

## Q1 L10 - Jesus Opens the Way Through the Veil - 2022-03-05

Shawn Brummund: Hello and welcome to another edition of the Sabbath School Study Hour right here in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh Day Adventist Church in the greater Sacramento area of California. It is so nice to be able to have those of you who are joining us live through the different, various livestreams, as well as those who are joining us here on this program through the different, various networks and satellite television.

It is always being able to get together here on this particular Sabbath, as we look at today's lesson study, which is lesson study number 10, "Jesus Makes a Way Through the Veil." We're continuing to make our way through this particular quarterly, which is entitled, "The Message of Hebrews," "The Message of Hebrews." So, if you have your quarterly, you haven't gone through it--even if you have--go ahead and grab that. Most importantly, make sure that you grab your Bible, because this is going to be another deep Bible study, as we look at one of my favorite books, the book of Hebrews.

And, also, I want to make sure that you take advantage--or give you an opportunity to take advantage of a free gift offer that we also have for you here today, which is entitled, "A Divine Design." Now, that free offer is number 902, and you want to be able to share that free offer number with the different agents that will answer the phone for you, to be able to get that out to you. All you have to do is dial 1-866-788-3966. Again, that's 1-866-788-3966, and we'll be happy to get you a copy of this very deep study on the very same subject.

And so, if you want to dig just a little bit deeper than even our Sabbath School Study Hour, learn a little bit more about this great sanctuary message, then make sure you get a hold of this free gift offer. For those of you who'd like a digital copy, we also offer that digitally. And all you need to do is text the code, SH152, and you want to dial that to 40544, and that will be available to you if you're in the United States or the United States Territory. As you saw on the screen, there's also a website that is available for anybody internationally to be able to get on the Internet and get a free digital download for that. So, please, I want to encourage you, take advantage of that very important study.

All right, friends, we're going to invite our musicians out, as they share with us and lead us in worship and in song.

♪ I'm alone yet not alone. ♪

♪ God's the light that will guide me home. ♪

♪ With His love and tenderness, ♪

♪ leading through our wilderness. ♪

♪ And wherever I may roam, I'm alone yet not alone. ♪

♪♪

♪ I will not be bent in fear. ♪

♪ He's the refuge I know is near. ♪

♪ In His strength I find my own. ♪

♪ By His faithful mercies shown. ♪

♪ That so mighty is His shield. ♪

♪ All His love is now revealed. ♪

♪ When my steps are lost and desperate for a guide, ♪

♪ I can feel His touch, a soothing presence by my side. ♪

♪ Alone yet not alone, not forsaken when on my own. ♪

♪ I can lean upon His arm and be lifted up from harm. ♪  
♪ If I stumble or I fall, I'm alone yet not alone. ♪  
♪ When my steps are lost and desperate for a guide, ♪  
♪ I can feel His touch, ♪  
♪ a soothing presence by my side, by my side. ♪  
♪ He has bound me with His love. ♪  
♪ Watchful angels look from above. ♪  
♪ Every evil can be brave, for I know I will be saved. ♪  
♪ Never frightened on my own. ♪  
♪ I'm alone yet not alone. ♪  
♪ I'm alone ♪  
♪ yet not alone. ♪

Luccas Rodor: We've been studying the lesson that has to do with the book of Revelation--sorry, with Hebrews, not Revelation. I like that it's Hebrews, and it's kind of like Revelation because it says, "In these last days," right? And so, that's where the reference to Revelation came in right now. But this has been such a beautiful lesson. The book of Hebrews, the letter of Hebrews is really a sermon. Now, the book of Hebrews is an exhortation. It was a sermon that was preached, and then it was written down, and I love this letter, because it is really a letter of triumph, of victory, right? And I think I repeated this a few times while teaching previous lessons.

The letter of Hebrews is an argument that Jesus is better, better than anything that we could ever know, especially to those people that were living in that first century, going through the ordeals that they were going through, they needed to hear that. They needed to hear that what they had in Jesus, what they received in Jesus was better. It was better than what they had left behind. It was even better than what they thought they had to look forward to. They had to look above and beyond to what was going to happen. And so, studying this lesson, this quarterly, and going through the book of Hebrews has been such a blessing to me personally that I'm so happy that we're studying it this quarter.

Now, our memory verse today--and we're going to be studying lesson number 10, as Pastor Shawn already repeated, the title of the lesson is "Jesus Opens the Way Through the Veil." Now this is a big one. And the chapter that we're going to be studying mostly is chapter 9. It's a portion of chapter 9 and a portion of chapter 10, and the memory verse this week is Hebrews 9:24 that says, "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Now, one thing that I--a connection or a link that I thought very appropriate to this week's lesson is that several times throughout His ministry, Jesus foreshadowed His death. And multiple times with His disciples, He speaks about what was going to happen with Him, what He was going to be subjected to. He also spoke several times about His resurrection, about what was going to happen after that. He spoke about His return to His Father, but it's almost as though the disciples, they kind of ignored the good stuff, right, and they focused on that one bad part--at least bad to them--which was the fact that Jesus was going to die. L

ike, they focused just on that. Because we know that when it happened, they all fled away. They weren't really hopeful, they weren't happy, they weren't joyful. They really, apparently forgot about the rest that Jesus had said, and I think that's a big lesson. We have to be careful with the things that we listen to, to listen to the entire message. Sometimes we only get caught up on one or another part of it. But with the disciples, that's what happens. And in the gospel of John, chapter 16, verse 6, that's what we find. Because Jesus says, in the context of what's about to happen to Him, He says, "But now I go away to Him

who sent me." And so, we know that the disciples, they get very sad, and they get distraught, and, you know, they're depressed because of this news.

But in the next verse it says Jesus, in the context of their, you know, sadness and their depression, Jesus, He comforts them by saying--and this happens in verse 7, John 16, verse 7--He says, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away." Now far removed from that scene, we can ask ourselves today, "Well, what could be good about Jesus leaving them? What could be better than His physical presence with the disciples?" This seems like a bad answer, a bad comfort that Jesus is giving them. "Yeah, it's all right. I'm going to go away, but don't worry."

What could be better than Jesus's physical presence? But the thing is that Jesus, He offers an answer. In the following verses, He has an initial statement. Part of the answer, part of the solution to why the disciples should look forward to this event is given by Jesus here in verse 7, where He says, "If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I depart, I will send Him to you." So, that is part of the reason. In part, that was the reason why they should rejoice, but it's not the whole reason. That's just part of it. The other part, the other reason for Jesus's ascension to heaven to be a good thing, to be a vital thing, a vital offering, is found in the letter of Hebrews, and that's what we're going to be talking about today.

You see, friends, while the atonement of Jesus on the cross is vital, is important, it's complete, it's final, there was yet the matter of the application of the benefits of what He had done on the cross. So, Jesus dies. Then what? You know, one of the things that sometimes we don't really comprehend is that the cross had a purpose, a very important purpose.

You see, on the cross, or the cross bought back God's rights, God's authority to save us. The cross offered that, but there was something that the sanctuary did. Because while the cross bought back the authority, the ability, the possibility for us to be saved as a race, as a people, as the humankind, the sanctuary and everything that happens within the sanctuary has to do with the individual, with me, with Jesus saving me.

And so, what happens in the book of Hebrews is the explanation that Jesus's benefits through the cross in the heavenly sanctuary are better, are complete, are whole. They're perfect. And that's what we're talking about today. That's the subject of this week's lesson. Sunday's lesson has the title, "Jesus Before the Father." And here I'm just going to repeat, so it's fresh in our mind, I'm going to repeat the memory verse, Hebrews 9:24. It says, "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Now, in the Old Testament, we know that in the Old Testament times there were five greater feasts and two lesser, smaller feasts, so seven in total, and three of these were moments where Israelites were invited to come to the sanctuary, come to the temple to give offerings. It was an opportunity for them to celebrate specific acts of God, specific attributes of God that revealed His character. And these three feasts were Passover, right, the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which was also known as the Feast of Booths. And that offered the Israelites an opportunity to come to celebrate to God, to meet their Lord, and to celebrate specific attributes, specific characteristics of His.

But these feasts, more than being an end in themselves, they represented something more. They represented something that was going to happen in the future. Jesus is the true antitype, the truth fulfillment who, in every way, fulfilled completely, entirely, wholly, in every aspect and detail, the meaning of these feasts. You see, what had happened to the Jews, what had happened to the Israelite nation is that they had lost the forest for the trees. They had gotten too consumed into the nuances of what they were doing that they forgot why they were doing what they were doing, in regard to many things, but also in regard to these feasts. And again, this is something that we need to pay attention to, because it's very easy, friends, nowadays, for us to lose the forest for the trees, for us to get so caught up in the nuances of what we're doing that we forget that there is something beyond this.

We get so caught up in the church of God that we forget the God of the church. And so, here, the text of Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 24, our memory verse, it describes Jesus's ascension up to the Father into the presence of the Father, arriving in the heavenly sanctuary, the true sanctuary, having offered a superior sacrifice. Remember how I said that the main theme of Hebrews is that Jesus is better, Jesus is superior. And here in these two chapters, we're finding that Jesus offers a superior sacrifice than what was offered previously and what was given before. Through this section of the book, which is really Hebrews 9, verse 11, to chapter 10, verse 18, the reality of Jesus's sacrifice appears in contrast to the old system. Everything that the old system, that the old covenant could do or could not do, they failed to do, Jesus's blood finished and sealed it for us.

Now, here's the thing. I'm saying these things. And either because we've been hearing this all our lives, or we kind of become used to the lingo, right, to the terminology, it doesn't strike us as much, unfortunately. I think it's also because we're so far removed from that time, right? It's 2000 years later. We're so far removed from the culture, from the context, but someone saying this to a first century--a first century Israelite, coming from Judaism, this was a shock. That Jesus' blood is better, that there is now a new covenant, that was a shock, that was a huge thing for them. But here that's what happens. And the argument that he makes is that there were basically two weaknesses in the old covenant, in the old system.

First of all, a limited access. There was a barrier between humans and God. There was a limited access. And number two, there was a limited purification; because while there was a limited access, people couldn't really come into the presence of God. The most that they could do is go up to the outer court of the sanctuary. The priest could go into the inner part of the sanctuary but not the holy of holies. And even the high priest could only go once a year.

So, you see that there was limited access to God. They couldn't really step in boldly into the presence of God. And secondly, the purification they had to bring in several times, again and again, repeatedly. They needed to bring in the sacrifice of bulls and goats and lambs. And so, with Jesus, that doesn't happen because Jesus's sacrifice is final. Once is more than enough.

So, these are the problems that the author, he brings forth in what the old system represented: limited access, limited purifications. And these two deficiencies, as I've just said, they were rectified, they were removed by the sacrifice of Jesus, through His blood. He entered into the celestial sanctuary. And so, the author of Hebrews, he establishes a radical contrast between what was and what now is through Jesus, a contrast between the old sanctuary of the Mosaic peregrination through the desert, and now the new sanctuary in heaven. This is a beautiful thing. Can you imagine this for the first century Israelites, how excited they were by listening to this, by hearing the sermon? This was being preached by an excited evangelist, passionate, telling them that Jesus was better.

You see, friends, shielded by His blood, we can now--and what they were understanding is that they could now--they didn't have a limited access. They didn't have limited purification. They could now come forth boldly into the presence of God. This holy boldness--and this is also what he explains--doesn't emanate from us. It's not something that's coming from us as a form of, you know, of religious pride. "Now, now we can come." No, it doesn't come from us, and that is what he's explaining. Everything here comes through Jesus. And they derive especially from two attributes, two characteristics of Christ.

First, He understands us. Jesus understands you. He knows what it's like. As our great High Priest, He walked in our shoes. He cried our tears. He felt our pains. He bled our blood, and He died ultimately our death. He understands. He knows. He understands our tribulations, our temptations. He knows what it's like to be tempted. And you know what that means? That He knows perfectly what we need. He knows what we need. That's the first one.

Secondly, His blood opens the doors to a whole and a complete purification from sin. Friends, His blood opens the doors of the sanctuary. He keeps them wide open, so that we may enter by faith. So, He understands, and He is enough. You see, friends, the blood of Christ, it doesn't provide mere ceremonial

purification in the terms of the Old Testament, but total, complete purification. His offering frees us from the bondage of sin.

And so while here in this world, we still have to live in the presence of sin, because it's still all around us, we do not have to live under the bondage of sin. That's what Christ is offering here. This is the purification of the conscience that goes way beyond what the Israelites knew as ceremonial purification, because their religion was all about that. It was all about cleaning themselves all the time, repeatedly, constantly. I mean, when you read what--and this really isn't what you find in the Old Testament. This is what you find in the traditional oral, written law. They were oral, and then they were written down. You have that in the Torah. The Mishna and the Gemara, you find what they had to do. There were so many things that had to be done, and that's where I said that, you know, they lost the forest for the trees. And here is Jesus saying, "No, I'm opening the door. It's not a purification that you do. It's a purification that I do for you."

Friends, the heavenly sanctuary requires a better sacrifice than that of animals, and that's what we find here in chapter 9. We're going to read it. Verse 23, chapter 9, 23, that says, "Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these," better sacrifices. And after all, Jesus didn't enter the heavenly sanctuary by the authority of the blood of goats, or lambs, or sheep, or bulls, but with the blood of His own sacrifice.

A few verses later, 9, verse 26 and 27, that says, "Not that He should offer Himself often," because that's what they were used to. They were used to often bringing sacrifices, at least three times a year in those three feasts that I described previously, at least. So, that's what they were used to continuously. But here, "not that He should offer Himself often," or several times as the high priest enters the most holy place every year with the blood of another. He then would have to suffer often, since the foundation of the world.

But now once at the end of the ages He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Do you see the contrast? Here he's saying, "Look, this is what would have had to happen, were Jesus a regular high priest, were he just another one. But since He is who He is, once is enough, that's it. You don't have to worry about this anymore." No, friends, His sacrifice was more than enough. Verse 28, "Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin for salvation." What is it saying? Why apart from sin? Because the first time Jesus appeared, He appeared in the context of sin.

Jesus, Jesus's incarnation was in the context of our life, our world, sinners all around Him. But the second time, uh-uh. The second time will be perfect--not that the first one wasn't perfect for the context in which it was--but the second one won't involve those aspects of what happened. This is why, friends, Jesus's sacrifice brought all others to an end. That's why we don't go anywhere today to sacrifice goats, and bulls, and sheep, and lambs. They were no longer necessary. They are no longer necessary. It was no longer necessary for them to look forward to anything. You'll remember that in the Old Testament times, people--what did they live for? What was their--Jesus's second coming for us, right? We have Jesus' second coming. What was their advent? It was that one day the Messiah would come. That's what they waited for. That's what they spent thousands of years waiting for.

But at this moment now, that had been fulfilled. That was done. They didn't have to look forward to that anymore. It was complete in Christ, and this is what the preacher here is trying, with all his heart, to bring forth, to explain. The antidote had been provided. The price had been paid. And that segues into Monday, Monday's lesson, because here we have an invitation, but it's not really an invitation on the terms of what we really expect.

The main text here is Hebrews chapter 12, verse 18 through 21, and this is the description. It's a reference to a scene in the Old Testament, and it's a curious scene. Look at what it says. Hebrews 12:18-21, it says, "For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and

to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. For they could not endure what was commanded. And if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow. And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.'"

Friends, here we find that God gives them an order. All right? This is when the children of Israel, they approach Mount Sinai. This is in the context of everything that is happening there, God becoming their legislator, and them accepting that, and a moment of terror falls upon them, and this is the description that we just read. And in God's order here to them, we find three basic characteristics that really, they're the watermark of God's character, of His personality.

We find these three characteristics throughout all of God's commandments. And the three characteristics are--the first one is it's clear. God's commandment to the children of Israel here in this scene, it was clear. They knew what they had to do. They understood it. No one needed an extensive theological training to understand what God was asking them. No one needed to get confused, doubtful, or obscure. It was clear as day. Don't touch the mountain.

Second, they were protective. God was trying to protect them. Everything that God asks or demands, friends, everything that He asks or demands is for our protection. You know, sometimes humans have a hard time with that. Because when you look at it, the basic struggle between God and us, between the Holy Spirit and us is that God tells us this, but we want to do this.

The classic Hebrew term for sin--there are quite a few of them. There are at least eight in the Old Testament. But the classic one is translated for rebellion. And that's at the foundation of sin. When God says, "But I choose." God knows, "But I think." Can you relate to that? The things that God forbids are the things that would prevent us from living the best lives that we can live.

You see, God's commandments in the Bible, they're not meant to bore your life. They're meant to protect your life, to give you quality of life. And that's a great misunderstanding, also, that people have sometimes about the biblical God. He doesn't want to bore your life. I promise you, once you live within His will, you will live life in abundance. Life will be full.

So, first of all, God's words are clear. Secondly, they are protective. And finally, they are immutable. And what this means is that we are the ones that when we keep them, we are, by His grace, transformed and adjust our lives to what He's commanded. It's human arrogance that sometimes wants to get what God says and then fit it into what they prefer. Have you ever heard anyone--maybe this is something that you said yourself in your exodus through this life. You know, "I haven't found the right church yet. I haven't found the church that fits me." Have you ever heard anyone say that? "I haven't found the church that fits me." What does that mean? Most of the times, it means that people are trying to find God's words as they prefer it, and that's dangerous. Because at that point, you're making a god unto yourself. Your preference, your comfort is what is god to you.

You see, friends, we're not called to take the Bible and fix it, mold it, box it in to what we are. It's the other way around. I take truth, and I adjust myself to that truth. That's easier said than done, I understand, I acknowledge, but that's what the path of sanctification is for. It's where, by God's grace, our rough edges are chipped out, filed out, and we fit His mold, the mold of Christ. It's human arrogance that seeks out alternatives to His directions. Just like Naaman, we have the freedom of not accepting God's recommendations, but the result of that is that if we do that, we will remain lepers. We will remain lepers.

Now, this text that we just read, it falls under this last category. God, through Moses, provided necessary instructions to prepare the people to meet Him. They needed to consecrate their conscience. They needed to consecrate themselves first. And disobedience to this it was very severe for them. It meant death. Now, you might say, "Well, wow, God is being severe here with them." Disobedience meant death.

Friends, we have to understand who these people were. These were a nation of people that for the past 200 years had been treated as slaves, and for the past 400 years had been in the context of Egypt. And the sad truth about humans is that when you treat someone a certain way for a long time, they will start acting like that. And these people had been treated as slaves. And in their mind, they were slaves. And so, God bringing them out and trying to make a nation out of them, of course, He had to be strict. He had to be straight with them. That's how you discipline young children--not with death, of course--but you discipline them with, "Because mom said so," "because dad said so." You don't really explain that much to a two-year-old. But as they grow, you progressively broaden their discipline. Isn't that true? You're not going to discipline a two- or three-year-old as a ten-year-old, and you're not going to discipline a ten-year-old as a twenty-year-old. It doesn't work that way.

And so God did with the children of Israel, and you'll see a progressive shift throughout the Bible of how God dealt with them. But at this moment, at this moment, disobedience was met with a severe punishment. The divine instruction in Exodus 19:13 was, "When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain." And as the lesson puts it, He wanted them to have the experience Moses and the leaders of the people would have when they ascended the mountain and beheld God and ate and drank with Him in His presence. The people later recognized that they had seen God's glory and that it was possible for God to speak with man and still live.

Now, what did God intend with this request? To teach the importance of obedience, perhaps, the importance of sanctity? What we see here is that while God guided Israel towards Himself, they grew afraid. They were terrified of Him. The description given here in Hebrews of these events describes a lack of faith.

Why were they afraid of God? Because they lacked faith--an apostasy of the people with the golden calf and how they feared meeting God because of their sin. So, the question, "Why were they afraid of encountering God?"

Friends, it's because they didn't love Him, not the way they should have. Because 1 John chapter 4, verse 18, said, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." Now, this text is not talking about fear in the sense of respect, of honoring God. Right? We know through multiple verses that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and such verses. The fear that is being mentioned here is the fear of being afraid, of being terrified.

We're not called to be terrified of God. We're call to respect Him, to honor Him, not to be terrified of Him. The segue here into Tuesday's lesson is perfect because the Greek term here that we find in Tuesday's lesson, the Greek term used here in these chapters for the word "veil," is the Greek word *katapetasma*. And you'll find this in the lesson, and this could really refer to a few different things, a few different meanings. It could refer to, for example, the screen of the court. It could refer to the screen at the entrance of the outer part of the sanctuary, and it could also refer to the veil that separated the holy from the most holy place.

In Leviticus chapter 16, verse 1 and verse 2, after the divine punishment given due to their irreverence and disdain--and this is talking about Aaron's sons. Remember that moment where Aaron's sons, they bring in this foreign fire? And then they're destroyed by God's holiness, by God's glory. And at this point, Aaron is warned not to go in casually beyond the veil. Right? Just once every year.

Now, friends, in an era of widespread cynicism and disdain for what is sacred and for what is holy, God's divine actions and protections of what is holy and His righteous punishment to mockery and disdain, to what He considers to be holy, that may be misunderstood, right? Our world today is infested with cynicism, with mockery. Wherever you go--we live in the age of entertainment. And the thing about modern entertainment is that it's completely irreverent. But if fallen humans were simply given a free reign to disconsider what is pure, what is holy, very little would be left of true biblical religion.

Consider the examples in the Bible of when God deals with mockery, with disdain and scorn for what He

holds sacred. In the book of Galatians, the apostle declares in Galatians 6 or 7, he says, "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." Sometimes it might seem that people get away with whatever. But the reality is that sooner or later, a reckoning comes to everyone. And you know what? Praise God for that. Imagine if it didn't. Praise God for His judgment. God's judgment comforts me. There is someone to be held accountable to. Praise God for that.

Friends, the very geography of the sanctuary, its location in relation to the tribes indicated its centrality. As the lesson says, Jesus, as our High Priest, has also been our veil. Through His incarnation, God pitched His tent into our midst and made it possible for us to contemplate His glory, and that's found in John chapter 1, 14 through 18. He made it possible for a holy God to live in the midst of an imperfect people. And that reveals the beginning of Wednesday's lesson, which is the new and living way through the veil.

Friends, I don't know if you ever--maybe this is something that you've said yourself. I know that I have said this on multiple occasions. Sometimes I have said, as a child, "I wish I were one of the Old Testament Israelites that witnessed all the patriarchs, the prophets, the miracles, you know, the cloud of fire by day, and the cloud by day and the fire by night." And have you ever said that? Have you ever wondered that? That's something that I've said many times, and I've read it many times in different books. And sometimes they seem so privileged, you know, that they lived in those times.

Well, you know, you have to ask yourself, were they really? Was it really so? I mean, we frequently hear this, but what about when we actually get into what this means? Because this isn't the perspective of the book of Hebrews. In the book of Hebrews, that's not so. Actually, contrary to this idea, the author sees the God of the Old Testament separated by numerous barriers. And he's right. They were separated from their God because of sin. It wasn't as easy to approach God as we have it today. The people living in the Old Testament times, they couldn't just come out boldly into the presence of God as we are invited to.

So, the question, you know, the assertion that they had it better--really? Not really, not in my opinion and especially not in the opinion of the author of the book of Hebrews. Because his argument is that we have it better because we can boldly enter into His presence. And the contrast that He makes here is to emphasize, is to emphasize exactly the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, what they had before and what they now had in Jesus Christ. For example, in the Old Covenant, the people could only come up--and I've said this before today--they could only come up to the gates of the sanctuary. Only the priests could enter the tent of the congregation, and only the High Priest could go into the holy of holies once a year and with several safeguards.

The experience of the Sinai was a scene of terror, friends. This is terrifying, what we just read, his description of that encounter on Sinai. Observe the very descriptive narrative of Hebrews, you know. "For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched--" This is Hebrews 12:18-21. We already read it. "--that may be touched and that burned with fire into the blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sounding of the trumpet, and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken anymore." They begged that the word should not be spoken anymore. "For they could not endure what was commanded. And if so, much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." And so terrifying it was that Moses himself said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling." Now, again, the reason why the author describes it this way is to create a contrast between what was and what now is in Christ.

You see, friends, Christians are invited to boldly, by the blood of the Lamb, to enter into the sanctuary, into the very presence of Christ without fear or trembling. We're called to draw near in absolute certainty, not like at the Sinai in the desert, but into the heavenly Sinai. As verse 22 and 23 puts it of chapter 12, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels to the general assembly."

Friends, in Jesus, all the barriers are broken. His blood introduces us to the very presence of God. Hebrews chapter 9, verse 9 and 10 tells us that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not perfectly--or



could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper. They were merely temporary symbols and signs, fleshly ordinances. But Hebrews 9:13 states a vital reality, that the blood of bulls and goats sanctified for the purifying of the flesh, but only the blood of Christ was capable of purifying the conscience from the dead works.

Hebrews 10:1-2 argues that because the Old Testament sacrifices needed to be repeated, it was clear that they were not permanent. They couldn't be permanent, and they were certainly not enough to purify the conscience. But then Hebrews chapter 10, verse 22, it adds to this by saying, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. You see, those under the New Covenant come to the very presence of God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Friends, that is what is guaranteed in Jesus. That is what is assured in Jesus. In Him, our contaminated conscience--and you know what I'm talking about. This contaminated conscience, stained by the guilt of sin, can be perfected, can be cleansed, and can be purified. The lesson says that it is Jesus who intercedes for us. And through His sacrifice and faithfulness, He claims salvation for us. Friends, with this kind of intercessor, there is no hopeless cause. There is no hopeless case. You cannot say that your case is hopeless, that you've gone too far. That is kind of blasphemous because there is no way that you are a better sinner than Jesus is a Savior.

Finally, Thursday's lesson. The main point of Thursday's lesson--and here we have a few minutes left. The main point of Thursday's lesson is found in chapter 12, verse 22 through 24. And we read this previously. And once again, here, this author, for the sake of a contrast, he argues that the believers in Christ come, or they have come to Mount Zion, to the celestial Jerusalem, through faith. And what that means is that their experience anticipates the future. Please understand what I'm saying. Those who believe in the sacrifice of Jesus--our experience can anticipate the very future.

So, Jerusalem truly isn't, here in this context, it's not that old Israelite dream city, but the heavenly city that pertains to the realm of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen, assured by Him who does not lie. By faith in Christ, future promises, friends, invade our lives retrospectively. And they are already ours today. This is how we come to Mount Zion, boldly into the presence of God through our great representative, Jesus Christ.

It's not by chance that in Ephesians Paul tells us that through Christ we already sit in heavenly places. Do you understand this? This is incredible. Ephesians 2:4-7, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus."

Friends, at this point, the ascension of Jesus isn't really a matter of faith anymore. It's a matter of fact. The recipients of Hebrews, they're told here, they're exhorted to hold on to the confession of their faith. You see, in Christ, God resurrected us with Him because we are dead. If you look at this world today, people are half alive--or better, they're half dead. The world is dead, friends. People are empty, are lost, are sad, are terrified. And you see this. The world is breaking. The world is throwing up its demons, letting us know that it's broken. But here we have a promise that in Christ we can be resurrected. We can be made new.

You see, with Him, we already trail the paths of paradise. Colossians 3, verse 1, argues the same point. It says, "If you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are from above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." You see, friends, in Christ, we were resurrected, and we have been introduced into the very presence of God. Together with Jesus, we breathe the air of a new world, a new existence.

The excitement of the book of Hebrews, friends, it's palpable. I can imagine this author enraptured by what he's trying his best to preach. I can feel it, and I'm not him. To Him, we can finally sing glory hallelujah. The eternal realities already belong to us, through Jesus. Just look at Hebrews 6:19. "This hope

we have is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." And this way, friends, the entire letter of Hebrews is an extraordinary hymn of victory.

In Christ, everything is guaranteed. It's the typology of the first two feasts of the yearly peregrination. Passover and Pentecost were fulfilled. Then according to Hebrews' answer of the book of Revelation, the third feast this final peregrination, the Feast of Tabernacles, will also completely be fulfilled. That is guaranteed. You can take it to the bank. We will celebrate with Jesus when we finally meet Him in that city, the final, permanent habitation of the saints, where we will be reunited with the eight--with the saints of all ages in the glorious feast of the centuries. And as promised, we will see His face without any obstacle, without any veil.

Friends, the ascension of Jesus guarantees our victory. I've said this before. I'll say it a million times. You don't leave your house every morning to win, to gain victory. Do you know why? Because Jesus already guaranteed it for you. You just need to accept it. Revelation 22, verse 3 through 5, "And there shall be no more curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no more night there. They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them the light. And they shall reign forever and forever."

Friends, as is argued in the book of Hebrews, to the primitive members of the church of the first century that have left the imperfections of the old system, and that had embraced the faith of Jesus, there is therefore no reason to give up or to give in. There is no reason to turn back. In Christ, the future blessings are already ours. And with Him, we breathe the atmosphere, the atmosphere of a new world. And so, glory hallelujah, maranatha. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

I'd like to invite you, if this message in any way inspired you to learn more about this, to claim this victory, this promise, not based on yourself, because thank God it's not based on you or on me, but on Jesus,

I'd like to invite you to take advantage of this free offer. It's beautiful. "A Divine Design." If you would like this free offer, please do call 866-788-3966. Ask for offer number 902 in the USA, SH152 to 40544. And outside of North America, you can go to [study.aftv.org/SH152](http://study.aftv.org/SH152).

I'd like to pray with you before we finish, after this marvelous study. Dear Lord, thank you so much for--thank you so much for the Bible. Thank you so much for the book of Hebrews. Thank you so much for knowing, Father, that in Christ all of the promises that we find in here are guaranteed. There's no doubting. There's nothing uncertain here. It's all sure. These things that we take as faith, Lord, or by faith, they become fact in the lives of those who believe.

Now, Lord, at the same time, we live in a broken world, where it's easy for us to come to church and sometimes, you know, hear something, hear a sermon, hear a song, hear, and then we become motivated, but then we go back home. And over the days of the week and the day-to-day, we just become so demotivated. So, Father, please allow Jesus to sit in the throne of our heart. Allow us to crucify the old man, the old woman on the cross of the heart and allow Jesus to sit in control and in command. Use us, Father, bless this church. And Lord, glory hallelujah to your name. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. And it is in Jesus' name I pray, amen.

God bless you.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen. And be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts, wherever and whenever you

want, and most important to share it with others.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Male: I'd have to say that I had a wonderful childhood growing up. I went to a private school up until the seventh grade, until junior high. I believe it was at that point in junior high that my life began to change. I went from a Christian education into a public school. It was a big difference. There was a lot of secular influence, of peer pressure. And for me, it was the music. I started listening to heavy metal music. Every concert that would come to town, I was there. It had a profound effect on me.

I started using marijuana probably at the age of 14. I started drinking, using a lot of cocaine, and that led to methamphetamine, and that completely changed my life. I dropped out of high school my sophomore year, and went to work. I would get off of work, and we'd go into the bar until 2 o'clock in the morning. I'd get back up at 5, and I'd go back at it again, six, seven days a week.

At the age of 20, I lost my dad to a heart attack. I didn't know how to handle the loss. So, I tried to mask my pain with alcohol and drugs. Got three DUIs in one year, was arrested. They gave me a year in the county jail. And the moment I got out, I went back to doing the same thing, hanging with the same people, the same crowd. I was involved in a hit and run motorcycle accident, and I was charged with a felony DUI. Even though at the time of the accident I was not under the influence, I still had methamphetamine in my system.

At my sentencing date, I left the court room, and I didn't come back, and that left me with a felony warrant. And I had fallen asleep at a park, and I woke up to a park ranger knocking on my window. I knew I was wanted, and I knew that I was not going to just turn myself in. I turned to him, and I made the comment, "Not today," and I took off.

I led five different agencies on about a 35-minute chase. And I realized at that point that I wasn't going to get away and that this was going to end up either me killing somebody or myself. And so, I made the decision to pull over. At that point, everything that I had, I lost.

I was sentenced to two years in state prison, and it was there that God got a hold of me, and it was through Amazing Facts Ministries, I remember listening on my radio to Pastor Doug Batchelor. I wanted to get to know the Bible, I wanted to know God. And so my Aunt Marilyn sent me an Amazing Facts Study Guides, and it was there that my relationship with Christ began.

I had called home, and I knew my mother wasn't doing well, but I didn't realize that she had cancer. She had about a 30% chance of making it through her surgery. She had told the doctors that she was not going to have chemo, and she was not going to have radiation, that if her God was going to save her, then He would save her. I remember hanging up the phone to what I thought was my last conversation with my mom. I turned around, I got down on my knees, and I prayed to God. I said, "God, if you're there, please save my mother. Wherever you need me in life, whatever you want me to do, I am yours." And I had a feeling of such peace, that I knew that my mother was going to be okay, and now my life was going to change.

There are no words that I can adequately express to Amazing Facts and to Pastor Doug to say thank you. To all those people who support the ministry, I am a product of your support. My life is changed because of this ministry, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Casey: I would go out and go drinking, and I just wanted to have fun. I was working a lot at the time, going to school, and just wasn't really interested in really following God. I would have people tell me, "Why don't you just have faith," if I was going through some type of trial during my life. I didn't understand what that meant. I would pray, but I didn't feel any less stressed about or worried about a situation. I didn't understand God's Word. It seemed like it contradicted itself. And so, I struggled with that a lot.

My ex-husband and I, we had began dating, and within seven months we got married, which was really fast. After we got married, he was very disrespectful, and he was cheating a lot. I found out he was

cheating when I was pregnant with my first son. I tried to get him help, and he checked himself out of rehab a week later, living homeless in our hometown. He was saying and doing things that he shouldn't be doing. He was committing crimes. It always started with alcohol and then pot or marijuana, and then he would go to the meth.

So, it was just a really ugly chain of things, and that's when I moved in with my sister. We were staying with her and her husband, and I started doing studies with my sister. She was studying with some people, and I joined the studies, and I learned a lot of different things that I had never known about the Bible, and it started opening up to me and making sense.

So, my sister had installed the satellite, and I found Amazing Facts. The one thing I love about Doug Batchelor is he uses his own life situations, and he uses really good stories to connect stories from the Bible or teachings.

I didn't understand why he was always bringing up the Sabbath and why it was so important. And I was asking my sister, "Why does he keep talking about the Sabbath?" And later on, I found out, through studying more and listening to his teachings about it, the truth about the Sabbath. I know that I started changing as a person. I wanted to follow the truth. I wanted to have a closer relationship with Christ and be closer to God.

So, after doing the studies and learning the truths that I had been learning, I decided to take that next step and give my life to Christ through baptism. Besides learning these messages, these truths about the Bible through Amazing Facts, all of these wonderful people from Amazing Facts, the way they reached out to me, they really showed me that they have caring hearts, that they're Christ-like, because that's what a Christian is.

My name is Casey. Thank you for changing my life.