

About 25 years ago, during a late summer rain storm, I was sitting in the cafeteria at General Motor's Institute. I was a Freshman and was eating with a group of my classmates. During the course of the conversation, someone said: "I dunno about this God thing. If He'd do things like in the Old Testament, maybe I'd be more confident."

Then someone else said, "Don't test God."

Just at that moment, there was a bright flash of lightning outside followed by a booming loud clap of thunder.

Everyone was silent for a bit, and then the first guy says, "Do that again."

In the Letter to the Hebrews, we hear how *"you have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and countless angels in festal gathering, and the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven, and God the judge of all, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled Blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel."*

And this is in opposition to *"that which could be touched and a blazing fire and gloomy darkness and storm and a trumpet blast and a voice speaking words such that those who heard begged that no message be further addressed to them."*

We're a few weeks away from Lent. And already we hear in the Gospel, that the twelve apostles *"went off and preached repentance."*

While we may be more enticed by the reports that they *"drove out many demons, and ... cured [the sick],"* I would hazard to say that the greater 'miracle' is repentance.

In our contemporary English usage, 'repent' comes across almost as a condemnation – or a judgement.

There are two words used in the Hebrew scriptures for 'repent.' One of them means 'to sigh.' Almost as if we've been holding our breath and finally let go and let God take over. And the other means "to turn," or "to return."

Are we holding our breath, waiting for God to do some party trick to prove himself to us? Let go. Breathe.

Are we pointed in a direction that we know we shouldn't be pointed towards? Turn back, return to God.

Let us turn back toward the holy mountain, to God's city, and standing with the angels and the saints, let us lift our minds, and hearts, and prayers to Jesus – who's blood has redeemed us; and through adoption in Christ, has made us heirs to the new covenant and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.