

# Seeking a Homeland

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*Hebrews 11:13-16*

## **INTRODUCTION**

- A. Illustration about Rothschild's house being unfinished, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #14984.
- B. It is true that our home is in heaven, not on this earth.
  - 1. "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20).
  - 2. Although our citizenship is in heaven, it's difficult—as we go through this life—not to be tangled up in the things of this world.
    - a. We save money for our retirement and the kids' education, which we must do, but we forget that all our possession will one day be burned up.
    - b. We have the plastic surgery, lose the weight, buy the best clothes to present ourselves as attractively as possible, but we forget that our bodies are dust and shall return to dust.
    - c. We work hard at work to get that promotion, but we forget that power is temporary and must pass.
  - 3. Because we forget, in the normal course of events, that our citizenship is in heaven, we must be reminded.
    - a. We need a real life example of one who remembered that his citizenship was in heaven—we have that example in the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah (vv. 9-11).
    - b. This morning, we want to examine how these Patriarchs were "Seeking a Homeland."

## **THE PATRIARCHS WERE MEN WITHOUT A HOMELAND, v. 13**

- A. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah died in faith, not having received the promises.
  - 1. The Patriarchs were men who lived in faith.
    - a. They died the same way, with faith, trusting God and obeying him.
    - b. What a way for us to die! Still trusting God and still obeying God.
  - 2. The Patriarchs had not received the promise.
    - a. The question arises, "What is the promise of which the author speaks?"
    - b. If we keep this verse in context, the promise seems to be the promise to give the descendants the land of Canaan.
      - 1) The author of Hebrews speaks of the Patriarchs having been strangers and pilgrims, and they were strangers and pilgrims in the land of Canaan.
      - 2) "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:8).
- B. The Patriarchs saw the promises afar off, were assured of them, and embraced them.
  - 1. Through faith, the Patriarchs knew that these promises were sure and would come to pass.
  - 2. How? They never owned a piece of land in Canaan; they were simply aliens in that country.
    - a. They knew that this promise would come to pass, because God is faithful.
    - b. God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2).
  - 3. We can rest assured that we shall spend eternity in heaven, even though we don't see heaven with our eyes.
    - a. We have "hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began (Tit. 1:2).

- b. God will not go back on his word. He promised heaven for his faithful children, and heaven he will deliver for his faithful children.
- 4. Illustration about George Jelinek's being elected to the Kansas House of Representatives, Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations, #4601.
- C. The Patriarchs confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
  - 1. These two terms graphically depict exactly how the Patriarchs considered themselves.
    - a. The first term refers to a stranger and a foreigner.
    - b. The second term refers to a person who was staying in one place temporarily and who had his permanent home somewhere else.
  - 2. Not only were the Patriarchs strangers and pilgrims, they confessed that they were.
    - a. Abraham said to the Hittites, "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you" (Gen. 23:4).
    - b. We are all strangers and pilgrims on this earth, but we need to confess it, need to know it.
  - 3. Since we are strangers and pilgrims on this earth, we need to live as strangers and pilgrims.
    - a. "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 4:11).
    - b. Illustration about the American tourist visiting the rabbi Hofetz Chaim, Illustrations Unlimited, p. 173, #6.
    - c. Are you living as a pilgrim and stranger on He each?

## **THE PATRIARCHS WERE MEN WITH A HOMELAND, vv. 14-16**

- A. Those who confess that they are strangers and pilgrims seek a homeland v. 14.
  - 1. All men desire a home, all men desire permanence, all men desire a place to hang their hat at the end of the day.
  - 2. The Patriarchs were seeking a homeland, they were seeking permanence, they didn't want to be in one place one week and another place the next week.
- B. Had the Patriarchs called to mind the country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return, v. 15.
  - 1. The Patriarchs could have gone back to Mesopotamia had they so chosen.
    - a. Humanly speaking, the Patriarchs had every reason to go back to Mesopotamia.
    - b. Excavation have been done at Ur of the Chaldeans, the city of Abraham's birth.
      - 1) This city possessed an elaborate system of writing, advanced means of mathematical calculations, religious records, refined specimens of art, a school system, and much else that modern man equates with civilization and refinement.
      - 2) Abraham did not have to dwell in tents in barren fields; he could have lived in a cosmopolitan city.
  - 2. Juxtapose the behavior of the Patriarchs with that of their descendants.
    - a. The children of Israel desired to go back to Egypt—"Why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink" (Num. 20:5).
    - b. They lost sight of why they were there and what they were doing.
  - 3. Too many Christians go back into the world.
    - a. They are like Demas who forsook Paul "having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10).
    - b. They become Christians, but their former lifestyle pulls them back into its deceptive web.
- C. Why would the Patriarchs not go back to Mesopotamia when they could have had it so good? They desired a better, a heavenly, country, v. 16.
  - 1. They knew that if they lived as strangers and pilgrims that heaven would be their reward, and a heavenly reward would far outweigh any temporal delights they could have enjoyed.
  - 2. That heavenly country really is better than this earth upon which we live.

- a. Every pain that could ever be endured in this life will be obliterated in the next (Rev. 21:4).
  - b. Illustration about the elder son of the Duke of Hamilton being promoted to king, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #2379.
- D. God is not ashamed to be called their God, v. 16.
- 1. God is not ashamed to be called their Gods for they persevered as he desires all men to do.
    - a. Had the Patriarchs gone back to Mesopotamia, no doubt God would have been ashamed to have been called their God.
    - b. “The just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10:38).
  - 2. Throughout the Old Testament, God names himself as the “God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.”
  - 3. Have you drawn back? Is God ashamed to be called your God?
- E. God has prepared a city for them, v. 16.
- 1. Notice the tense of this verb; it’s past tense; God had already prepared this city for the Patriarchs.
    - a. In fact, this city was prepared since the foundation of the world (Mt. 25:34).
    - b. Everything is ready for us in heaven; it’s not as though we’re going to get there and have to wait around until everything is finished. God is ready and waiting for us.
  - 2. God had the Patriarchs in mind as he prepared this city.
    - a. Notice that the text says that “He has prepared a city for them.”
    - b. God had us in mind as he prepared heaven—“I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn. 14:2).
  - 3. God has prepared fabulous things for his children.
    - a. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).
    - b. Because God prepared heaven, heaven is far more wonderful than we can even imagine.
  - 4. Because God has prepared this city, everything will be perfect.
    - a. We don’t have to worry about the foundations crumbling, the electricity not working, etc.
    - b. God does everything right, and heaven will be a perfect abode for the soul.

## CONCLUSION

- A. The Patriarchs knew that they did not belong on this earth and that shaped their lives. Has that fact shaped your life accordingly?
- B. The Patriarchs knew they had a home in heaven.
  - 1. Do you know that you have a home in heaven?
  - 2. Have you done what it requires to have a heavenly home?
  - 3. Do you need to come to Jesus as we stand and sing?