

The Bible tells us that Jesus, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross. So, while Jesus was suffering such pain and humiliation during those last hours of His life, He knew something would follow, to which He looked forward, even with joy. What was it? And, to what might we look forward, when we face suffering or death?

The Bible tells us! First though, Hebrews 12 reminds us of Mt. Sinai, where Moses and the children of Israel encountered the Lord, in a desert wasteland, some 3,400 years ago. There, they experienced smoke, lightening and thunder. The earth shook. A trumpet sounded louder and louder. No one could approach or touch the mountain, except for Moses, and even he was afraid, remarking “I exceedingly fear and quake.”

Yet, in contrast, Hebrews 12 describes our future meeting with the Lord, likened to Mt. Zion, in a totally different way. Instead of fear and shaking in God’s presence, we will rejoice. Far from a wasteland, we will meet the Lord in a beautiful city, the heavenly Jerusalem. Not as the descendents of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, but as the “church”, comprised of all New Testament believers, we will gather around the throne. There, we will not see a smoking mountain, but see both the Father and the Son, amidst a countless multitude of angels. Old Testament believers, “the spirits of just men made perfect” will be there, too.

And, there we will find the blood, which Jesus shed upon the cross as an atonement for our sins. Yes, Jesus’ blood, which is the basis for our redemption, cleansing and sanctification, will ever be in heaven as a witness to our salvation. And Jesus knew this upon the cross. It gave Him joy, even amidst His suffering.

As believers, when we think of death, we should not fear our future encounter with the Lord. Unlike the children of Israel who were fearful, having been warned not to come near, all believers will gladly gather before the Lord in the heavenly Jerusalem. Having been redeemed, cleansed and sanctified by the blood of Jesus, we will be welcomed into the very presence of our holy God. And that blood, which Jesus shed on the cross, is there too, bearing witness.

Forever, we will know that our presence in God’s kingdom is not because of what we have done for Him. It is because of what He has done for us.