

“Faith’s Everyday Connection with Heaven”

Hebrews 11

October 20, 2024

INTRO ...Getting a Master’s Degree in Faith

...Commending people for the way faith shaped their lives

- **Abraham** - *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive..." (v.8) ... "By faith he went to live in the land of promise" (v.9) ... "For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." (v.10). ...*

NOTE: All These phrases describe something of a "FUTURE REALITY"—Not a Present One!

- **Moses** - *"²⁴ By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."*

NOTE: the "Present, Experiential Elements" of Moses Story: He forgoes present possession & present pleasure... and he Looks to a Future Reality!

...Clearly, Faith is making Hard Choices (that "DEFER" pleasure)

"Many people tend to think of the Christian life only in terms of a past definitive event. We talk about having been born again, or “deciding for Jesus,” as if that were the whole of the Christian life. But the idea of walking in faith shows that the Christian life is a pilgrimage with its destination not in this life, but only far off in the next." **Daniel Doriani**, Hebrews, Ref. Exp. Comm.

"Pilgrims & Pilgrimage" ...**Pilgrimage = Walking Toward a Destination!!** (Keep moving, don't stop, we're trying to GET Somewhere!)

HEAVEN!!!

...Heaven is NOT a *Footnote ...or a “Participation Ribbon”!!

v. 13-16 ...The Longing & Pursuit of HEAVEN!

"This verse might seem to express a tragedy. After all, Abraham and those with him spent their whole lives longing for things they were promised, longing to have a home of their own. They trusted God for this and believed the promises he gave them, yet they died without having received them. What a dismal story! ...One thing this tells us, however, is that Christianity is not a religion focused on the earth and this present life. The Scriptures make this point over and over again. Paul says, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2). Jesus taught, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matt. 6:19–20).

This directly confronts a view that is quite prevalent in our time: a packaged version of Christianity that offers mainly temporal benefits. It goes like this: “If you trust Jesus, you will do better at work, you will be a better husband or wife or parent, you will have less stress and lose weight.” Certainly, Christianity does give us spiritual resources that transform this present life—resources like righteousness, peace, and joy. ... The primary blessings Christianity offers do not lie in this life at all, but in the life to come, in the resurrection from the dead. Indeed, even our present blessings, abundant and

wonderful as they are, are located in heaven and are accessed by the exercise of faith." **Daniel Doriani**, Hebrews, Ref. Exp. Comm.

...The Vocabulary of this commended "living by faith" — **"not receiving promised things, BUT seeing them at a distance"** ... **"Strangers/Sojourners/Exiles"** ... **"pursuing a homeland"**

— "Living by Faith" NEEDS These Words to SING in my life!! ...These can't be "Dull, Dusty, Back-Shelf Words"!!

"Not Receiving Promised Things, But Seeing Them at a Distance"

Heb 11:39-40 "And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better..."

"They did not receive most of the promise (verse 13). Some, but not most. The lesson the writer wants us to get, right off the bat, is that the promises of God are not mainly for this world - some, but not mainly." **John Piper**, "The Hope of Exiles on the Earth"

Critical Clarifier—"Faith" Does Receive a Lot in This Life! ... There are Aspects to the Life of Faith that WILL be Manifest in This Life!

...Abraham lived a "favored & protected life" in this foreign land ...Abraham was blessed with a family heritage

...Sarah got pregnant and had a son!

...Moses' life was miraculously spared from the ("disease") hostility of his day!

...Moses/Israel was spared the earthly judgment that God visited on the Land of Egypt (the Passover)

...Moses/Israel experienced an earthly, miraculous rescue from dire circumstances at the Red Sea

...Israel experienced victories in the wars with the inhabitants of Canaan

...Rahab's earthly life was protected from harm

v. 32-35 ...Stories of Earthly-Experienced-Rewards and outcomes!

NOTE: The chapter doesn't skip a beat to then, immediately in v. 35ff, mention outcomes that included suffering, difficulties, hostilities, hardships, wanderings, etc.!

NOTE: What Sustained These Earthly People in Their Difficult Moments—Something BETTER Than THIS Life!!

What/Where is this "BETTER"?? ...HEAVEN!!!!

Again... Heb 11:13 "...not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar"

...What were they "Seeing from afar"?? ...**v. 16** **"...they desire a better country, that is a HEAVENLY one. ...He has prepared for them A CITY"**

"Strangers/Sojourners & Exiles" (v. 13 **"...having acknowledged that they were STRANGERS and EXILES on the earth"**)

...This is simply the "Mindset of the Pilgrim" ...He's Just Passing Through!

— He's NOT occupied with Local-Long-term Arrangements

— He's NOT a CITIZEN of Earth ... Php 3:17-20 ¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Heb 12:1 "... let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

...This is a Race/Pilgrimage that has a DESTINATION!! ...that destination is HEAVEN! ...so don't get slowed up or distracted by the stuff of earth!!

"So the point here is that the life of faith is the life of an exile, a sojourner, a refugee. The promises of God are our real home and we have seen them from afar and have greeted them and tasted them and they have made us restless and uneasy. They have begun to shape our whole way of seeing and thinking and feeling. They have colored all our values and goals and desires. We have been put out of sync with this world because our treasure is in heaven." **John Piper**, "The Hope of Exiles on the Earth"

"They are seeking a homeland" (v. 14)

v. 16 ... "They desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."

Heb 10:38, 11:6 ...have spoken to us about the **"pleasure of God"** in regards to the walk of faith. Here, the pleasure of God is once again revealed! **...It is a Pleasure that is connected with our Longing to be At Home, in Harmony, Fully Present, IN HIS PRESENCE!!**

"He says that the promises of God are like a great friend or lover coming to meet you. You see her in the distance and your heart leaps up and you greet her the best you can from a distance, and you say to others, "I am waiting for her to come. That is what I want. This time and this place are incomplete without her. I don't really belong here; I belong with her." Read verse 13 with me: "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth . . ."
John Piper, "The Hope of Exiles on the Earth"

Switchfoot ("Where I Belong")

... Feeling like a refugee, Like it don't belong to me, The colors flash across the sky
... This air feels strange to me, Feeling like a tragedy, Take a deep breath and close my eyes
... Storms on the wasteland, Dark clouds on the plains again, We were born into the fight
... But I'm not sentimental, This skin and bones is a rental, And no one makes it out alive
... Until I die, I'll sing these songs, On the shores of Babylon, Still looking for a home, In a world where I belong
...And when I reach the other side, I want to look you in the eye, And know that I've arrived, In a world where I belong