

Faith of the Patriarchs
Hebrews 11:13-16

13) These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14) For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15) And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16) But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

III. The writer mentions the faith of Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of the family (11:13-16)

A Let us see their faith in the imperfection of their present condition

1. Consider this
 - a. They had not received the things promised, but yet believed
 - b. They had not yet been put into possession of Canaan, but believed
 - c. They had not yet seen their numerous descendants, but believed
 - d. They had not seen Christ in the flesh, but believed

Note v13...

- i. KJV...

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth

- ii. NLT...

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth.

2. We today, like the patriarch of old are to believe the promises and look for them even though we may not completely embrace them before death.
3. Our hope in Christ is based on His eternal promises

Note Paul's words in 1st Corinthians 15:19...

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

4. We will with confidence that God will meet all our needs while we are here on earth, and we see promises being fulfilled as we base our hope and faith on God's Word, yet we understand that the ultimate fulfillment of promises will be in our eternal home in glory, so we too look for a city whose Builder and Maker is God.

B. Their actions demonstrated their faith, and even though they had not received the Promises

a. They saw them afar off.

i. Faith has a clear and strong eye that can see promised mercies at a great distance.

ii. Abraham saw Christ's day, when it was afar off, and rejoiced, according to Jesus

Note John 8:56...(By faith)

i. KJV...Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

ii. NLT...Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.

b. They were persuaded of them, that they were true and should be fulfilled.

i. Faith tells us that God is true

ii. Faith in God and His Word settles and satisfies our souls.

c. They embraced them.

i. Their faith was a faith of agreement and acceptance.

ii. Their faith had a long arm that laid hold of blessings that were at a far distance

iii. Their faith made the promises that were far off present

iv. Their faith persuaded them to love and rejoice in the promises that were beyond them, yet was theirs

d. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.

i. Their condition like our condition which is Strangers and pilgrims.

1) They were and we are strangers as saints whose home is heaven

2) They were and we are only traveling through this world towards home

ii. They acknowledgment their condition of being strangers and pilgrims looking for a home whose Builder and Maker is God

- 1) They were not ashamed of their condition, nor of their hope
- 2) They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims
- 3) They expected little from this world
- 4) They endeavored to lay aside every weight that would interfere with their race
- 5) They did not engage the world, but girded up the loins of their minds to guard their path while they longed for home.
- 6) They understood the importance of being separated from the world, for as Paul wrote in 1st Corinthians 15:33...evil communications corrupt good manners.

e. They declared plainly that they sought another country

Note: v14...For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

- i. Heaven not this world was their country, and ours
- ii. They did and we should walk and live as if we are aliens in a strange world, for our citizenship is from heaven above, so our language is different, our walk is different, our desires are different, our culture is different, so let us be careful to not become adjusted to this life and this world, but continue to be acknowledged as the people of God.

f. Their confession of looking for another country showed their faith

- i. They were not mindful of the country from whence they came

Note v15...

15) And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned

- 1) They had no desire to go back to their former home
- 2) They did not yearn for the plenty and pleasures of their previous life
- 3) They did not regret leaving their former land, and thus they had no desire to return to it, for they were citizens of another world.

Note: We as the Children of God can learn from Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, and Jacob. Once we

are called out of sin, we should have no desire to go back to the old way of life, for we have found a better way with a greater promise and hope than what we had before..

ii. They did not take the opportunity nor look for an opportunity to go back.

- 1) If they had looked for a chance to go back, they could have found one.
- 2) They had time and strength to return, but they looked for the promises of God and a city whose builder and maker was God.
- 3) Those who want to go back find that their old friends are glad to receive them, but once they go back, they ever find peace or satisfaction outside the plan of God.
- 4) Instead of going back, they endured the journey and stayed faithful to God Who had made the promise of a destiny that no one or nothing else could provide.
- 5) Understand that in our journey there will be difficulties, temptations, trials, and discouragements, but as long as we keep our face set like a flint toward heaven, we will continue in our sojourn until Christ calls us to our reward.
- 6) They looked for a better country

1st. The heavenly country is better than any country upon earth

- a) It is better situated
- b) It is better supplied with everything that is good
- c) It is better secured from everything that is evil
- d) The employments, the enjoyments, the society, and everything in the heavenly are better than the best this world has to offer.

2nd. All true believers desire this better country.

- a) True faith draws forth sincere and fervent desires for the things of God
- b) The stronger the faith the more fervent the desire for the things of God

g. These people in the faith of those promises

- i. They not only lived in faith, but died in the faith of the promises from God
- ii. They died being fully persuaded that all the promises would be fulfilled to them and theirs

Note v13...

i. Kjv...

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

ii. Nlt...

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth.

iii. Their faith held out to the end

- 1) By faith, when they were dying, they received the atonement
- 2) By faith they agreed with the will of God
- 3) By faith they quenched all the fiery darts of the devil
- 4) By faith they overcame the terrors of death, disarming it of its sting
- 5) By faith they bade a cheerful farewell to this world and its comforts for a better world given to them by promise which they accepted in faith

C. Now, let us look at the reward of their faith

Note these comments

i. A great reward is that God is not ashamed to be their God

ii. Another reward is that God has prepared for them a city

iii. Look at v16...

1) Kjv...

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city

2) Nlt...

But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

1. God is the God of all true believers, and our faith gives us an in God, and in all his fullness.
2. God is called their God, and God calls himself their God
 - a. God said to Moses in Exodus 3:6a...

...I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

- b. God allows us to call Him our God, for He has given us the Spirit of adoption where we are enabled to cry “Abba Father.” For He is our God as people of faith.

Note Romans 8:14-17

14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

3. Isn't it amazing that God is not ashamed to be called our God as He was called their God even though we are far less than perfect
 - a. Our perfection does not give us the privilege of calling Him our God
 - b. It is our faith in God above to perfect and sanctify us by the blood of Christ that enables us to call Him our God, and He is not ashamed to be identified as our God even though we have not in our flesh reached total perfection from our own point of view as well as the point of view others.
 - c. Men see our errors, our mistakes, our failures, but the Father sees our faith as He looks through the blood of Christ which covers our sins.

Note: Somebody ought to shout Hallelujah for God see you as righteous.

- d. Therefore, let us endeavor to live in such a way as to not bring shame upon our Lord, and if we suffer, let it not be because we deserve, but let our suffering be because we are the Children of God and great will be our reward as we remain faithful.
4. To prove that He is not ashamed to be their God, God prepared for them and us a city
 - a. Nothing in this world compares to the love God has for His people
 - b. Therefore, God gives us much better and much greater than what the world gives us
 - c. Furthermore, since God has made us His own, He will provide for us accordingly.

- d. Also, since God has taken the title of being our God, then God will fully respond, answer, and act upon the fact that He is our God
- f. As the people of God, adopted by God into His family to be His children living by His rules in accordance with His character and in relationship with Him, we can expect our God to make suitable provision for us here and in eternity.
- g. When you consider what the Lord hath done, what the Lord has for us, what the Lord is doing right now in our lives and family, our love and affections along with our desires for our Lord should be stirred and enflamed and excited for the things God has prepared for us when this life is over.