

Hebrews

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[0 : 0 0] We're dealing with the issues of Abraham and Sarah, and they are presented as one of the premier examples of faith that is exercised toward God.

And all of these things, like Paul said when he wrote to the Romans, that whatsoever things were written aforetime, and this would be one of them, was written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Romans 15.4, one of my favorite verses. And it is against situations like this, this kind of backdrop, that God has given us historical examples that are designed to set forth the idea God has a reliable track record.

He can be trusted. He is worthy of placing your faith and confidence in Him. And we have this whole string of examples in the Old Testament where believers did just that.

And the principle is, God honors those who honor Him. We've got this example with Abraham and Sarah, and Abraham having been called to go to a land that he did not know, had no idea where God was leading him.

[1 : 1 8] But that was God's responsibility, and his responsibility was just to follow. And once again, as we go through the text here, as we deal with Old Testament issues, especially with Genesis, I am continually struck by the reality that for reasons that God has reserved to Himself, He is pleased to utilize and involve human and angelic instrumentality.

And I cannot call this anything other than a divine condescension on God's part. It is God stooping to involve the likes of humans and angels to accomplish His will.

And when you realize that, and even in the Scriptures, we've got, what, 40 plus authors, not authors, excuse me, 40 plus writers, one author, but 40 plus writers that God utilized in the compiling of the Bible.

And when you consider that God could have just taken this book, this content, bound however He wanted to bind it, and just drop it out of heaven to humanity.

He said, here it is, make some copies of it. Or He could have even produced the copies. But no, He uses human instrumentality, 40 plus, over 1,500 years, to give us this document, the Bible.

[2 : 5 4] And He is pleased to do that. And in doing so, the Bible has a human dimension to it, in addition to divine authority.

And we find that all throughout Scripture. And when it comes to utilizing individuals, it does the same thing. God is using flawed human beings to accomplish His will.

And here we've got an example with Abraham and Sarah. So let's just jump in with the last verse on page 11D. And it is taken from the example with Sarah and Abraham.

And through faith, also, Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed. And then let's go to our new sheet, here with 11E.

And was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

- [3 : 59] The question is, did she always do that? Nope. Remember on one occasion, when the Lord appeared to her, the angel appeared to her and announced that she was going to have a child, and told Abraham that, and she was in the tent, and she laughed.
- And she thought it was just so much baloney. She couldn't believe it. She didn't believe it. But here's an example that Sarah, along with Abraham, both of them had a faith that was immature, faith that was misplaced, faith that was inadequate, and yet, they grew in faith and in confidence.
- And that's the way this thing called faith works. None of us has a perfect faith. But God will accept the faith we have.
- And our faith is intended to grow and mature and develop. And that simply means we come to a place where we are able and willing to trust God, His wisdom, His power, etc., more and more.
- And as we begin, our faith is usually flagging. We have just enough faith to believe in Christ as our Savior and that's about it. But then we start growing. And the Bible calls this growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- [5 : 21] And we are moving through this thing called maturity. We are developing and learning more and more to trust the Lord. And she, Sarah, was delivered of a child when she was past age.
- Remember, Sarah's 90. Abraham is 100. These people just don't have babies. They do not conceive children at that age.
- And by the way, God could have very easily allowed them to have this child, Isaac, when they were of a normal childbearing age.
- But He didn't. He waited until Abram is 100 and she is 90. Why do you suppose God did that? Think about it.
- Why do you suppose God did that? It wouldn't be a miracle if it was. Precisely. Precisely. He waited until the human element and the human ability was completely removed.
- [6 : 27] so that there could be no doubt for Abraham and Sarah or anyone else that this was a God thing. It was not a human thing.
- That there was a divine provision here where this pregnancy and birth of a child could be realized and there is no way in the world that you can say, well, Viagra, you know, Cialis, none of that stuff.
- This is a God thing and God waited and waited and waited until there was no possibility of their reaching any other conclusion. It had to be a God thing.
- And what does that do? That simply builds their confidence and their trust more and more. God, more than anything else, God wants to be believed.
- He wants to be trusted. And that begins, of course, with our salvation and these examples that are given all throughout the Old Testament. In fact, this whole chapter referred to as the Hall of Faith, this whole chapter is simply designed to reveal the fact that God has proved himself faithful, capable, able to scores of people over the years.
- [7 : 55] And these are listed here as an example. And Abraham and Sarah are just one of them. She judged him faithful who had promise. Therefore, verse 12, sprang there even of one and him as good as dead.
- That's speaking, of course, of Abraham. And the text goes on to say, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude.
- I'm just reading from the bold print here in the King James. And as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. Remember, God told Abraham and said, look earlier, told him, look at the heavens.

See the stars up there? Can you count them? Well, I remember reading an article one time where a fellow by the name of Ptolemy counted the stars and said that there were 1,043.

Well, I think he missed a few. But anyway, the stars are innumerable as is the sand of the sea. Innumerable. And when God told Abraham to just look up there and see the stars or the sand of the seashore, so shall your seed be.

[9 : 08] Now, this, of course, is a precise case of figurative language and it is intended hyperbole. I don't know if you have any idea how many grains of sand there are on the beaches of the world, but I suspect that they would number in the, well, who knows, well beyond the quadrillions, quintillions, septillions, and all the rest of it because a grain of sand isn't very big.

But he was simply telling Abraham that your seed is going to be innumerable. And that is precisely what it has been in the millions of Jewish people that have descended from Abraham and from Sarah.

These all died in faith. Verse 13. Not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed, agreed, admitted, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

And aren't we all? Songwriter said, this world is not my home. I'm just a traveling through. There is laid up for me treasures beyond the blue.

So we are citizens, Paul reminds us in Philippians, that our citizenship, that is, our place of permanent residence, is in heaven, from whence we also look for our Lord Jesus Christ.

[10 : 44] So this earth is something that you don't want to be tethered to too much, because heaven is our eternal home, and that's where we're going to be, and we are going to be with him, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

So, these did not realize that. In fact, we haven't realized it either. But the time is coming when we will, and all of this is designed to build your confidence and trust for that which has not yet been realized.

That's the important thing to keep in mind about both faith and hope. They both have a future aspect to them. You do not hope for anything that's already been realized, and you do not need to exercise faith in something that has already become a reality.

That's why, as we mentioned earlier, of the three, faith, hope, and love, faith, and hope, are both going to be put out of business, because they will have all been realized in finality, and nobody in heaven is going to be hoping for anything, or exercising faith in anything, because it will have been an accomplished fact.

So, that's the burden of this passage here in Hebrews. Continuing on, verse 13, these all died in faith and believing, 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.

[12 : 18] For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. and of course, this talking about heaven itself, and Taylor, the last one on that verse, on that verse at the bottom, says they were looking forward to their real home in heaven.

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

But now, they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly. Therefore, or wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God.

For, he has prepared for them a city. And this, of course, is a heavenly city. And continuing on, verse 17, By faith, and every time you see that word, those two words, by faith, I would suggest that you think in terms of translating those or thinking of them in terms, because he believed God.

That's the expression of by faith, on the basis of faith, because he believed God on the basis of his believing God. Joe? I want to stop there a minute about the heavenly city.

[13 : 49] Okay. And I'm confused about this. In John, I think it's 14, he tells, I think he's talking to the disciples that there will be mansions, you know, and this verse is used a lot of funerals.

But the reason I'm confused is, at that point, the church is not there yet. We don't have the church, as we know it. That didn't come until Acts.

But this is in John, so he's just talking to Jews, the apostles. Right. So, how does this tie in, or how do we justify, I mean, Christians use this verse all the time at funerals.

Right. Right. Does that apply to us as the church, that John stuff about, you know, houses or rooms in this city?

Yeah. Well, I think there are two different aspects to this. One is earthly, and one is heavenly. when the Lord Jesus said, in my father's house, there are many mansions.

[14 : 56] I go to prepare a place for you, et cetera, et cetera. Well, the question is, in that context, there in John 14, what is the father's house?

Now, there is a tendency, as Joe has indicated, and it's easily understood why it is confusing, there is a tendency to think that Jesus is in heaven, and there he is building mansions.

He's constructing these mansions, and when you get there, yours is going to be assigned to you. This is a huge building project. Well, I don't think that that's exactly what the Lord had in mind at all.

and when you talk about my father's house, that has to be interpreted, I think, on the basis of other expressions similar that Christ was referring to, and when you do that, you come to an earthly house, an earthly tabernacle, temple, and I think that this is exactly what the Lord had in mind.

When he said, as he chased the money changers and those that sold doves, etc., out of the temple on at least two different occasions, what did he say?

[16 : 26] He said, my father's house is to be a house of prayer. You have made it a den of thieves.

What was he talking about? He was talking about the temple, the Jewish temple there in Jerusalem that he cleansed and chased these people out of.

He referred to that as his father's house. So, I think you need to keep that in mind when you see that expression there in John 14. Jesus said, in my father's house, there are many mansions, and that's probably not the best translation.

It means in my father's house, there are many dwelling places. Well, what are these? What are these dwelling places? These dwelling places were nothing more than a series of, I guess, what we would call apartments or condos in the temple area that was designed to house the priests who worked there in the temple.

And when Jesus talked to the twelve, he reminded them that you who have followed me in the regeneration when the son of man comes into his kingdom, you also will sit upon the twelve thrones of Israel, judging the twelve tribes.

[17 : 50] Where is that going to be? It's going to be here on earth. This is millennial. And this is in fulfillment of what Exodus 19 and verse 6 refers to when God tells Moses that Israel is going to be a nation of priests.

That priesthood is going to extend to all of Israel, and the Gentiles will be the beneficiaries of that. So this is talking about an earthly, millennial kind of kingdom when Christ establishes that.

And that I think comes into play in John 14 also. John 14 though, it also goes on to say that I will come for you.

And I think that's where we Christians use this all the time, get the idea of this is the rapture. They're thinking this is the rapture. I will come for you. Right. Yeah, I don't think it is the rapture.

You can't be if what you're saying is right. Yeah, well, and I trust it is. I don't have any infallible interpretations, but you have to use scripture to interpret scripture.

[19 : 11] I've often said that the Bible is its own best interpreter, and it's its only reliable interpreter. So, the key to understanding, I think, almost any passage of scripture is to utilize other passages that are in reference to the same thing and pull them together and allow them to speak with one voice.

And that's called comparing scripture with scripture. And that's, of course, the most beneficial way of studying the Bible. That's what we ought to engage in constantly. Roger? I think probably so, yeah.

It ties in with the Revelation 20 and John said, I beheld the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, adorned for her bride and so on for his bride.

And this is all part of the same package. Dan? So, if I understand you correctly, this does not necessarily mean eternity. In John, I've prepared a place.

I do a prepared place for you. I'm actually a man. Yeah. And this is, I think this is millennial. I think it's millennial. And if you look at Ezekiel chapter 40, through the end of the book, through the end of the book, you find virtually nothing there but the dimensions, the outline, the blueprint that is given for the millennial kingdom that's going to be established, and this is for the kingdom age, and it is set forth there in great detail.

[20 : 54] In fact, I think some 20 chapters are devoted to that, and that's going to be the millennial temple, and it will endure, of course, for a thousand years, and at the end of that, then Satan is loose from the bottomless pit, according to Revelation 20, and those who join with him are dealt with summarily, and then the end of the millennium has come, and the thousand years are fulfilled, and then the eternal state begins, which is yet another issue.

So, these are all, these are all very interesting issues that we're dealing with, and there are various different interpretations of them, but I keep coming back to this, that we need to, as best we can, allow the scriptures to interpret itself, and when you do that, that will give you a more sound interpretation than anything else.

Other comments or questions? Yeah, Dan? I'm not so sure I'm clear on that, Mark. In other words, when you say I go through a place, a mansion has many rooms.

Okay, he said this before he was going to be crucified the night before. Right. So, he says that, and now you said it's a millennial, it's not applicable to eternity, or, because I think, the reason I ask, most videos, you know, you know how that's imperative.

And so, if I understand you, that's not necessarily the case, according to what I understand you saying. Well, I think that is true. I do not know, I do not know exactly at all.

[22 : 42] I've got far more questions about heaven than I have answers. And, I do know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

and in what context that is going to be, and how we are going to be present with the Lord. This involves the issue of our glorified body, and when we receive it, which is not altogether clear, we do know that this corruptible body is going to put on incorruption, this mortal body is going to put on immortality, and exactly when we receive that glorified body, I do not know.

There's a lot of division regarding that. Some are of the opinion that when we die, we receive a glorified body.

This is based on 2 Corinthians chapter 5 that talks about this earthly house is being, it's literally the word that is used there in the Greek conveys the idea that this earthly tabernacle is falling apart, which is probably a pretty good description, because as the aging process sets in, sometimes you just feel like you're falling apart.

This body is being dissembled. And then Paul goes on to say, we have a building of God not made with hands reserved in the heavens for us. So, this corruptible body that goes to the grave, or that's buried at sea, or is cremated, or whatever it is, physically it comes to an end.

[24 : 44] Do we then receive this new body in heaven, this glorified body, and this presents the two-body theory, and some hold to that, and I don't know that it has that much merit, but, or some say that we're going to get a temporary resurrection or physical body, but that just doesn't seem to square with me.

I'm not comfortable with that. Don? Mark, it's fair to say that we have, as you pointed out, the kingdom period, and the mystery period, which is all through the Bible, but there's something else beyond that we do not know yet.

We will learn more. Well, this actually is the mystery period. We are in the mystery. But when we die and go on, as the through the stone I read says, I now know more than your wives of men, that means there's something beyond that we will learn more.

Well, it just, you know, about all we can do is speculate about a lot of these things.

A great deal has been written and a great deal has been said about heaven, but sometimes you're hard pressed for really concrete answers. And the one thing, the one thing that impresses me, more about heaven and the eternal state than anything else, has nothing to do with mansions and streets of gold and all the rest of it.

[26 : 17] It is that we shall be caught up to be with the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

That, more than anything else, is what is going to make heaven, heaven. It's the very presence of Christ. That's going to be the ultimate payoff.

And no one's going to be disappointed. And there's going to be a lot of surprises, but no disappointments. Bob? In your comments there, and I've heard other people talk about the minute details of heaven.

It's like, faith just covers all those minute details. Just have faith. It's going to be the best you've ever experienced. Yeah, that's true. And think of it this way, guys.

I appreciate that, Bob. Think of it this way. whatever heaven is going to be, it's going to be as good and as wonderful as God can make it.

[27 : 33] How good is that? Everything is going to have a perfect appropriateness to it.

everything is going to be absolutely as it ought to be because God has his own sense of oughtness, of appropriateness, and that is what he is going to make it so that there will be nothing missing and nothing lacking and no disappointment.

It is going to be the grand finale of God's ability to make this eternal state everything that it ought to be.

And it will be in accordance with the standards of one who is perfect. So, no disappointments, no criticisms, and no what shall I say, no dissatisfaction of any kind.

Joe? You mentioned our bodies being corruptible now, you know. Of course, the Bible also uses the phrase tent for our bodies saying. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Not a mansion, just a tent.

[28 : 53] Absolutely. Yeah. And that's designed and intended to speak of the temporary nature. A tent is something that you put up and then you strike it and you take it down and you move it someplace else.

So, we are tent dwellers. We are just living here on this present globe in a very temporal kind of situation in a very temporal kind of body to be sure.

Other thoughts or comments? Anyone? Yes, Dana? I agree. We can't imagine what heaven will be like. And so, I don't even try to begin.

It's going to be wrong. Yeah, you're right. Likewise, I think my idea of God is going to be totally wrong. You know, it's easy to go to the Michelangelo painting and you know, let's look at it.

But it's going to be nothing, I believe it's going to be nothing like I can comprehend it. Yeah. Other than it'll be good. Yeah, it'll be beyond our wildest imagination.

[29 : 59] And all I can really worry, instead of worrying about that, all I can do is worry about myself here and now. Am I doing the best that I can do?

Yeah, absolutely. Good. Good. Scott? It doesn't call to describe us as ambassadors and our message is reconciliation. Right.

Absolutely. Absolutely. As an ambassador, you can be called home at any time. Yep. Yep, good point.

Good point. Other thoughts anyone? Anyone? Okay, well, let's just continue until the food gets here. By faith, verse 17, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.

And he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. son. And that's something that really tested Abraham in the ultimate way.

[31 : 07] Because all through his life, from the time he left Ur of the Chaldees, his faith and confidence in the Lord was growing and maturing and developing until it got to this place where the ultimate was demanded of him.

And the question is, has Abraham developed and matured enough in his faith to be obedient to God even in a severe test and requirement like this?

And the answer is yes. Yes. all because God had demonstrated to Abraham time and again that he could be trusted.

Now, when he is telling him, you need to offer Isaac up as a sacrifice, Abraham tells his wife, the lad and I are going yonder to worship and we will return.

return. He knew that he was taking Isaac there to offer him as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. He told his wife, we will return.

[32 : 25] Well, now, how is that going to work? If he gets there and slays his son, how are they, plural pronoun, how are they going to return?

Abraham's reasoning is, I don't have any idea. That's God's problem. All I know is, God has given me the promise regarding this son, and if he wants him slain, he will be slain, and God can raise him from the dead.

That's what it takes. Now, that, that is an incredible demonstration of faith on the part of Abraham. But he didn't get there overnight.

His faith was through the years growing and maturing and developing until it came to the place where this ultimate test would be given him, and Abraham is going to pass it in flying colors.

And all that does, all that does, guys, is convince us, at least me, should convince all of us, generations later, that this same God who came through for Abraham under these circumstances is the God who is still in charge, and he is worthy of your trust.

[33 : 41] He's worthy of your faith. God has proved himself over and over again. What does it take? What does it take to convince people that God is reliable?

God is trustworthy? And that's more than anything else what he wants to be believed. And all of these examples are given that we might benefit from them so that our faith will grow and develop and mature.

That's why these things are recorded here. Whatsoever things were written before time were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

And that word is might have confidence. Confidence. Confidence and trust in what? In the future? No. In the God of the future. In the God who has demonstrated his faithfulness all throughout scripture.

Morning by morning, new mercies I see. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me. Amazing. Absolutely amazing. What more can he say than to you he hath said, than to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled.

[34 : 53] Man, oh man. God is worthy of being believed. He that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed, your offspring, be called.

Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead. And here Abraham is ready to slice his son's throat with his knife, this sacrificial knife, just like they always slew the animals.

And he's ready to do God's bidding. And God sent an angel and said, don't harm the lad. And he looked in the thicket there, and there caught in the thicket was a ram with his horns entangled in the thicket, just kind of held captive there.

And that was the substitute that Abraham was going to sacrifice in the place of his son. And that's a perfect illustration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And how that ram was the substitute for Isaac. It's a beautiful, beautiful picture. Okay, anything else before we conclude this?

[36 : 21] Guys, I appreciate your input. it. And we've dealt with some issues that, once again, have more questions engendered than they do answers.

But the main thing that this whole passage and this whole chapter is teaching is simply this. God can be trusted. You're in good hands. Relax.

And you're in good hands, and I'm not talking about all state. I'm talking about the one whose good hands really matters.