**The “*Power”* Points is a teaching summary**

**from the classes of Grace Bible Church of PA**

**Taught by Pastor/Teacher Ed Rish**

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**A Contrast of Two Mountains**

The LORD JESUS CHRIST said, I will never leave you nor will I ever forsake you. When He ascended into heaven JESUS left behind something priceless, He left behind the Word of GOD. In the age of Israel the people had the Old Testament. Today we have the completed canon of scripture, the Bible. In the Old Testament the people were under the old covenant which was the Mosaic Law. As we noted, one purpose of the Law was to reveal sins. Because man has a sin nature, sins are a fact of life that he has to deal with because no one will ever reach sinless perfection. Trying to live according to the Law put the people in bondage because it made them conscious of their sins. Sin consciousness leads to feelings of condemnation. Recall Paul’s words, *wretched man that I am!* Paul realized his sinfulness, but Paul also knew the solution. ***Romans 7:24-25 Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*** Through our LORD’s death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven, He became the mediator of a new covenant. It’s unlike the old covenant. Paul tells us in ***2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.*** Old things in this verse include a number of things, but among them is the old covenant. At the moment a person makes the choice to believe in JESUS CHRIST, he’s no longer under the Law. The Law was like a tutor designed to lead people to CHRIST but after they believe the Law was no longer needed; a new Law is in place called the covenant of grace. Through the cross of CHRIST believers have been showered with grace.

In our current series the writer of Hebrews calls this, better things. Under grace the gates of Heaven have been opened to every person through faith in CHRIST, under grace believers have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens In CHRIST. By the power of GOD believers have been graciously given everything pertaining to life and Godliness. Under grace all believers have been elected to privilege and predestined to live with CHRIST forever in Heaven, under grace all believers have been given the opportunity to execute a plan prepared for them in eternity past and they’ve been given the opportunity to advance to maturity, and glorify GOD. That sets up the potential for every believer to receive blessings in time and greater blessings still in eternity. Therefore Peter tells us in ***2 Peter 1:10-11 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.***

Through learning and understanding the Word of GOD, the believer’s calling and election become real to him. By practicing the virtues mentioned in 2 Peter 1, believers stand to not only enter Heaven, but also be blessed abundantly in Heaven. Paul calls this *walking,* it involves using the grace of GOD. None of this can be accomplished under the old covenant.

At the point of salvation all believers have a new objective that involves serving GOD by grace through faith. Because of their faith, the Christian Jews in our current study were being persecuted so they were considering abandoning their faith. As we have been noting adversity is part of living the Spiritual life and is necessary for growth. Very few believers grow to maturity in the midst of prosperity because prosperity is like a barrier that keeps man from coming to GOD. On the other hand, adversity drives man to GOD and opens the eyes of people and helps them to see their need for GOD. Suffering drives wandering believers back to GOD. Therefore GOD uses a tool called divine discipline, not only to convict, correct, and train believers, but also as a means of accelerating growth. Divine discipline can appear in the form of suffering, affliction, pressure or persecution. Whatever form GOD’s discipline appears in, it hurts. ***Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not be joyful, but sorrowful;*** If discipline didn’t hurt it wouldn’t get the believer’s attention, and would have no benefits. Yet look at what this verse goes on to say, ***yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness***. Look at what Paul said in ***2 Cor. 12:9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”*** The peaceful fruit of righteousness is the power that comes out of being made weak. Because we are sons of GOD, He disciplines us so we can be brought to a place where He can bless us.

Our next passage pertains to both saved and unsaved Jews; it has to do with a contrast between two mountains. The 1st mountain represents the old covenant, Mt. Sinai where the Law was given to Moses. The 2nd represents the new covenant or the covenant of grace, which is represented by Mt. Zion. Coming to Sinai is analogous to going back to the Law. In the case of unbelievers, you can’t get saved through the Law, for believers you can’t find grace through the Law so both types of individuals come short of grace. Mt. Sinai was where man saw his imperfection in light of the absolute holiness of GOD. The people knew they couldn’t live up to total obedience to the Law and they couldn’t bear the sight. What resulted were feelings of condemnation. In light of GOD’s holiness, the people saw their sinfulness and that was the purpose of the Law, to reveal man’s sinfulness. The message to the Christian Jews in Hebrews was you didn’t get saved through the Law but through grace, so the objective now is to live by grace, which is represented by Mt. Zion, or the mountain of grace. The principle of Mt. Zion appears as far back as the Old Testament, but it’s seen in the Millennium and in the eternal state as well. Zion is the city of Mt. Moriah, where Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. In the Old Testament Zion refers to Jerusalem, the city of David. But in the Millennium, Zion has a connection to the future capital of Israel. This Jerusalem is a reference to grace. In the eternal state, Zion is the New Jerusalem; therefore Zion is a reference to Heaven. In grace GOD provided fallen man with a savior, the man JESUS CHRIST, so for those who choose to believe in Him their destination is Zion.