyri, of heirs being of age, of women who have attained maturity, of full-grown cocks, of acacia trees in good condition, of a complete lampstand, of something in good working order or condition. To summarize; the meaning of the adjective includes the ideas of full-growth, maturity, workability, soundness, and completeness. The verb refers to the act of bringing the person or thing

to any one of the aforementioned conditions. When applied to a Christian, the word refers to one that is spiritually mature, complete, well-rounded in his Christian character. ([Hebrews](#))

Larry Richards commenting on the word group (telos, teleioo, teleios, teleiosis, teleiotes) writes that "These words emphasize wholeness and completeness. In the biological sense they mean "mature," or "full grown": the person, animal, or plant achieved the potential inherent in its nature. The perfect is the thing or person that is complete, in which nothing that belongs to its essence has been left out. It is perfect because every potential it possesses has been realized. (BORROW [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words for interesting discussion on "PERFECT" in OT and NT](#))

TELEIOO - 23V- Lk. 2:43; Lk. 13:32; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 17:4; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 19:28; Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 7:19; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 9:9; Heb. 10:1; Heb. 10:14; Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18

Telioo is used 9 times of 24 total NT uses in Hebrews, often in the sense of to make perfect or fully cleanse from sin in contrast to ceremonial (Levitical) cleansing. The writer is emphasizing the importance of **perfection**... (which should cause any Jew who is contemplating the worth of Christ and the New Covenant to realize his utter hopelessness to every attain perfection under the Old Covenant).

Hebrews 2:10+ For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to **perfect** the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Comment: This does not imply any moral imperfection in the Lord Jesus, but speaks of the consummation of the human experience of suffering the death of the Cross, through which He must pass if He is to become the Author or Captain of our salvation.)

Hebrews 5:9+ And **having been made perfect**, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

Hebrews 7:19+ (for the Law **made** nothing **perfect**), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

Comment: This means to carry through completely, to make complete, to finish, bring to an end. The old covenant could bring nothing to conclusion. The Mosaic economy could reveal sin but it could never remove sin, and so it had to be removed. It gave no security. It gave no peace. A man never had a clean conscience.

Hebrews 7:28+ For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, **made perfect** forever.

Hebrews 9:9+ which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot **make** the worshiper **perfect** in conscience,

Hebrews 10:1+ For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, **make perfect** those who draw near. (Contrast with Jesus in Hebrews 5:9 above. The idea in Hebrews 10:1 is that the ceremonial law could not actually save the believer. Its work was always short of completeness.)

Hebrews 10:14+ For by one offering He has **perfected** for all time those who are sanctified.

Comment: Wuest writes "*Here, the completeness of the state of salvation of the believer is in view. Everything essential to the salvation of the individual is included in the gift of salvation which the sinner receives by faith in Messiah's sacrifice. The words "for ever" here are to be construed with "perfected." It is a permanent state of completeness in salvation to which reference is made. The words "them that are sanctified" are descriptive of the believer. He is one set apart for God*) ([ibid](#))

Hebrews 11:40+ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be **made perfect**.

Hebrews 12:23+ (But you have come...) 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**,

Study the other 15 NT uses of telioo

Luke 2:43 and as they were returning, after **spending the full number** of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,

Luke 13:32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I **reach My goal!**'

Comment: "Today and tomorrow and the third day" means that God's timetable is unfolding for Jesus, and no king like Herod could shorten the time. When His work is accomplished or has reached its intended goal, His death and resurrection will be its perfection.

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to **accomplish** His work.

Comment: Teleioo does mean just to bring to an end but to perfect it. The work He had been sent to do was finished on the Cross, and thus He cried "It is finished! [= related verb teleo]" John 19:30. Note that Jesus is not saying that He refrained from eating food but that the great goal of His life was not to cater to His body but rather to the will of His Father! Which do you cater to? Are you accomplishing His work in and through you? see Eph 2:10+)

John 5:36 "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to **accomplish**, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

Comment: The Old Testament testifies to the mission and ministry of Jesus precisely what God said He would do in Scripture and what God told Jesus to do as He ministered.

John 17:4 "I glorified Thee on the earth, having **accomplished** the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

Comment: Jesus had finished His work of teaching and witness, but His work of redemption had yet to be accomplished on the cross. He would then shout the great victory cry: "It is finished!" John 19:30

J C Ryle explains how the Cross accomplished God's perfect will "*The crucifixion brought glory to the Father. It glorified His wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, and love. It showed Him wise, in providing a plan whereby He could be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly.—It showed Him faithful in keeping His promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.—It showed Him holy, in requiring His law's demands to be satisfied by our great Substitute.—It showed Him loving, in providing such a Mediator, such a Redeemer, and such a Friend for sinful man as His co-eternal Son.*"

John 17:23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be **perfected** in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.

Comment: "In unity" is literally "unto oneness" and represents the goal of the perfecting action, that goal being believers might be in a state of having achieved the unity intended for them; one which reflects the unity between the Father and the Son.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished (related verb **teleo**), in order that the Scripture **might be fulfilled** (teleioo), said, "I am thirsty."

Comment: Here Scripture "reaches its goal" or is fulfilled in Jesus.

Acts 20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may **finish** my course (dromos = race, the course of one's life), and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient (IS = It already is - we don't need to ask Him for more. We need to abide in the sufficiency of what He has already provided) for you, for power is **perfected** in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Philippians 3:12 (note) Not that I have already obtained it, or **have** already **become perfect** (perfect tense) (reached my goal, accomplished), but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Comment: He was not yet perfectly conformed to Christ. The process was still going on. Note that **perfect tense** speaks of an action that was completed in past time, having results that exist in present time. The past completed action of teleioo would refer to the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the saint to that place of spiritual maturity in which the sanctifying process would have done its work so well that nothing needed to be added. In other words, the saint would be brought to a place of absolute spiritual maturity beyond which there is no room for growth and the results of this work would be permanent, and there would be no possibility of slipping back into a state of spiritual immaturity again. Obviously this

perfection will only be fully achieved when we are glorified.

James 2:22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was **perfected**;

1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been **perfected**. By this we know that we are in Him:

1 John 4:12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is **perfected** in us.

Comment: Wuest writes that "If saints have this agape love habitually for one another, that shows that this love which God is in His nature, has accomplished its purpose in their lives. It has made us loving and self-sacrificial in our characters. This love has been brought to its human fulness in the lives of the saints. The verb "is perfected" is perfect in tense, speaking of a past completed act having present results. ([ibid](#))

1 John 4:17 By this, love is **perfected** with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not **perfected** in love.

Ye are come unto Mount Zion - These poor Hebrew Christians, outcast from their Temple, and soon to see their beloved city vanish from the earth, were sore at heart. What a contrast was presented by the bare room in which they celebrated the simple supper and the splendid Temple with its magnificent rites! What a tiny rill their hymns were, compared with the mighty torrent of Temple psalmody! What a handful of worshippers, compared with the multitudes that congregated from all the world! Sometimes it seemed as though the contrast were unbearable.

Then said the Holy Ghost, lift up your eyes and see. Ye are not the lonely, isolated handful ye suppose. Every time you offer your prayer and sing your hymns ye are joining with the spirits of the perfected just, with numberless holy angels, and with vast multitudes in heaven and on earth who are ever adoring Christ. You climb the temple of Worship, of which the steps are prayers and the gates praise, and as you do so, on either hand go myriads of happy and holy spirits; and those surely are specially near whom you "have loved long since and lost awhile."

What special blessing these thoughts will bring to the bedridden, who for many years have not entered the courts of God's house; to the aged, and lonely, and exiled! We never worship God alone. As soon as we begin to pray, we say, Our Father which art in heaven, forgive our sins; give us our daily bread. We need not die to pass within thy gates,

O Jerusalem, city of God! Already we tread thy golden pavement, and hear the music of the waters of life, and press to our wounds the leaves of thy tree. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

Hebrews 12:22-23 - Invisible Companions - One Sunday morning while traveling in West Virginia, we visited a small church in a tiny village. Only 15 people were present, yet they radiated joy as they sang. And the pastor preached from the Bible with enthusiasm. But I couldn't shake a feeling of sympathy for him and his people. With little chance for growth, it looked like a discouraging ministry.

But the testimony of a young seminarian showed me how wrong I was! Assigned to minister in a small village chapel, he was dismayed when only two people stayed for the communion service. As he read from the liturgy, he came to the words: "Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we worship and adore Thy glorious name." That sentence changed everything for him. In his heart he said, "God forgive me. I did not know I was in that great company."

When we came to Christ in faith, we joined an invisible host of companions, what the writer of Hebrews says is an "innumerable company of angels," and "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (He 12:22, 23). Keep this amazing reality in mind as you worship God. It will give great meaning to every service, whether thousands of fellow worshipers are present, or just two or three. — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Glory to God, and praise and love
Be ever, ever given
By saints below and saints above,
The church in earth and heaven. —Wesley

When Christians worship here on earth,
the hosts of heaven are worshipping with them.

Hebrews 12:22-24 - OUR HERITAGE AND OUR GOAL - WE ARE far from being perfect. When in our deepest moments, we ascend into the Holiest, on the wings of faith and prayer, we pass through a vast host of sympathetic spirits, all of whom are devoted to the same Lord and Master, and are joining in the same act of worship. Many of them have known and helped us in our earthly life, and they have been sent forth to minister to us, and to help us on our way. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."

We are also come unto God, the Judge of all. When Moses stood before God on the Mount, he said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." But we may come with boldness to the footstool of the Eternal Throne, though our God is a consuming fire, for in Christ Jesus we stand accepted. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and His Blood speaks better things than that of Abel. That blood cried against Cain. But the Blood of Jesus cries on our behalf; it has opened the way into the Holiest; has cleansed us from our sins; has ratified the New Covenant, and is the Pledge of our redemption.

Therefore, although we realise our sinfulness and imperfection, let us arise into the unseen, and join with the One Church of the Redeemed in heaven and on earth. We are come to it in the purpose of God, and by the all-sufficing work of Christ our Lord, but let us see to it that we come also in our spiritual realization, communion, and fellowship.

We are members of the Church Universal, citizens of the Heavenly City. Heirs of that precious Redemption, which has severed us from things that are seen, and made us part of that blessed throng that no man can number—"the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven." Neither life, nor death, nor rite, nor church-order, can divide those who are for ever one with each other because they are one with Christ. Nothing but sin and obtuseness of soul can exclude us from living fellowship with saints of all communions and sects, denominations and ages.

PRAYER - Accept our thanks, O God, for this foretaste of the bliss of Paradise. To Thee we would pour forth our tribute of adoring love, and join with angels and the spirits of the Redeemed in worship. Unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing and honour, glory and dominion, for ever. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 12:22-23 - Born Here! - For many years, a popular bumper sticker in Colorado bore a single word—NATIVE. It proclaimed to every new arrival, "You just moved in, but I was born here. This is my state, my heritage, and I belong."

Our nationality, citizenship, and sense of belonging are usually determined by birth. This was especially true for the Israelites in Old Testament times. They were not only the people of Israel but the people of God.

It may seem surprising, then, to read in Psalm 87 that people of rival Gentile nations will one day be treated as if they had been "born" in Zion (Ps 87:4, 5). Herbert Lockyer says of this passage:

"Whether some were born in Egypt or came from Ethiopia, all [will be] equally honored as home-born sons of the city of God. The proud from Egypt, the worldly from Babylon, the wrathful from Philistia, the covetous from Tyre [will be] brought under the regenerating, transforming power of the Spirit of God."

That is, they will be spiritually reborn.

Through faith in Jesus, we too are born again (John 3:1-18). We are now citizens of "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," and our names are "registered in heaven" (Hebrews 12:22, 23). Praise God! We have been born into His family with all of the accompanying privileges! —D C McCasland ([Ibid](#))

What a blessing to be born again!
To be made new, set free from sin;
What a prospect, to live in heaven,
As God's own child, cleansed and forgiven! —Fitzhugh

Jesus was born to die, so we could be born again.

Bishop Trench on general assembly ([paneguris](#)) - *The Church Triumphant*.—The πανήγυρις (*pançguris*) was a solemn assembly for purposes of festal rejoicing ... the word having given us "panegyric," which is properly a set discourse pronounced at one of these great and festal gatherings. Business might grow out of the fact that such multitudes were assembled, since many, and for various reasons, would be glad to avail themselves of the circumstance; but only in the same way as a "fair" grew out of a "feria" or "holy-day." Strabo notices the business-like aspect which the πανήγυρις commonly assumed, which was indeed to such an extent their prominent feature that the Romans translated πανήγυρις by the Latin *mercatus*, and this even when the Olympic games were

intended. These, with the other solemn games, were eminently, though not exclusively, the *παν γυραις* of the Greek nation. If we keep this festal character of the *πανηγυρις* in mind, we shall find a peculiar fitness in the employment of this word at Hebrews 12:23, where only in the New Testament it occurs. The apostle is there setting forth the communion of the Church militant on earth with the Church triumphant in heaven—of the Church toiling and suffering here, with that Church from which all weariness and toil have for ever passed away (Revelation 21:4); and how could he better describe this last than as a *πανηγυρις*, than as the glad and festal assembly of heaven?

Hebrews 12:22-24 - The Church Indestructible - The chief executive of a large and successful chain of stores made a striking statement about the future of his company. He said that a hundred years from now it would be either greatly changed or nonexistent.

The same can be said about every human organization. Leaders come and go, consumer desires change, manufacturing methods evolve. As a result, companies either change or they don't survive.

According to Jesus, this will never happen to His church. Some individual churches may go out of existence, but the "gates of Hades" will never prevail against the church that Jesus is building. When He referred to "My church" (Matthew 16:18), He had in mind all believers—past, present, and future. Paul called this vast group the "body of Christ" (1Corinthians 12:27).

The moment we trust in Jesus, we become members of His body, the church. And when Jesus used the phrase "the gates of Hades," He was referring to death, for Hades is the abode of the dead. One by one believers die and pass through those "gates," but this neither changes nor diminishes the church. They simply join those who are already victors in the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22, 23, 24).

Praise God, the church is indestructible! —Herbert Vander Lugt ([ibid](#))

Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone;
Chosen of the Lord and precious,
Binding all the church in one. —Neale

The Church, rooted by God, can never be uprooted by man.

Hebrews 12:23 - Morning and evening : Daily readings (May 15 PM) - Recollect that there are two kinds of perfection which the Christian needs—the perfection of justification in the person of Jesus, and the perfection of sanctification wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. At present, corruption yet remains even in the breasts of the regenerate—experience soon teaches us this. Within us are still lusts and evil imaginations. But I rejoice to know that the day is coming when God shall finish the work which he has begun; and he shall present my soul, not only perfect in Christ, but perfect through the Spirit, without spot or blemish, or any such thing. Can it be true that this poor sinful heart of mine is to become holy even as God is holy? Can it be that this spirit, which often cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this sin and death?" shall get rid of sin and death—that I shall have no evil things to vex my ears, and no unholy thoughts to disturb my peace? Oh, happy hour! may it be hastened! When I cross the Jordan, the work of sanctification will be finished; but not till that moment shall I even claim perfection in myself. Then my spirit shall have its last baptism in the Holy Spirit's fire. Methinks I long to die to receive that last and final purification which shall usher me into heaven. Not an angel more pure than I shall be, for I shall be able to say, in a double sense, "I am clean," through Jesus' blood, and through the Spirit's work. Oh, how should we extol the power of the Holy Ghost in thus making us fit to stand before our Father in heaven! Yet let not the hope of perfection hereafter make us content with imperfection now. If it does this, our hope cannot be genuine; for a good hope is a purifying thing, even now. The work of grace must be abiding in us now or it cannot be perfected then. Let us pray to "be filled with the Spirit," that we may bring forth increasingly the fruits of righteousness. (Spurgeon, C. H.)

QUESTION - [What does "church of the firstborn" mean in Hebrews 12:23? Gotquestions.org](#)

ANSWER - The phrase *church of the firstborn* is found in Hebrews 12, a chapter that speaks to the differences between [Mt. Sinai](#) (where the law was delivered) and [Mt. Zion](#), the dwelling place of God. Verses 18–21 recall the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai and the fact that no one was allowed to approach the mountain or even touch it. There was fire and smoke, and the people were terrified (see Exodus 19:10–19). Only Moses was allowed to go up the mountain to meet God.

This scene at Mt. Sinai is contrasted with the [New Covenant](#), symbolized by Mt. Zion—not the earthly mountain but the heavenly counterpart. (Mt. Zion was the site of Jerusalem and came to stand for the place where God resides.) Generally speaking, the tone of the passage describing Mt. Zion is much less ominous and more joyful. Not only does God "reside" in the heavenly Jerusalem, but also there are "angels in joyful assembly" (Hebrews 12:22) and "Jesus the mediator of a New Covenant" (verse 24). With them

all are “the spirits of the righteous made perfect” and “the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven” (verse 23). So, under the New Covenant, there are many who are able to approach God, unlike what happened on Mt. Sinai.

“**The spirits of the righteous made perfect**” refers to all believers but may, at least temporarily, refer to those who have already died in the Lord—they are now made perfect. The “church of the firstborn” is comprised of all those whose names are written in heaven—believers of all ages, dead or alive. The Greek word for “church” simply means “assembly,” and that’s how the NLT and CSB translate it.

But why is it called the church of the “firstborn?” Does *firstborn* describe the members of the church in some way? Or does *firstborn* refer to someone else?

In the New Testament, Christ is described as “the firstborn over all creation” (Colossians 1:15). This refers to His position as rightful heir over all creation. This seems to be similar to the way the word is used in Hebrews 1:6.

Colossians 1:18 and Revelation 1:5 speak of Jesus as the “firstborn from the dead.” This refers to the fact that He is the first to be resurrected and given a resurrection body; it also implies that many more resurrections will follow. Romans 8:29 says that Christ is the firstborn of many brothers and sisters. So, the “church of the firstborn” is simply another way of saying the “gathering of people in Jesus Christ.” The term *firstborn* emphasizes that He is preeminent over all creation and the first of many to be resurrected and given a glorified body.

The passage ends with a warning. If those who rejected the Old Covenant were punished severely, how much more severe will be the punishment for those who reject the superior covenant?

Hebrews 12:24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [kai diathekes neas mesite Iesou, kai aimati rantismou kreitton lalounti](#) (PAPNSD) [para ton Abel.](#)

BGT κα διαθηκης νεας μεσ τησο κα αματι αντισμο κρεττον λαλο ντι παρ τ ν βελ.

Amplified: And to Jesus, the Mediator (Go-between, Agent) of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks [of mercy], a better and nobler and more gracious message than the blood of Abel [which cried out for vengeance]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

NKJ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

NET and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than Abel's does.

CSB to Jesus (mediator of a new covenant), and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the blood of Abel.

ESV and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

NIV to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

NLT: You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Abel did. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: and to Jesus, mediator of a new agreement, to the cleansing of blood which tells a better story than the age-old sacrifice of Abel.

Wuest: and to Jesus, the mediator of a new testament, and to blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than the blood of Abel [i.e., the animal blood which he shed sacrificially].

Young's Literal: and to a mediator of a new covenant -- Jesus, and to blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than that of Abel!

- **Jesus** - He 7:22, Heb 8:6,8, 1Ti 2:5
- **New** - Heb 13:20, Isa 55:3 Jer 31:31, 32, 33
- **Covenant** - He 9:15 Mt 26:28 Mk 14:24 Lk 22:20
- [Hebrews 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Hebrews 7:22+ so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Hebrews 8:6+ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the **Mediator** of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Hebrews 9:15+ For this reason He is the **mediator** of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

1 Timothy 2:5+ For there is one God, and one **Mediator** also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 1:7+ ("SPRINKLED BLOOD") In Him (CHRIST) **we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

JESUS OUR MEDIATOR

And to Jesus, the Mediator ([mesites](#)) of a new ([neos](#)) covenant ([diatheke](#)) - Here we see an implicit contrast with the Old Covenant, for Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant, while Jesus is the better Mediator of the better covenant. Why would anyone want to go back to the Old when the New is so much BETTER? This is the third time the writer mentions the truth that Jesus is the Mediator (Heb 8:6+, Heb 9:15+), so that this truth is clearly something he desires his readers to fully grasp.

We see the "picture" of Jesus as our **Mediator** everytime we see the phrase "**through Christ** (Jesus, Him)" for it is only **THROUGH** Him that we can draw near to the Father. E.g., Hebrews 7:25 says "Therefore He is able also to save forever **those who draw near to God through Him**, since He always lives to make intercession for them." So while the word **mediator** is not used explicitly in this verse, it does describe the function of a mediator—interceding on behalf of others before God—which is central to Christ's ongoing priestly ministry. "Those who draw near to God through Him" also emphasizes that access to God is only possible through Jesus. **This is the very definition of a mediator—one who bridges the gap between two parties.** Jesus Himself said, "No one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6), and Paul affirms, "There is one God, and one Mediator also between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5)

John MacArthur notes that "Our Lord is here called by His redemptive name, **Jesus**, which He was given because He would "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). When we come to Mount Zion, we come to our Savior, our Redeemer, our one and only Mediator with the Father. (See [Hebrews MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 416](#))

C H Spurgeon - The center around which we gather in these days is not Sinai with its thunder and its fire; it is the cross—no, it is heaven. It is the enthroned Savior. It is the great Mediator of a better covenant than that of which Moses came to speak. We gather there, and we make up a part of that vast throng that now surrounds that center. Oh, that we while we hear the sweet voice of the gospel we may lend it a willing ear, and may we not be among the number of those who reject the voice that speaks from heaven to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. ([Spurgeon's Expositions - Hebrews 12](#))

We see the **New Covenant** alluded to in many OT passages as for example in Isaiah - "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make (cut = karath) an everlasting (olam) covenant (berit/berith/beriyth) with you, [According to] the faithful mercies shown to David." (Isaiah 55:3)

Comment: "The faithful mercies shown to David" refers to the covenant God made with David in 2Sa 7:12-16 in which He promised that David's throne, dynasty, and kingdom would continue forever. Christ's resurrection confirms Him as the eternal Davidic king [Acts 13:34], though He will not take possession of that kingdom until He returns as **King of kings and Lord of lords** [Rev 19:11-16-+]. It should however be noted that some writers see this reference to David is an allusion to the New Covenant made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah in Jer. 31:31; 32:40). See discussion entitled Prophetic Promises of the New Covenant for more discussion of the New Covenant in the Old Testament!

In Hebrews 8 the writer contrasts the Old Covenant - "But (contrasting Heb 8:1-5+) now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent

ministry (more excellent than the OT shadows, mere copies of the true, more excellent than the Aaronic priesthood), by as much as He is also the **mediator** of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises." (Heb 8:6+)

In Hebrews 9 Jesus is called the Mediator of a new covenant - "And for this reason (What reason? Because Christ has appeared as our High Priest Who entered "through the greater and more perfect tabernacle...through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all" Heb 9:11-12+) He is the **mediator** of a new covenant, in order that (**term of purpose**) since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant (cp Ro 3:25+), those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (Heb 9:15+)

Mediator (3316) (**mesites** from **mesos** = middle, in midst) describes who stands in the middle between two people and brings them together.

MESITES - 6V Gal. 3:19; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; Heb. 9:15; Heb. 12:24

The covenant Christ mediates is a **better covenant**, since it is enacted on **better promises**. In Hebrews 8:6-13, the New Covenant is contrasted with the first covenant (Heb 8:7+), the Mosaic Law (Ex 19:5). Christ's blood is the basis of the New Covenant and pays for the sins of all (Mt 26:28). Christians are ministers of the New Covenant (2Cor 3:6+). There will be an aspect of fulfillment in relation to Israel in the Millennium. Remember that the New Covenant was first given in the Old Testament to Israel, **not** to the Gentiles and **not** to the Church. God declares...

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a **new covenant** with the **house of Israel** and with the **house of Judah** (if one reads this verse literally, clearly the New Covenant is first made to Israel and Judah), 32 not like the covenant which I made with their (the Jewish) fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (the first covenant = Mosaic covenant), My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel **after those days**," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them (Israel) and on their (Israel's) heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (When will these promises be fulfilled? See discussion of Ro 11:26+ where Paul teaches that all Israel will be saved)

35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: 36 "If this fixed order (Sun, moon, stars) departs from before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever." (**NOTE:** This verse substantiates the certainty of God's promises to Israel. The church has not replaced Israel. The sun, moon, and stars are still in their order, thus God's promises stand in effect.) 37 Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD. 38 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. (see Jer. 31:31-34+).

New (3501) (**neos**) signifies new in respect to time (contrast kainos = new in respect to quality - the "New Covenant" is both!). **Neos** describes that which has recently come into existence but for a relatively short time. I like Homer Kent's explanation of why the writer choose neos over the more common word kainos - "The choice of neos here emphasizes the fresh and recent character of the revelation in Jesus Christ." After all it had only been about 30 years or so since the Cross.

This temporarily and qualitatively new covenant is a better covenant of which Jesus is the Guarantee and Mediator, the writer explaining that...

(Jesus as a Priest forever) so much the more (than the Levitical priests) also Jesus has become the guarantee of a **better covenant**. (Hebrews 7:22+)

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of **abetter covenant**, which has been enacted on better promises. (Hebrews 8:6+)

And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:15+)

Covenant (1242) (**diatheke** from **dia** = two + **tithemi** = to place pictures that which is placed between two Thus, a covenant is something placed between two, an arrangement between two parties.) was a commonly used in the Greco-Roman world to define a

legal transaction in settling an inheritance. **Diatheke** denotes an irrevocable decision, which cannot be cancelled by anyone. A prerequisite of its effectiveness before the law is the death of the disposer and thus **diatheke** was like a "final will and testament". In reference to the divine covenants, such as the Abrahamic covenant, diatheke is not a covenant in the sense that God came to agreement or compromise with fallen man as if signing a contract. Rather, it involves declaration of God's unconditional promise to make Abraham and his seed the recipients of certain blessings.

AND TO THE SPRINKLED BLOOD WHICH SPEAKS BETTER THAN [*THE BLOOD*] OF ABEL: kai haimati rhantismou kreitton lalounti (PAPNSD) para ton abel:

- **Sprinkled Blood** - He 9:21, 10:22, 11:28, Ex 24:8 1Pe 1:2
- **Speaks** He 11:4 Ge 4:10 Mt 23:35 Lk 11:51
- [Hebrews 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Hebrews 9:13-14+ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 11:4+ By faith Abel offered to God a **better sacrifice** than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. (SO WHO OFFERED THE REAL "**BETTER**" SACRIFICE?)

Genesis 4:4+ (WHAT BLOOD DID ABEL SACRIFICE? WHOSE WAS BETTER?) Abel, on his part also brought **of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions**. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

1 Peter 1:2+ (Peter describes those who are "aliens...chosen") according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be **sprinkled** with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Exodus 24:6-8+ (SPRINKLED BLOOD INAUGURATED OLD COVENANT) Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" 8 So Moses took the blood and **sprinkled it on the people**, and said, "**Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you** in accordance with all these words."

Leviticus 16:14-15+ (BLOOD SPRINKLED ANNUALLY ON DAY OF ATONEMENT) "Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and **sprinkle** it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall **sprinkle** some of the blood with his finger seven times. 15 "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and **sprinkle** it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

THE BETTER SPRINKLED BLOOD OF CHRIST

This verse is not as easy to interpret as you might think on first reading, the difficulty being in the last clause referring to **Abel**. Specifically, does the writer intend the readers to focus on the literal blood of Abel or the blood of the animal Abel sacrificed. I favor the latter, especially because of context (just mentioned covenant and blood of Jesus' sacrifice), but many excellent commentators favor the former. The following discussion attempts to lay out some of the arguments for both interpretations, but it might be a bit arduous. The key to interpretation in my opinion is which blood is the writer focusing on? Animal blood (offered by Abel) or human blood (spilled by Cain)? I suppose we could all agree to agree that regardless of the interpretation of Abel, the blood of Jesus is the only efficacious blood that could inaugurate the New Covenant!

And to the sprinkled ([rhantismos](#)) blood ([haima](#)) which speaks better ([kreitton](#)) than the blood ([haima](#)) of Abel - What is the **the sprinkled ([rhantismos](#)) blood ([haima](#))**? **Speaks** in the present tense pictures the sprinkled blood of Christ as continually speaking. The only blood that has been sprinkled by which they could be saved was the precious blood of the Lamb of God. **Sprinkled blood** would have conjured up the picture in the OT of Moses sprinkling blood on the people (Ex 24:8+), which was symbolic of them

entering into the Old Covenant but which did not provide redemption from their sins. It was like the sprinkled blood of the red heifer (Nu 19:13+) which brought ceremonial cleansing. Finally, every year on the Day of Atonement the high priest sprinkled blood on the mercy seat (Lev 16:14-15+), and since the Temple was still standing presumably the Jews were still observing the Day of Atonement.

Similarly even the acceptable sacrifice of Abel (Heb 11:4+) was performed by faith and with animal blood, which could not remove sins. As the writer stated "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." (Heb 10:4+) So there had to be "better blood," perfect blood of the sinless Lamb of God (Jn 1:29+). And that is what the readers who believed in Jesus had come to—to the better blood of a **new covenant**. Jesus' blood **speaks** (present tense - continually speaks) a better word than Abel's, Jesus' blood offering mercy instead of judgment.

F F Bruce on sprinkled blood - This may remind us of "the sprinkling of the blood" at the time of the first Passover (Ex 11:28);but more probably our author is thinking of the covenant-blood of Christ as the antitype of the blood sprinkled at the inauguration of the old covenant (Ex 24:6-8). By the blood of the new covenant, symbolically applied, believers' hearts are "sprinkled clean from an evil conscience" (Heb 10:22). The removal of an evil conscience does away with the barrier between them and God; the sacrifice of Christ thus "has better things to tell than the blood of Abel" (NEB). (See [The Epistle to the Hebrews - Page 361](#))

Speaks in the present tense pictures the sprinkled blood of Christ as continually speaking.

Longman - "**The sprinkled blood**" is hardly another component in the festive assembly but rather an extension of the description of Jesus' role as **mediator**, and one that further underlines the contrast with Sinai, where the old covenant was ratified in sprinkled blood (Ex 24:8). The reason Christ's people are able to be on Mount Zion is that blood has again been shed (see esp. Heb 9:15–22), fulfilling the model of the ceremonial "sprinklings" of blood in the OT (Heb 9:13, 19, 21). But not all bloodshed is beneficial, as we are reminded by a further reference to the first bloodshed of the Bible (cf. Heb 11:4). Abel's blood cried out with a message of condemnation (Ge 4:10), but the message of Jesus' blood is far "better" (the last use of this pregnant term in Hebrews). (See [Hebrews - Revelation](#))

For the explanation of this sprinkling we must look to the types of the Old Testament.

Spurgeon - The text does not merely speak of the shed blood, but of "**the sprinkled blood.**" This is the atonement applied for divine purposes, and specially applied to our own hearts and consciences by faith. For the explanation of this sprinkling we must look to the types of the Old Testament. **In the Old Testament the blood of sprinkling meant a great many things (ED: I HAVE NUMBERED THEM);**

(1) we meet with it in the book of Exodus, at the time when the Lord smote all the firstborn of Egypt.

(2) Then the blood of sprinkling meant preservation. The sprinkled blood very frequently signified the confirmation of a covenant. So it is used in Exodus 24:6,8 the blood was sprinkled upon the book of the covenant, and also upon the people, to show that the covenant was, as far as it could be, confirmed by the people who promised, "All that the Lord has said we will do." In many cases the sprinkling of the blood meant purification. If a person had been defiled, he could not come into the sanctuary of God without being sprinkled with blood.

(3) There were the ashes of a red heifer laid up and these were mixed with blood and water; and by their being sprinkled on the unclean, his ceremonial defilement was removed.

(4) The sprinkling of the blood meant, also, sanctification. Before a man entered upon the priesthood the blood was put upon his right ear, and on the great toe of his right foot, and on the thumb of his right hand, signifying that all his powers were thus consecrated to God. The ordination ceremony included the sprinkling of blood upon the altar all around. Even thus has the Lord Jesus redeemed us unto God by His death, and the sprinkling of His blood has made us kings and priests unto God forever.

(5) One other signification of the blood of the sacrifice was acceptance and access When the high priest went into the most holy place once a year, it was not without blood, which he sprinkled on the ark of the covenant and on the mercy seat, which was on top of it. (Lev 16:14-15)

All approaches to God were made by blood. There was no hope of a man drawing near to God, even in symbol, apart from the sprinkling of the blood. And now today our only way to God is by the precious sacrifice of Christ. The only hope for the success of our prayers, the acceptance of our praises, or the reception of our holy works, is through the ever-abiding merit of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost bids us enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; there is no other way.

Better than the blood of Abel - It is important in regard to interpretation to note that the phrase *"the blood"* is added in almost all of the translations. As I have alluded to above, this phrase can be taken two ways, and from a brief survey of commentaries, most prefer the interpretation that refers to Abel's literal blood (despite the fact that "blood" is not in the Greek text), rather than the blood of the animal which he offered for a sacrifice. What if the translation read this way - **"better than the sacrifice of Abel"** or **"better than the sacrificial blood of Abel"**? Do you see my point? Unfortunately some the translations favor the former interpretation by adding even more text that is not in the Greek! For example, the Amplified Version, which is usually fairly literal, adds an overt "interpretative" phrase in brackets. The Amplified reads "and more gracious message than the blood of Abel [**which cried out for vengeance**]".

THOUGHT - Regardless of which interpretation you favor, the addition of words not in the Greek (or Hebrew) text to the translation is another reason one needs to be an **Acts 17:11+ Berean** with any Bible translation! This is also another reason I prefer the NAS as it is the only version which routinely puts in italics English words that are not present in the Greek text! The point, as you can see with the example from the Amplified Version, is that it is virtually impossible to completely remove all traces of interpretative bias! This is just another reason to encourage the diligent exegete to go directly to the original languages which is now possible with many Bible programs! Or one can also read Young's Literal (but even it is not always correct because it is based on the Textus Receptus). Young's Literal in this passage reads "and to a mediator of a new covenant -- Jesus, and to blood of sprinkling, **speaking better things than that of Abel!** (Heb 12:24YLT, Bold added).

To reiterate, while most sources favor **Better than the blood of Abel** as a reference to the literal blood of Abel, there is support for this blood referring to the blood of animals. The sprinkling of Jesus' blood was to be sure His own literal blood, but in other references in Hebrews the efficacy of His blood is directly contrasted with the blood of animal sacrifices (esp Heb 9:7, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 10:4), never with blood of humans. So it would be surprising that all of a sudden the writer refers to the literal blood of Abel given ALL (except Heb 2:14) of the preceding contextual uses! Also in this immediate context (in line with the author's train of thought comparing Mt Sinai and Mt Zion, the old and the new, and having just mentioned the "New Covenant") it would seem very reasonable to interpret the *blood of Abel* as the blood which he offered to God in the form of an animal sacrifice. His point would be that Jesus' sprinkled blood is better! Remember that for the most accurate interpretation, keep context king!

Kenneth Wuest uses this same line of reasoning writing that the best action for the readers is "if they place their faith in Messiah as High Priest, come to Jesus, the mediator of the New Testament. They come also to the **blood of sprinkling**, Jesus' blood, which speaks better things than the blood of the sacrificial animal which Abel offered. It is not Abel's own blood which is compared here with Jesus' blood, for the historical background and the analysis of the book show that the purpose of the writer is to prove that Jesus' blood of the New Testament is better than and takes the place of the animal blood shed under the First Testament. Our exegesis of this verse, therefore, is in line with the analysis of the letter. Again, the writer confronts his readers with the superiority of Jesus' blood as over against that of the Levitical sacrifices. ([Hebrews](#))

See a similar conclusion which is well-reasoned in the 10 page article **BETTER THAN THE BLOOD OF ABEL? SOME REMARKS ON ABEL IN HEBREWS 12:24** Kyu Seop Kim (see [Kim's conclusion below](#)). I would call your attention to the fact that Kim referred to **CONTEXT 16 times in his 10 page article**. I re-assert that CONTEXT is KING IN INTERPRETATION. Here's a brief note on CONTEXT.

"**Context** is the setting in which a passage occurs or simply what precedes and what follows the **text** you are studying. Thus **context** includes those verses immediately before and after the passage, then the paragraph and book in which the passage appears, then other books by this author, as well as the overall message of the entire Bible. Picture a set of concentric circles with the text you are observing in the center and surrounded by the next circle which is the paragraph or subdivision in which that text "lives." Next, you encounter the "circle" of the book in which that text is found and finally the "circle" of the entire Bible. Never observe a passage without looking at the "circles", especially the immediate paragraph, which means you need to not rush, but be willing to take a moment and do some more reading. (see Interpretation)." (See full discussion of [context](#))

In Hebrews 11 we read that Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to God because it was offered in faith and obedience...

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks (Hebrews 11:4+) (Note the repetition of the key idea **faith!**) (To be sure "he still speaks" is a reference to Genesis 4:10 where God says to Cain "brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground" and this might lead one to favor that the reference to the **blood of Abel** in Hebrews 12:24 is his own literal blood.

But clearly this verse also refers to Abel's **better sacrifice**, which from Genesis 4:4 ["of the firstlings of his

flock"] refers to animal sacrifice and therefore to the blood of an animal. This comparison of Scripture with Scripture would leave open the interpretation of the **blood of Abel** in Hebrews 12:24 as a reference to animal blood rather than Abel's blood. Notice also that Abel's **better sacrifice** was not **better** because it was an animal sacrifice instead of fruit from "the fruit of the ground" [Genesis 4:3]. It was **better** because of condition of the "sacrificer" [by faith], not because of the specific type of sacrifice. God has always been more interested in the internal than the external. Man on the other hand in his fallen condition gravitates towards the external rather than the internal!)

Although the word **blood** is not mentioned, as mentioned above Genesis 4 teaches that Abel offered an animal sacrifice, Moses recording...

And Abel, on his part also brought of **the firstlings of his flock** and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; (Genesis 4:4)

Throughout this epistle the writer has been arguing from Scripture that the New Covenant is a better covenant for it has better promises, a better sacrifice, better blood, and a better High Priest. He is trying to demonstrate to these "wavering Jewish believers" (undoubtedly including some who were only professors) who were being tempted to go back to the old system, that the new covenant was better. Remember that this temptation to return to the familiar rituals of the Old Testament sacrificial system would undoubtedly have been an ever present temptation because at the time of this epistle, the OT sacrifices were being performed in the Temple. It would have been tempting for these Jews to walk by sight rather than by faith. Given this historical background and the flow of the argument in this epistle, the **blood of Abel** could very reasonably be interpreted as a reference to the blood that Abel offered when he killed the sacrificial animal.

For example, notice the writer's strong emphasis on Christ's blood as better than that of animals - "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation and not through the **blood of goats and calves**, but through **His own blood**, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the **blood** of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **how much more will the blood of Christ**, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (He 9:11; 12; 13; 14-See **notes** He 9:11; 12; 13; 14)

John MacArthur favors the interpretation that the **blood of Abel** is a reference to his animal sacrifice writing that "The sprinkled blood of Jesus far surpasses the sacrifice of Abel (Heb. 11:4) and speaks better than the blood of Abel. Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God because it was offered in faith, but it had no atoning power—not even for Abel, much less for anyone else. Jesus' blood, however, was sufficient to cleanse the sins of all men for all time, to make peace with God for whoever trusts in that blood sacrifice (Col 1:20+). (See [Hebrews Commentary - Page 416](#))

David Guzik - The **blood of Abel** does not mean the blood he shed in his martyrdom. Rather, it was the blood of the sacrifice he made - the first recorded sacrifice from man to God in the Bible. The blood of Jesus speaks better things than the blood of animal sacrifice, the blood of Abel. ([Hebrews 12](#))

William MacDonald - His (Christ's) precious blood is contrasted with the blood of Abel. Whether we understand the latter as meaning the blood of Abel's sacrifice or Abel's own blood which was shed by Cain, it is still true that Christ's blood speaks more graciously. The blood of Abel's sacrifice said, "Covered temporarily"; Christ's blood says, "Forgiven forever." Abel's own blood cried, "Vengeance"; Christ's blood cries, "Mercy, pardon, and peace." (Bolding added) (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

J Vernon McGee ([John Calvin](#), and many others) favors the **blood of Abel** as referring to Abel's literal blood "Abel's blood cried for vengeance, but the blood of Christ speaks of salvation."

The outstanding expositor **Ray Stedman** favors that the **blood of Abel** refers to Abel's literal blood explaining that "Moses was the mediator of the old covenant and under it, the Aaronic priests sprinkled blood upon the mercy seat to cover over the sins of Israel. This made the continued presence of God among them possible. As our author has ably shown, all this was but a shadow of the new covenant where Jesus would be an eternal mediator, sprinkling His own blood which does not merely cover over sins but takes them entirely away. The better word of which his blood speaks is forgiveness, whole and complete. This is in contrast to the (**ED**: LITERAL) blood of Abel, which...could only call for vindication but could not offer forgiveness. Let us never forget that we are redeemed, not with perishable things such as silver or gold "but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1Pe 1:19+). ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

To reiterate, I think a reference to the literal blood of Abel is much less likely because in context he has just mentioned the **New covenant**. The only **blood** that relates to the efficacy of the **New Covenant** is the blood of Jesus, not the animal blood of Abel (and certainly not his literal blood). I will admit that I am surprised that a majority of conservative sources I use and respect interpret this

as the literal blood of Abel. It will make for an interesting conversation in heaven.

Abel brought but the type and the figure: the lamb, which was but a picture of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world; but Christ was that Lamb.

C H Spurgeon - Abel stands forth before us as the first in a cloud of witnesses, bearing brave testimony, and prepared to seal it with their lives. He died a martyr for the truth—the grandly Godlike truth that God accepts men according to their faith. All honor to the martyr's blood that speaks so effectually for precious truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ, being also a testifier and witness for the faith of God, spoke better things than Abel, because He had more to speak, and spoke from more intimate acquaintance with God. He was a fuller witness of divine truth than Abel could be, for He brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim 1:10), and told His people clearly of the Father. Abel brought but the type and the figure: the lamb, which was but a picture of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world; but Christ was that Lamb. He was the substance of the shadow—the reality of the type. Abel's sacrifice had no merit in it apart from the faith in the Messiah with which he presented it. But Christ's sacrifice had merit of itself; it was in itself meritorious. What was the blood of Abel's lamb? It was nothing but the blood of a common lamb that might have been shed anywhere. If he had not had faith in Christ, the blood of the lamb would have been as water—a contemptible thing. But the blood of Christ was a sacrifice indeed, far richer than all the blood of beasts that ever were offered. ([Note on Hebrews 12:24](#))

Abel - In another context (and that is significant) Jesus' commentary on **Abel** in Mt 23:35+ clearly refers to the literal **blood of Abel** for as our Lord said to the Jewish multitudes and His disciples - "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from **the blood of righteous Abel** to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. (Mt 23:34, 35+) You could see how someone might use Jesus' declaration to justify interpreting the "blood of Abel" in Hebrews 12:24 as referring to Abel's literal blood, but again the context is substantially different than Hebrews 12 (in my opinion).

Clearly Abel was justified (declared righteous) by grace through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ (see the **Protevangelium**, or "first giving of the good news" by God in Genesis 3:15+) - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." So Abel had heard the gospel in some form (we know from Galatians 3:8+ the gospel was presented to Abraham) and responded to the good news in faith ("*By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous*" - Hebrews 11:4+) in contrast to Cain who responded in works and disobedience (and rebellion). Abel's sacrifice (either of his own blood or that of the animal's he sacrificed [depending on which interpretation one favors]) clearly had no atoning power per se.

Interpreting Hebrews 12:24 as a reference to Abel's murder, one can say that Abel was slain but he still **speaks** (Mt 23:35, Hebrews 11:4+). Abel's own shed blood cried out to the Lord for justice and judgment, but Jesus' blood procures redemption and forgiveness, something better than Abel's blood. Moses writes...

(God to Cain) And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your (Abel's) **brother's blood** is crying to Me from the ground. (Ge 4:10+).

Let me sum up this section on the interpretation of the phrase **the blood of Abel** with this well worded and well reasoned comment by **Jamieson**...

his comparison between two things of the same kind (namely, **Christ's sacrifice**, and **Abel's sacrifice**) is more natural, than between two things different in kind and in results (namely, Christ's sacrifice, and Abel's own blood [Alford], **which was not a sacrifice at all**); compare Heb 11:4; Ge 4:4. This accords with the whole tenor of the Epistle, and of this passage in particular (Heb 12:18-22), which is to show the **superiority of Christ's sacrifice** and the **new covenant**, to the Old Testament sacrifices (of which **Abel's is the first recorded**; it, moreover, was testified to by God as acceptable to Him above Cain's), compare Heb 9:1-10:39. The word **better** implies superiority to something that is good: but Abel's own blood was not at all good for the purpose for which Christ's blood was efficacious; nay, it cried for vengeance. So Archbishop Magee, Hammond, and Knatchbull. Bengel takes "the blood of Abel" as put for all the blood shed on earth crying for vengeance, and greatly increasing the other cries raised by sin in the world; counteracted by the blood of Christ calmly speaking in heaven for us, and from heaven to us. I prefer Magee's view. Be this as it may, to deny that Christ's atonement is truly a propitiation, overthrows Christ's priesthood, makes the sacrifices of Moses' law an unmeaning mummery, and represents Cain's sacrifice as good as that of Abel. ([Hebrews 12](#))

As an aside, it is sad that the **literal interpretation of Scripture** gave way to the **allegorical mode of interpretation** almost as soon as all the apostles were dead, this latter method becoming the predominant mode of interpretation after 100 AD (For a succinct

summary which gives a good historical perspective see Dr Stephen Lewis' work [Hermeneutics - Study of Interpretation of Scriptures - recommended-interesting overview of the history of Bible interpretation - see page 22](#)).

It is little wonder, that Augustine and many other early Christian exegetes, interpreted **Cain** as symbolic of the envious "*Jews by whom Christ was slain*" while Christ Himself "*the Shepherd of the flock of men, [is] prefigured in Abel, the shepherd of the flock of sheep*". This type of far fetched interpretation has caused many to shy away from the study of valid Old Testament types (See related discussion - Typology - Study of Biblical types) Clearly Augustine's (and other's) allegorical interpretation is incorrect. What is even more tragic is that **misinterpretation** of the Word of Truth invariably leads to **misapplication**. This allegorical interpretation of Cain is an excellent case in point for it has been misapplied by some to justify their "right" to punish the Jews (cf pogroms, holocaust, etc). Such aberrant interpretations emphasize the need for Spirit taught, intellectually honest interpretation of the Word of Truth, **Inductive Bible study** being one of the best modalities to achieve this end. (See discussion of the individual facets of inductive study Observation, [Interpretation](#), Application)

Now every blood-brought child of God can say:

The terrors of law and of God,
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.
—A. M. Toplady

Hughes sums up this section beautifully writing that "As fellow-pilgrims in the great marathon, we must not veer off course toward Sinai, because Jesus has met Sinai's great demands for holiness and perfection at Calvary atop Mount Zion."

To run and work the Law commands,
Yet gives me neither feet nor hands;
But better news the Gospel brings;
It bids me fly, and gives me wings.

The Scriptures tell us that in the Church "you have come" (right now!) to these seven sublime realities:

- To the City of God,
- To myriads of angels,
- To fellow-believers,
- To God,
- To the Church Triumphant,
- To Jesus,
- To forgiveness.

If this does not create a wellspring of thanksgiving in our hearts and make us want to march to Zion, what will?
(SEE [Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul](#))

Robert Candlish on blood of Abel - Especially it has been the same in the way of fallen man's approach to his offended God; which has always been through blood, and the same blood,—the blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). With this blood of the Lamb, the blood of Abel's sacrifice is expressly associated by the apostle, when he speaks of "the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24). In that sublime passage, Paul is reminding believers of their peculiar privileges, as living under the economy of the gospel; and, among the rest, he mentions "the blood of sprinkling,"—the blood of Jesus,—"which speaketh better things,"—which more effectually purges the conscience and gives peace,—than the blood of mere animal sacrifices could do. **For "the blood of Abel" there referred to is not the blood of his slain body crying for vengeance;—it would not be to the purpose of the apostle's argument to compare or contrast Christ's blood with Abel's, in that sense of it.** It is the blood which Abel shed when he offered his sacrifice that is intended,—the blood of such sacrifices as he presented, and all the faithful continued to present, until Christ died. Such blood could speak of pardon and reconciliation only symbolically and typically. The blood of Christ speaks of the real blessing really purchased and bestowed. (See [The book of Genesis expounded in a series of discourses](#))

If you would like to read more on Blood of Abel versus Sacrifice of Abel here is a link to a pdf article [BETTER THAN THE BLOOD](#)

Here is a portion of the conclusion of this 10 page article -

Conclusion This study does not deny that 'blood' and 'Abel' together evoke their famous collocation in connection with his murder,²³ but it seems Hebrews 12:24b has a double force. So, this study argues that τ υ β ε λ refers to Abel as an example who speaks to us through his right observation of the cult. We have sound fundamentals to argue that, in Hebrews 12:24, the author intended to contrast the cult offered by Abel (i.e., the Jewish cult under the Sinai covenant) with the cult offered by Christ (i.e., the sprinkled blood), which leads to true salvation and sanctification according to the new covenant. **This interpretation fits exactly to the context contrasting the Sinai and Zion symbols in Hebrews 12:18-24.** While Abel's cultic action was faithful, and even superior (πλεονα) to Cain's offering (11:4), his ritual was practised according to the Sinai covenant. By contrast, the heavenly cult was performed by Jesus Christ, the mediator according to the new covenant. So, it is highly probable that the reason Abel's cult is referenced in Hebrews 12:24 is that Abel's cult was depicted positively in Hebrews 11:4, and that the author felt the need to evaluate Abel's cult in comparison to Christ's cult for the sake of his readers who perhaps were at risk of compromising their faith, or of returning to their previous Jewish religion and its cultic practices.

Sprinkling (4473) [rhantismos](#) from [rhaino](#) = to sprinkle) means a scattering of drops of some liquid (usually blood, oil or water in Scripture) The corresponding Hebrew word (nazah) stresses the purpose whereas [rhantismos](#) stresses the process of sprinkling. The only other NT use of [rhantismos](#) is in Hebrews where the author writes that the readers who have accepted Messiah as Savior have come to "Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel." (Heb 12:24+ Heb 9:13, 14+)

Sprinkling of Individuals with Blood in the Old Testament (1). Ratifying the Mosaic covenant (Ex 24:8; Heb 9:19, 20+) (2). Consecration of family of Aaron to priesthood (Ex 29:21) (3). Cleansing from leprosy (Lev 14:2-7)

1 Peter 1:2+ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Rhantismos is found four times in the Greek translation of the Hebrew ([Septuagint](#)) to describe the "water of sprinkling" (Nu 19:9). Over Israel's almost 40 year period of wilderness wandering, approximately 1.2 million people died because of God's judgment. The Israelites were continually coming into contact with dead bodies, which led to ceremonial uncleanness. Therefore, the Lord provided a means of purification ("*water for impurity...sprinkled*" Nu 19, 13, 20, 21) so that those who came into contact with dead bodies might be cleansed.

Blood (129) [haima](#) is literally the red fluid that circulates in the heart, arteries, capillaries, and veins of a vertebrate animal carrying nourishment and oxygen to and bringing away waste products from all parts of the body and thus is essential for the preservation of life. **Haima** gives us English words like hemorrhage (Gk - *haimorrhagia* from *haimo-* + *rragia* from *regnuo* - to burst) English derivatives include hematology (study of blood) and "leukemia" which is from leuco (white) plus haima (blood), which is fitting as leukemia is a disease that affects the white blood cells. Derivatives of haima are : **haimatekchusia** (130), shedding of blood; **haimorroéō** (131), to hemorrhage. Haima was used to describe "descent" or "family" in ancient times. "To shed blood" is to destroy life.

Zodhiates adds that "**haima** is used to denote life given up or offered as an atonement since, in the ritual of sacrifice, special emphasis is laid upon it as the material basis of the individual life. The life of the animal offered for propitiation appears in the blood separated from the flesh which the Jews were forbidden to eat (Ge. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 17:10-14; Deut. 12:23; Heb. 9:7-13, 18-25; 11:28; 13:11). This life is, on the one hand, in the blood, presented to God; on the other hand by sprinkling, appropriated to man (Heb. 9:7, 19, 20). This blood thus becomes the blood of the covenant or testament (see *diathekē*) which God commanded to us (Heb. 9:20). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

HAIMA IS A KEYWORD IN HEBREWS - 22X OUT OF 97X IN NT - Heb. 2:14; Heb. 9:7; Heb. 9:12; Heb. 9:13; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 9:18; Heb. 9:19; Heb. 9:20; Heb. 9:21; Heb. 9:22; Heb. 9:25; Heb. 10:4; Heb. 10:19; Heb. 10:29; Heb. 11:28; Heb. 12:4; Heb. 12:24; Heb. 13:11; Heb. 13:12; Heb. 13:20

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and **blood**,
Hebrews 9:7 only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking **blood**,
Hebrews 9:12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own **blood**

Hebrews 9:13 For if the **blood** of goats and bulls
 Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the **blood** of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself
 Hebrews 9:18 even the first covenant was not inaugurated without **blood**.
 Hebrews 9:19 he took the **blood** of the calves and the goats
 Hebrews 9:20 saying, "THIS IS THE **BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU**
 Hebrews 9:21 he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood
 Hebrews 9:22 almost say, all things are cleansed with **blood**,
 Hebrews 9:22 and without shedding of **blood** there is no forgiveness.
 Hebrews 9:25 high priest enters the holy place year by year with **blood** that is not his own.
 Hebrews 10:4 For it is impossible for the **blood** of bulls and goats to take away sins.
 Hebrews 10:19 confidence to enter the holy place by the **blood** of Jesus,
 Hebrews 10:29 has regarded as unclean the **blood** of the covenant by which he was sanctified
 Hebrews 11:28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the **blood**
 Hebrews 12:4 have not yet resisted to the point of shedding **blood**
 Hebrews 12:24 Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled **blood**
 Hebrews 12:24 which speaks better than the **blood** of Abel.
 Hebrews 13:11 For the bodies of those animals whose **blood** is brought into the holy place
 Hebrews 13:12 He might sanctify the people through His own **blood**
 Hebrews 13:20 the great Shepherd of the sheep through the **blood** of the eternal covenant

Spurgeon has the following sermons related to **blood**...

- [Exodus 12:13 The Blood](#)
- [Hebrews 12:24-25 The Blood Of Sprinkling](#)
- [Hebrews 12:24-25 The Blood Of Sprinkling](#)
- [Hebrews 13:20 The Blood Of The Everlasting Covenant](#)
- [Hebrews 9:19-20 The Blood Of The Testament](#)
- [Hebrews 9:22 Blood-Shedding](#)

C H Spurgeon - Hebrews 12:24 - Morning and evening: Daily readings (April 17 AM) -

Have you come to the blood of sprinkling?

Reader, have you come to the **blood of sprinkling**? The question is not whether you have come to a knowledge of doctrine, or an observance of ceremonies, or to a certain form of experience, but have you come to the blood of Jesus? The blood of Jesus is the life of all vital godliness. If you have truly come to Jesus, we know how you came—the Holy Spirit sweetly brought you there. You came to the **blood of sprinkling** with no merits of your own. Guilty, lost, and helpless, you came to take that blood, and that blood alone, as your everlasting hope. You came to the cross of Christ, with a trembling and an aching heart; and oh! what a precious sound it was to you to hear the voice of the blood of Jesus! The dropping of his blood is as the music of heaven to the penitent sons of earth. We are full of sin, but the Saviour bids us lift our eyes to him, and as we gaze upon his streaming wounds, each drop of blood, as it falls, cries, "**It is finished**; I have made an end of sin; I have brought in everlasting righteousness." (Jn 19:30)

*He who does not desire to wash in it every day,
 has never washed in it at all.*

Oh! sweet language of the precious blood of Jesus! If you have come to that blood once, you will come to it constantly (cf 1Jn 1:7). Your life will be "Looking unto Jesus." Your whole conduct will be epitomized in this—"To Whom coming." Not to whom I have come, but to whom I am always coming. If thou hast ever come to the **blood of sprinkling**, thou wilt feel thy need of coming to it every day. He who does not desire to wash in it every day, has never washed in it at all. The believer ever feels it to be his joy and privilege that there is still a fountain opened. Past experiences are doubtful food for Christians; a present coming to Christ alone can give us joy and comfort. This morning let us sprinkle our door-post fresh with blood, and then feast upon the Lamb, assured that the destroying angel must pass us by.

SPRINKLED BLOOD - The question is whether it was sprinkled only at the Cross or was sprinkled by Jesus, the Great High Priest, in Heaven? There is a difference of opinion with advocates for only on earth and for earth and in heaven.

Simon Kistemaker - Jesus inaugurated the new covenant by shedding his blood once for all at Golgotha. Because of that sprinkled blood, believers enter the presence of God as forgiven sinners (Heb. 10:22; 1 Peter 1:2).

John MacArthur - Furthermore, this new view of the blood that is becoming quite popular says that it is still being poured out on the heavenly mercy seat even today; that when a person is saved there is some kind of a pouring out and re-gathering of that blood. I've had that conversation with a number of people who have taken issue with what I have said. They use Hebrews 12:24, "**The sprinkled blood**"... that statement regarding the sprinkled blood to indicate that it is constantly being sprinkled in heaven as an ongoing incessant offering for sin. And then they say further that the blood is never a symbol for death in the New Testament. It always is the fluid. In fact, there was a group of Baptists that met sometime back and they voted on that in their statement that whenever the blood of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament it is always referring to the fluid and blood is never a symbol for death. Unfortunately they again turn to Hebrews 9 to try to prove text that; Heb 9:13, 14, where it just says, "The blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself ... and so forth. "Without blemish to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to served the Living God." So they say it's the actual fluid that somehow cleanses you. One person said to me, "I don't know how and I don't where and I don't know what it involves but somehow the real fluid is poured out on my sins." (Source: I.F.C.A. MEETING 6–26–89, PART 1 June 26, 1989)

David Cooper - The blood on the altar will not save us. Only when the Blood is applied are we saved. The cleansing power of the blood of Christ is applied by faith to our hearts (Hebrews 9:11-14). How can the Blood be applied? Through faith in Christ (Romans 10:9, 10). When you truly believe that Christ is the Son of God and you confess your sins to Him, the power of His blood cleanses your sins, and you are saved from sin and for a life of worship to God. The Blood can be sprinkled on your heart, your mind, your home, your children, your problems. It is a blood of cleansing, consecration and deliverance. No person could sprinkle the blood on himself. A priest had to sprinkle the blood. Jesus is the Priest of the world. Come to Him and pray, "Lord Jesus, sprinkle my heart with Your blood."

A B Simpson - We have come "to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24). The blood of sprinkling refers to the constant provision of Christ's priesthood for our acceptance and full salvation. The blood shed was the figure of Christ's life offered to atone for our sins, but the blood sprinkled refers to the constant application of Christ's grace to our souls in sanctifying and keeping us from the power of sin. (The Christ in the Bible Commentary: Volume Six)

COMMENT: I think Simpson's statement "The blood of sprinkling refers to the constant provision" is accurate because 1 John 1:7 says "but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus** His Son **cleanses** (present tense - continually cleanses) us from all sin. But Simpson makes no comment on Christ's blood in heaven.

David Wenkel - See online [SENSORY EXPERIENCE AND THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE COVENANTS IN HEBREWS 12](#) (Bibliotheca Sacra 173:690, 2016) writes "The blood of Jesus frees the sinner from the penalty of death. This blood of Christ was not sprinkled on the altar in the earthly temple in Jerusalem; rather, it was sprinkled on the altar in heaven. The earthly temple and altar were a shadow and type of the heavenly reality. The heavenly realities that contain the sprinkled blood of Jesus are not presently visible to those on earth.

Pastor Glen Spencer - Sometime after His death on Calvary's cross, our Great High Priest passed within the veil of the heavenly tabernacle and in perfect fulfillment of the Old Testament type, Jesus sprinkled His blood upon the mercy seat. Paul refers to it as the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:24) Notice that speaketh is in the present tense. The blood is still there and remains efficacious today. All of Christ's intercessions for us there are based upon the divine and changeless power of His atoning blood.

John Phillips - (Exploring 1 Peter) - Moreover, "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:11–12). The Old Testament ritual prefigured a New Testament reality. What the high priest of Israel did in type Jesus has done in truth! He has entered into the Holy of Holies in heaven. **He has presented His blood upon the true mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary and has sprinkled it there as an eternal witness that our salvation is secure and eternal and that God is completely and eternally satisfied.** The Old Testament high priest had to reenact the ritual every year because mere animal sacrifices could never really atone for sin. The people were thus reminded year by year that all of this ritual was only temporary but that eventually a true Sacrifice would be offered.

J Vernon McGee on Heb 9:12 - **I believe this verse proves that Christ took His literal blood to heaven.** If that is not what the writer is talking about here, I do not know what he is saying. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves" -- that is literal blood. "But by his own blood," this is the literal blood which He shed on the cross. "He entered in." How? By His own blood. His was a superior sacrifice and the only one worthy of the genuine tabernacle. (Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee)

The following is more on this topic - [Dr. J. Vernon McGee Chapter I: In His Presence CHAPTER IN HIS](#)

[PRESENCE](#) - this is an excerpt...

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. ([Hebrews 9:12](#))

We are not going to insist that Christ presented His literal blood in heaven, but we do insist that such an explanation is tenable and is in perfect harmony with Scripture. The commentaries consulted on this passage in the ninth of Hebrews, for the most part, avoid any explanation as to whether Christ presented His blood literally or not. However, there are commentators who face this question. Frederick Grant, in *The Numerical Bible*, places the emphasis on the phrase, "having obtained eternal redemption for us," and draws the conclusion that Christ did not present His literal blood in heaven.⁶ The fact that He returned to heaven is evidence of a finished redemption. Dr. A. T. Robertson, in his word studies, suggests the literalness of the offering of the blood in heaven. In his comment on [Acts 20:28](#), where the preposition (*dia*) is used with the genitive (*tow idiou aimatos*), he states this is the preposition used with the genitive to denote agency. B. F. Westcott says that it is *means* (*dia*), but not *mode* (*meta*): Christ through His own blood. A comparison as made between the approach of the high priest on the great Day of Atonement into the Holy of Holies and the approach of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary is evidently correct as Franz Delitzsch in his commentary has well pointed out: "And since it is by means of this, His own blood, that Christ enters into the Holy of Holies (even as the Levitical high priest made his entrance by means of the blood of goats and calves)."⁷ However, Delitzsch concludes that Christ did not present His literal blood in heaven separate from the body. It is his conclusion that the glorified body of Christ did contain blood. And that, in our judgment, is the inevitable conclusion of those who reject the presentation of the literal blood in heaven. The blood was presented in the glorified body of Christ, according to Delitzsch. There is a host of scholars who think that the blood was presented separately as did the high priest in the old economy; among these are such names as Hofman, Bengel, Oetinger, Steinhofer, and a company of present-day students of the Scriptures.

Actually, what did become of the blood of Christ? His blood was shed and He was raised in a glorified body that is described by Himself as a body with flesh and bone (see [Luke 24:39](#)). Yet Scripture also says "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" ([1 Corinthians 15:50](#)). The implication is that the glorified body of our Lord did not contain blood. What the life-giving elements are in the natural body is evidently not the motivating force in the glorified body. At this point of our discussion we are not attempting to force dogmatic opinions, but to suggest some possibilities. Is the blood of Christ, therefore, like the blood of Abel, spilt and crying unto God from the ground (see [Genesis 4:10](#))? That seems tenable, for the writer to the Hebrews says that the blood of Christ "speaketh better things than that of Abel" ([Hebrews 12:24](#)). The blood of Christ was evidently presented by Himself at the throne of God, either in His glorified body or out of it. His body was evidently a bloodless one. The inference, therefore, is that Christ presented His blood in heaven as an atonement for sin (see [Hebrews 9:14](#); [10:19](#)).

The objection to the idea that the blood of Christ was presented in heaven is that it offends the sensibilities of folk. It is contrary to the highest aesthetic tastes of culture and civilization. To this we would affirm that the whole Bible doctrine of blood atonement is offensive to the natural man. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan made a timely retort to a listener one time who remarked that the cross with its blood was crude and offensive. "There is nothing crude and offensive I see in the cross with its blood but your sin and mine," was Dr. Morgan's rejoinder. The liberal theologian discounts the blood with this sneering remark, "I do not care for a religion of the shambles; there shall be no slaughterhouse religion for me." The cross of Christ with its attendant blood ever remains a stumbling block and foolishness to the world.

J Vernon McGee based on Heb 9:23 writes "These heavenly things needed cleansing because sin originated in heaven (see v. 11). The blood of bulls and goats has never been shed in heaven -- there is no denying that that would be crude. However, **the blood of Christ, we believe, is in heaven**, and that is not crude at all. (Thru The Bible)

Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) is identified as an early proponent of the view that Christ took His literal blood to heaven, where it is preserved and speaks for us

M. R. DeHaan wrote "Perhaps there is a golden chalice in heaven where every drop of the precious blood is still in existence, just as pure, just as potent, just as fresh as two thousand years ago." (M. R. DeHaan, M.D. BORROW [The Chemistry of the Blood](#), Zondervan, 1981 reprint, page 28). (Here is a sermon by R L Hymers refuting Dr DeHaan's critics - [A DEFENCE OF DR. M. R. DeHAAN ON THE BLOOD OF CHRIST](#) (see also [John MacArthur's open letter and Hymers response](#))

Charles Wesley - wrote a hymn Arise, My Soul, Arise with the line "And sprinkles now the throne of grace." This would suggest Wesley held the view that Jesus took His blood to heaven.

He ever lives above
For me to intercede;
His all-redeeming love
His precious blood to plead;
His blood atoned for all our race
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Wikipedia Article - The **Heavenly Presentation of Christ's Blood** is a doctrine taught by some [Christian Fundamentalists](#) that after Jesus' resurrection, he took his [blood](#) into heaven and sprinkled it into a heavenly [mercy seat](#) as a part of his priestly work.^{[1][2]}

This view has caused controversy among [Conservative Christians](#), as critics have argued that that it creates a magical view of the blood of Christ, while others have argued that a denial of Jesus' blood being presented to heaven diminishes of the role of the blood of Christ and thus also the atoning work of Jesus.^[3]

History The belief that Jesus carried his literal blood into a heavenly mercy seat has long been a point of debate within [Conservative Christianity](#). Among the earliest proponents of this view was the German theologian [Johann Albrecht Bengel](#) (1687–1752), who argued that Jesus took his literal blood to heaven, where it is eternally preserved.^[4] Although in contrast, [Frederick Grant](#) (1834–1902), in his *Numerical Bible*, argued against this idea, maintaining that Jesus did not take his blood to heaven.^[5] The doctrine gained broader attention through [Martin DeHaan](#) (1891–1965), who, in his book *The Chemistry of the Blood - BORROW*, speculated that a golden chalice in heaven might hold every drop of Christ's blood.^{[6][7]} [R. L. Hymers Jr](#) has further suggested that this perspective was held by the renowned English hymn writer [Isaac Watts](#) (1674–1748).^[8]

The issue concerning Jesus' blood being taken to heaven also caused a local controversy among the faculty of [Dallas Theological Seminary](#), as [Robert Thieme](#) (1918 – 2009) strongly criticized the view that Jesus took his blood to heaven as a part of his atoning work. Thieme himself argued that this idea was a perpetuating of mysticism from the [Dark Ages](#). Thieme's views were however accused of "heresy" by the [Baptist](#) writer Robert Walter, who borrowed from the statements of [Oliver B. Green](#) (1915 – 1976) on the blood of Christ being presented to heaven.^[3] Thieme's view that Jesus did not take his blood to heaven was also held by the then president of the seminary, [John F. Walvoord](#) (1910 – 2002). However, he also rejected the view of Thieme that Jesus' bleeding was not a part of the atonement.^[9]

More recently, Evangelical Pastor [John MacArthur](#) has rejected this doctrine.^[10]

Doctrine According to the doctrine that Jesus carried his blood into heaven, this act was an essential component of His redemptive work for humanity. Proponents of this view often interpret John 20:17—where Jesus tells Mary Magdalene not to touch him—as indicating that he had not yet completed the task of sprinkling his blood on the heavenly mercy seat.^[11] Based on this interpretation, figures such as [Jack Hyles](#) have argued that Christ's heavenly presentation of his blood fulfills the typology established in Leviticus 16.^{[12][13]} Theologians who support the view that Jesus presented his blood to heaven have thus proposed that Christ experienced two ascensions: one immediately after John 20:17, during which he presented His blood in heaven, and another as recorded in the [Book of Acts](#).^[14] However, The notion of a second ascension inferred from John 20:17 has been challenged by theologians such as John Walvoord.^[15] This doctrine is often grounded in Hebrews 9:12 and hinges on the interpretation of the Greek preposition *dia* ("by, through"). In his commentary, [Franz Delitzsch](#) explains that, just as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies by means of blood, so too did Jesus. Yet, Delitzsch ultimately concludes that Jesus did not present his blood in heaven separately from his body; rather, his glorified body itself contained the presented blood. This view, however, was rejected by [J. Vernon McGee](#), who maintained that Christ's glorified body does not contain blood and thus presented the blood separately from his body.^[5]

The doctrine that Jesus presented his blood in heaven is often supported by the belief in the imperishability of Christ's blood, a view commonly based on *1 Peter 1:18–19*, which contrasts his blood with perishable things. However, others interpret this passage as emphasizing the eternal value of his blood rather than asserting its physical incorruptibility.^[16]

QUESTION - [What is the kingdom that cannot be shaken in Hebrews 12:28?](#) GOTQUESTIONS.ORG

ANSWER - Nations, countries, and kingdoms of this world rise and fall. Even those that once seemed unshakable—like the kingdom of [Egypt](#), the [Roman Empire](#), and the Ottoman Empire—eventually crumbled after centuries of amassing power, wealth, and widespread dominance. But the kingdom of God possesses a strength and permanence of an entirely different kind. This is why Hebrews 12:28 says, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.”

The word translated “cannot be shaken” comes from the Greek term *asaluētos*, which describes something that is firm, stable, and unmovable. The kingdom of God is permanent. No rival or weapon can threaten its existence or thwart its advance. Jesus uses the same Greek root word to describe how, in the end times, even the creation will be less stable than the kingdom of God: “Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken” (Matthew 24:29; 2 Peter 3:10, 12).

This kingdom that cannot be shaken refers to the rule of God. His kingdom is not limited to a single nation or future event but encompasses His sovereign reign over all things. This involves His reign over creation, as Psalm 47:7 reads, “For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.” It also includes His reign over Israel, as Isaiah 33:22 declares, “For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is he who will save us.” Additionally, God reigns over Gentile nations, as Daniel 4:17 affirms: “The Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.” While the kingdom of God may at times be less visible, less acknowledged, and less respected, it is nevertheless present, sustained, and victorious.

God promised that a [descendant of David](#) will preside over His kingdom. Through the prophet Nathan, God told David, “When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:12–13; cf. Isaiah 9:6–7).

Jesus is the promised King from David’s line. He inaugurated God’s kingdom during His earthly ministry, as Mark records: “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” (Mark 1:14–15).

Jesus also taught that, while the kingdom had come near, its full realization lies in the future. When [Christ returns](#) to the earth, He will establish Himself as king in Jerusalem, sitting on the throne of David (Luke 1:32–33). It will be a time of peace (Micah 4:2–4; Isaiah 32:17–18), joy (Isaiah 61:7, 10), and comfort (Isaiah 40:1–2). “With righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth” (Isaiah 11:4).

A powerful contrast between the kingdom that cannot be shaken and the teetering kingdoms of this world appears in the vision God gave to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2—a multi-tiered statue representing a succession of world empires. Each earthly kingdom, whether represented by gold, silver, bronze, or iron, was destined for destruction. The king of Babylon saw how “a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands” (Daniel 2:34, NLT). The rock struck the image, and “the whole statue was crushed into small pieces. . . . Then the wind blew them away without a trace” (Daniel 2:35, NLT). And then the rock grew into the unshakeable kingdom: “The rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35, NLT).

Kingdoms in this world will rise and fall, yet the kingdom of God is everlasting. In Daniel’s words, “The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever” (Daniel 2:44).

Despite all appearances and the might and grandeur of history’s great empires, God’s kingdom is the only kingdom that cannot be shaken.

David Cooper - The Blood Still Speaks Text: Hebrews 12:22-24

Today we are confronted with a question of supreme importance: Why did Christ come into the world? We tend to confuse what Christ did with why He came. Indeed, He preached the kingdom of God. He healed the sick and performed signs and wonders to confirm the Kingdom message. He showed us the way of love. But He came for only one reason: to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15).

This is why the Bible places such emphasis on the blood of Christ shed on the cross. It is by His blood that we are saved. Leviticus 17:11 says, “The life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” The blood is mentioned over 700 times in Scripture. The word blood is a synonym for life. So when the Bible speaks of the blood of Christ, it means His sacrificial life given for our sins on the cross.

His blood is a covenant blood (Matthew 26:28), a justifying blood (Romans 5:9), a forgiving blood (Ephesians 1:7), a reconciling

blood (2:13), a cleansing blood (1 John 1:7), a sanctifying blood (Hebrews 13:12), and a redeeming blood (Revelation 1:5). So we join the host of heaven and sing Revelation 5:9, 10. The cross is not an emblem, but a sign of victory. On the cross Christ redeemed us from our sins. He lifted his voice in victory, "It is finished" (John 19:30). This was the cry of a Roman general, which he would declare to his troops when a battle had turned in their favor. Sin is finished! Death is finished! The law is finished! Redemption is finished! The plan of salvation is finished!

There is a communication breakdown when preaching on the blood to the 21st-century mind. We are so far removed from the sacrificial system that we struggle to connect with the imagery.

I. The Blood Speaks

A. The writer of Hebrews gives a contrast between the blood of Abel and the blood Christ. Cain murdered his brother, Abel. God confronted Cain: "Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). The blood of Abel cries for justice. It is the blood of the martyrs (Revelation 6:9, 10). But Jesus speaks a better word. His blood cries out to God for mercy.

B. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple with the blood of the sacrifice, which had been offered on the brazen altar in the courtyard. He wore only the linen ephod. He carried the blood in a censer. He passed through the Holy Place, behind the veil, into the Holy of Holies. He then sprinkled the blood seven times, representing completion or perfection, on the cover of the ark of the covenant between the gold cherubim. He made atonement, which means "to cover," for the sins of the people. God's glory would appear in the Holy of Holies when the blood was sprinkled. The blood covered the voice of the Law within the ark and spoke a word of mercy and intercession. The blood says, "The penalty has been paid, the demands of justice have been met, and so, the guilty are pardoned from all guilt."

C. When He was resurrected He went into heaven and presented His own blood before the altar of God and made atonement for our sins. Today we can approach God freely and confidently because the Blood speaks on our behalf (1 John 2:1, 2).

II. The Blood Is Sufficient

A. The blood of the Old Testament sacrifices could not atone for sins (Hebrews 9:22; 10:4). They were only symbols of the blood of Christ His blood is precious (1 Peter 1:19). The Virgin Birth confirms the sinlessness of Christ. This is the crucial truth. Only a sinless Savior could atone for our sins. The bloodline of Adam versus Christ is emphasized by Paul (Romans 5:12-21).

B. The blood of a child is different from the blood of the mother. The blood of a child is only produced when the sperm and ovum (egg) unite and the fetus begins to develop. So, the child has its own blood separate from the mother. At no point during pregnancy does the blood of the mother come into contact with the fetus. The placenta forms a link between the mother and the child. It allows all soluble elements such as proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals and even antibodies to pass freely from mother to child, and also for waste products from the child to be passed back to the mother. Yet, no actual interchange of blood occurs. All the blood of the child's is produced within the fetus itself (M.R. DeHaan, *The Chemistry of the Blood*).

C. The blood of animals can never take away sins. The animals only pointed to the blood of Christ. Christ has no need of the offerings of the Old Testament order. He has no need of the burnt, the grain, the fellowship, the sin or the guilt offering. He is the offering of God for the sins of the world. After His resurrection He entered heaven itself with His own blood and presented it before the altar of God. And 2,000 years later the Blood still speaks on our behalf and says, "Come boldly to the throne of grace, that [you] may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16, NKJV).

III. The Blood Must Be Sprinkled

A. Note that the writer of Hebrews says we have come "to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood (12:24). The sprinkling of the atoning blood means to apply its power to one's life. There were five predominant uses of the sprinkled blood in the Old Testament.

1. The Passover (Exodus 12:22)
2. When the covenant of the Law was ratified, Moses sprinkled the blood on the people (24:7, 8).
3. The Tabernacle and its furniture were consecrated by blood (Hebrews 9:21).
4. The consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests (Exodus 29:20)
5. The Day of Atonement on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:15, 16)

B. The blood on the altar will not save us. Only when the Blood is applied are we saved. The cleansing power of the blood of Christ is applied by faith to our hearts (Hebrews 9:11-14). How can the Blood be applied? Through faith in Christ (Romans 10:9, 10). When you truly believe that Christ is the Son of God and you confess your sins to Him, the power of His blood cleanses your sins, and you are saved from sin and for a life of worship to God. The Blood can be sprinkled on your heart, your mind, your home, your children, your problems. It is a blood of cleansing, consecration and deliverance. No person could sprinkle the blood on himself. A priest had to sprinkle the blood. Jesus is the Priest of the world. Come to Him and pray, "Lord Jesus, sprinkle my heart with Your blood."

Closing: It is more than a religious cliché. It is a powerful truth: "There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb." The blood still speaks!