

The Mountain of Quakers and Fakers

Hebrews 12:18-21

To grasp the message of the New Testament, you must be familiar with the theme of the Old Testament. You can't love the Christ of the New Covenant, until you realize one's dilemma within the Old Covenant. Moses reveals the dilemma of every sinner under the Law of God: *I am full of fear and trembling* (v. 21). A Gospel church is a *good news church*. Unfortunately, many churches focus on the Law; theirs or God's. The commandments, ceremonies and rituals that were ordered by God in the Old Testament form the Law.

The Law of God is an expression of His justice, transcendence, majesty and uniqueness—His holiness.

1. **The Law of God is pictured as a mountain** (i.e. Mt. Sinai) – God is exalted and unapproachable.
2. **The Law of God produces fire, darkness, gloom, and a storm** (v. 18) – the effects of seeing the Lord.
3. **The Law of God points out our deficiencies** (v. 19) – they “begged” nothing further be spoken.
4. **The Law of God produces fear in even the best of men** (v. 21) – “I am full of fear and trembling.”

I. You have *not* come to a mountain that can be touched.

This is the basic difference between the Law and the Gospel. Faith rests. Law leads to touching. Faith is trust in the touch of Another. Law is trust in your own touch. God gave the Law on Sinai. Moses read the Law and the people said, “*We will do everything the Lord has commanded!*” (Ex. 19:8). The Law of God is good is it not? “*We know that the law is good if one uses it properly*” (I Tim. 1:8). How am I related to the Law? “*You died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God*” (Rom. 7:4).

II. Others *are coming* to the mountain that can be touched.

In this world there are three types of people who come in contact with the Law of God:

1. Sinners who quake before God because they see His holiness and have no solution for their sins.
2. Sinners who fake it before God and others because they reach out to the mountain and try to touch it, then pretend that their experience has been a blessed one (or get angry when it's not).
3. Sinners who are a law unto themselves and have no cognizance of another higher Law.

Jesus Christ once declared, “*If I be lifted up, I will draw all men [people] unto myself*” (John 12:32). The Gospel church will take time to show how Christ is the Anointed One who fulfills the Law. All the sacrifices in the Old Covenant point to Him. All the Temple rituals exalt Him. All the commandments of God—the, “if you ... then I ...” promises of God—are fulfilled *in the obedience of Christ*. The Gospel church is satisfied and content in the Person and work of Christ, and can rest in His performance.

III. You and I have no reason to compare ourselves to others.

Wherever there is a spirit of condemnation or of spiritual pride, the mountain is being touched. The writer of Hebrews *assumes* He is writing to sinners who have experienced God's grace in Christ. It is for this reason he writes, “*For you have not come to the mountain that can be touched.*” Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the Law for us by his obedience to God as our representative (Rom. 3:19). Christ satisfied the penalty of the Law by his death as our Substitute, redeeming us from its curse (Gal. 3:13-14), and now the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us by faith (Romans 8:4).

1. Through the Law we see our shortcomings and sin (Romans 3:20).
2. Through the Law we see our helplessness in eradicating our sin (Romans 11:32).
3. Through the Law we see Christ, “For Christ is the end (Lit. *goal*) of the Law” (Romans 10:4).