

Hebrews

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[0 : 00] On the last sheet I gave you, which would be 11C and 11B, we just had a verse or so at the bottom. And it had to do with Sarah, who at an advanced age of 90, is going to find herself pregnant.

What do you think about that? 90-year-old woman, pregnant. Well, that, to be sure, is an exception. But the God of the Bible is a God of exceptions.

And I am satisfied, and I suspect that it would not be difficult for you to believe either, that the principal reason that God allowed this promise to go unfulfilled for so long, because it was many, many years earlier when he gave the promise to Abraham that of his seed, all nations of the earth should be blessed.

But he didn't have any seed. He didn't have even one child at all. And that went on for years and years and years. And Abraham rightfully is wondering, well, what is this?

I'm growing older and older all the time, and so is Sarah. And both of us are over the hill when it comes to childbearing. And it is precisely for this reason, I think, that God waited so long, is so that there could be absolutely no doubt that when it happened, it would be a God thing.

[1 : 36] And that would be the only thing that could possibly explain it. Because medical science as it exists today, and as it existed then in a very primitive state, could not begin to account for this absolute miracle.

It was just something that God did. And what it served to do, I'm sure, was to reinforce in the mind of Abraham that God is worthy of being trusted.

And he will provide and come through for all he has promised. Now, there's an important distinction that needs to be made here. And that is this.

And there are a number of Christians who naively misunderstand this principle. God has not promised to fulfill your desires, your dreams, your passion.

He has not promised to provide whatever you ask. He has promised to provide whatever he has promised.

[2 : 47] He will come through on what he has promised. He will make good on his word. And he will answer in accordance with his word. That doesn't at all mean that we're just kind of left out in the cold and it doesn't make any difference what we want or what we pray for.

It just means this. It means that God is, by his integrity, he is committed to fulfill all that he has promised.

Not all that we ask of him, but all that he has promised. Because in the first place, as Paul mentioned when he writes to the Romans in chapter 8, for we know not what to pray for as we ought.

And that's a very straightforward statement. And it simply indicates that because we don't understand all of the ramifications of what it is that's happening in our life, it is just as easy for us to pray amiss and in error as it is for us to pray accurately.

Because we are so limited in our knowledge and understanding, our intelligence is so lacking, that a lot of times we can really be thankful that we didn't get what we were praying for.

[4 : 07] Because it isn't always something that would be to our blessing and benefit. But we never know it at the time. And sometimes we can charge God foolishly for what we might think being derelict in his duty.

And where are you when I need you? And why haven't you come through for me? And why haven't you done this? And why haven't you... And that's just charging God foolishly. So what I think we need to do is, from this chapter 11, is use that as a backdrop, as illustrations that God has given through history, that he is eminently worthy and capable of being trusted.

And when we pray, be thankful that God sits and sorts our prayers, and he answers in accordance with his love and compassion and with our best interests.

And sometimes, sometimes that may be a little difficult to believe. Again, because of our limitations. But God does all things well, and he is only kindly disposed towards you.

So let's keep that in mind. And here in verse 11, this last verse on our page in 1097 here, Through faith, also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed.

[5 : 25] And of course the implication is, that she was well past that time, but it was on the basis of simply believing God. And each of these examples that is given here in Hebrews chapter 11, commonly referred to as the hall of faith, almost all of them begin, by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith, so and so did this, so and so did this, by faith.

And I've urged you to keep in mind, that the meaning of those two words, really spelled out, simply is this, because, he believed, what God said, he did thus and so.

By faith, because he believed what God said, Abraham left the land of Ur of the Chaldees, to a land that God would show him.

And Noah, because he believed what God said, he built an ark. And that's the only reason he built it. Because God told him, and he said, alright, seems like a stretch to me.

I just can't imagine all the implications of this thing. But God, I'm going to trust you, and build this ark. And God gave him the specific dimensions, and everything.

[6 : 36] And he and his sons, and we don't know who else, contributed to that, but they built this ark, and you all know the rest of the story. So, the verse, continuing on this new page, that we've given you, and this is 11E, at the top.

Does everybody have that? Yeah. For the benefit of our test, you may explain, James, and how the state works. Oh, okay. Well, I trust you all have the 11E, do you, at the top here?

Okay. Well, all you need to know really is, this text is taken from what is commonly called, the 26th Translation New Testament. And what you see, at the beginning of each verse, is in bold print.

And the bold print, is simply the lead version, which in this case, just happens to be the King James Version. And then, the other translations that follow, like for instance, in this first verse here, and was delivered of a child, when she was past age.

You see then it says, even when she was past age, and the ALF, that's just an abbreviation for, Alford's translation, it's just one of the 26, it was called upon.

[7 : 48] And that, when past the normal age, and that's B-E-R, that's just an abbreviation, for the Berkeley Translation, and then Rhames, the Translation, and Weymouth, and 20th Century New Testament, and so on.

So, each of these, inject something that, sometimes just changes a word or two, and whereas one translation, isn't all that explanatory, or doesn't grab you, another translation, and another word they use, it's kind of like a bingo, you know, and the light comes on, and it conveys meaning, that the others do not.

So, that's why we're using this, 11th translation, or 26th translation. And by the way, I just might insert this too. When we finish Hebrews, which won't be too long, because we're in chapter 11 now, and there are only 13 chapters in it.

When we finish Hebrews, we're going to look at prophetic implications, that are found in the book of Daniel, and that is just amazing, amazing material, there in the book of Daniel.

And I think that when we do that, I will dispense with a 26th translation, and just invite each of you, to bring your own personal Bible, or whatever translation that is. Because in the first place, I don't have a 26th translation, of the Old Testament, except for just one volume.

[9 : 05] And it's in the Psalms, and Proverbs, and so on. So, everybody will be using their own Bible then, when we come to that. So, let's continue on. Sarah here, is delivered of a child, when she was past age, because, she, judged him, faithful, that is God, reliable, who had promised.

And, you'll recall that, the way this, scenario, came about, in the first place, was when God, told Abram, that he was going, to be the father, of a great nation.

And he had no children, at all. And it was kind of like a joke, because the name, Abram, the name Abram, in Hebrew, means, father of many.

So, you can imagine, the embarrassment, when Abram, went to a strange country, and people, asking him his name, he says, my name is Abram. Oh, really? How many children, do you have?

Well, actually, I don't have any. And your name, is father of many? What a joke. You don't have any kids, at all? And then later, God changed his name, to Abraham.

[10:17] And that means, father of nations. Well, that's even worse. But, that was his name. And, God gave him those names. And, and when he told him, that you were going to be, the father of many, he, probably, expected, Sarai, which was her original name, and her name is going to be changed, later, to Sarah.

He probably thought, God said, I'm going to be, the father of many. Wow. That probably means, that Sarah's pregnant, right now. We're going to have a baby, before long.

Wow. Bun in the oven. And, lo and behold, it didn't happen. And, you know, month, after month, after month, when, when, Sarah's, menstrual cycle, began, they knew, all over again, it wasn't going to be, a baby this month.

That went on for years. And, Abraham and Sarah, are both wondering, what's going on here? God promised. Where's this baby? And then, can you imagine, can you imagine, try to, I know this is, a real stretch.

None of us can do this. But, just try to think, a little bit. And, put yourself, in Sarai's situation. She, she is, the depository, of this seed.

[11:44] You know? And, she's not producing. And, can you imagine, the hurt, and the heartache, that she sees, on her husband's face, each month, that goes by, and there's no pregnancy?

And, most women, under these circumstances, would feel like, some kind of a failure. like they've let their man down, you know, or something. And, she could see the disappointment, in Abram's, countenance, and everything.

And, she probably feels terrible, about that. And, one day, it appears, that she just got overwhelmed, with the whole situation. And, there was a code, that existed then, a social code, that, was prevalent, in the community, where they lived there, in, in the area of Hebron, southern Israel.

And, and that was this. And, it was founded, by the way, in the code of Hammurabi, which was kind of contemporary, with Abraham. And, the code, simply, specified this, that, when, a man, was married to a wife, for seven years, and she, bore no seed, it was perfectly, legal, and culturally, acceptable, for him, to acquire, the services, of a handmaiden, and produce, seed by her, and this handmaiden, would be in the status, of a servant, or a slave, and then the child, of that union, becomes the official, child and heir, of the wife, of the husband, not the handmaiden.

So, Sarai, having been able, to absorb, all the disappointment, that she could, for as many years, as she could, said, you know, and here's, here's a neat little piece, of rationalizing, and guys, let this be a lesson, to us all, that you can justify, and rationalize, just about anything, you want to, and Sarai, comes to this conclusion, she says to Abram, you know what, God promised, that you, were going to be, the father, of many, that doesn't, necessarily, involve me, the promise, was to you, so, if you, take, Hagar, my, bond servant, you, impregnate her, you're the father, you're the one, to whom the promise, was given, and the child, that is born, of Hagar, will not be Hagar's, it'll be ours, and I can imagine,

[14:33] I would like to think, that Abram, balked at the idea, you know, nah, I'm not going to do that, because listen guys, there is no, artificial insemination here, the only way, they could do this, is the old fashioned way, and that's, through a sexual relationship, and we are not told, how many attempts, there were, but we do know, that Abram, went in, to Sarai, at, the insistence, of his wife, Sarai, he went into Hagar, and Sarai, did so, with her blessing, and her approval, although I'm sure, there had to be, some tinge of, you know, resentment, jealousy, or whatever, on the part of the real wife, but nonetheless, she probably, thought of herself, as making this, great sacrifice, for her husband's sake, and you know, the result, was Ishmael, and Ishmael, became, of course, the father, of the Arab nations, and Ishmael, and Isaac, who would be, the child, of Abraham, and Sarah, have been at it, ever since, and they're still, at it today,

I remember seeing, one of the most, fascinating photos, I can ever recall, seeing, and it was on, Time Magazine, and it was back, in the 1970s, when Jimmy Carter, was president, and the Camp David Accords, were underway, and, Menachem Begin, the Prime Minister, of Israel, was meeting, with, what's the name, of the guy, Anwar Sadat, who was, the president, of Egypt, and, on the front page, of this, Time Magazine cover, the caption, was listed, that, Isaac, and Ishmael, meet again, and wow, that kind of really, sent a chill up my spine, and here are these, ancients, you know, going all the way, back to Abraham, and here they are, meeting, and of course, out of the Camp David Accords, and a kind of a friendly disposition, or at least a more friendly disposition, toward Israel, it

cost Anwar Sadat his life, remember that, some of his own people, came out of the stands, in a parade, and assassinated him, right there in the reviewing stand, and, so, the thing has continued, and it's going on, between, these adversaries, ever since that time, let's get back to our text, so, she judged him faithful, who had promised, therefore, sprang there, even of one, and him, as good as dead, and that simply means, from the standpoint, of being able, to procreate, to, impregnate, his wife,

Abraham, might as well, have been dead, because, there was nothing, that he could do, from a human standpoint, so many, going on, to the next verse, so many, as the stars of the sky, in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the seashore, innumerable, in other words, he's going to have, so many kids, so many children, so many offspring, you won't be able, to count them, these all died, in faith, these all passed on, as believers, and some translate it, like Berkeley says, controlled by faith, all these, went to their death, it was faith, they lived by, all of them, and in faith, they die, and it isn't just Abraham, it's going all the way, back to the beginning, of the chapter, and includes Noah too, not having received, the promises, but having seen them, far off, and were, persuaded of them, now that means, as far as they were concerned, they considered God, as being, so believable, that whatever he had promised, they regarded it, as a done deal, already fulfilled, did not question, they just, simply on the basis, of God giving them the promise, they took it to the bank, and they said, okay,

I believe, God said it, I believe it, that settles it, but they had not received, the promise, and yet, they died, in that position, knowing, and being certain, that God would, eventually make good on it, even though, they were not going, to be the recipients, and having seen them, and having seen them, far off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed, admitted, agreed, that they were strangers, and pilgrims, on the earth, on the earth, on the earth, I'm not, completely sure, how they were able, to arrive at that, but they had, certainly had a sense of it, because you know, Peter talks about, in one of his epistles, that, we are, strangers, on this earth, and Paul, in writing, to the Philippians, reminds them, that our, citizenship, is in heaven, from whence, we look for our Lord, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, so even though, we are, in many ways, deeply entrenched, here on planet earth, and we consider ourselves, citizens of the United States, our true citizenship, not here, the old song goes, this world, is not my home,

I'm just, a passing through, their treasures, are laid up for me, somewhere beyond the blue, so, hold, hold the things, that you have, in this world, lightly, because you are going, to relinquish them, and you move on, and someone said, no one has ever seen, a U-Haul, in a funeral procession, you're not taking it with you, and this world, is not our home, we're just a passing through, we need to keep that in mind, and it helps us, it helps us with our perspective, this world, valuable, important, enjoyable as it is, very temporal, and as the flower fades, and the grass withers, so all these things, pass away, and the scriptures say, what is your life, what is your life, it is even, as a vapor, that appears, for a short time, and then passes away, and, that's, a sobering thing, that we all need, to keep in mind, so, they are strangers, and pilgrims, on this earth, for they, that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country, and what country, are they talking about, it's not an earthly country, it's a heavenly country, they seek a country, in other words, there is, let me put it this way, [22 : 01] I think that, God has implanted, in the bosom, of every human being, that this world, is not all there is, there is something else, and this goes back, as far as, we can remember, maybe, as vividly, as anybody, and, and evidence, left behind, and you're as familiar, as I am, with, with the ancient Egyptians, and their views, regarding, life after death, and they didn't know, anything about this, from a biblical standpoint, but, I think, I think, God has, ingrained, into the being, of our humanity, the concept, that, we are, ultimately, intended, for something else, besides this, there is more, to life, in this world, and, in a very primitive, kind of way, the ancient Egyptians, kind of, thought they were, preparing for that, with the mummification, and burying favorite, pets, and animals, and servants, and food to eat, and everything, and what they thought, was going to be, some kind, of a next life, and they tried, to make provision, for it, in a, in a very primitive, kind of way, that, of course, was not really, guided by, great intelligence, but it was, on the basis, of what they knew, at the time, and, and they were, kind of, answering, to that, cry, of the human heart, that there is, something more, than this, there is, something beyond this, and indeed, indeed there is, they seek, a country, yes, oh yeah, oh yeah, absolutely, absolutely, and they, and they referred, to it as, sheol, s-h-e-o-l, and, sometimes, that's translated, the grave, but it, has the implications, of an afterlife, of there being, a life after this, and, and then, there's the Old Testament, the term,

Hades too, that is often translated, hell, yes, Roger, I'm sorry, in part of the Sanhedrin, believe and know, oh yeah, yeah, that, they were the Sadducees, and they, they were in continual conflict, with the Pharisees, because, the Pharisees, actually, the Pharisees, was, was, was a lay movement, of, of religiously, I guess you would call them, almost like, zealots, they were, they were the fundamentalists, of their day, they were the, straight arrows, of their day, theologically, and the Sadducees, the Sadducees, denied, the existence, of spirit beings, and they also denied, the resurrection, they, did not endorse, the idea, of a bodily resurrection, at all, and someone says, that's why they were called, Sadducees, they were so sad, you see, because they did not, believe in the resurrection, that was a terrible joke, they did not believe, in the resurrection, that's a good reason, to be sad, anyway, these two groups, these two groups, often, well I don't know, I would say often, but I would say, at least a few times, in scripture, actually, conspired together, teamed up, against the common enemy, who was Jesus, of Nazareth, and on more than one occasion, they tried to trip him up, tried to embarrass him, tried to make him look, and it's really humorous, as you read the accounts, in the gospels, because our Lord, always managed, to turn the tables on them, and left them, with egg on their face, and embarrassed, you know, and they posed, all kinds of hypothetical, situations, and he would answer them, and is it lawful, to pay taxes, to Caesar, not, you know, and he always came back, with the right kind of answer, that put them in their place, so they always met their match, in the Lord, so, let's get back to this, they seek, they seek a country, 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, now this is talking about, where they were originally, and, in the case of Abraham, of course, it was Ur of the Chaldees, but, because of his connection, and his relationship, with the God of heaven, Abram, as well as others, came to realize, in verse 16, that, in reality, you can never go home again, because what you considered home, wasn't really home at all, home, is the far country, home is the better country, and, they've even, you know, songwriters, have written songs about it, and one of the most, haunting, and telling, is, going home, going home, and, that's become a popular song, over the years, and it simply depicts, the death, of this physical body, anticipating the exiting, of the spirit from the body, being absent from the body, and present with the Lord, and, very often, you hear, someone talk about, he's gone, to be, at home, with the Lord, or she is at home, with the Lord, and, that's the far country, the heavenly, wherefore, God, God, is not ashamed, of them, to be called, their God, and, Weymouth says, for this reason, God is not ashamed, to be called, and other translations, render it very similar, to that, for, or because, many times, the word for, could better be rendered, because, for, or because, he, has prepared, for them, a city, and let's continue, if we may, on the flip page, he has a city, ready for them, to dwell in, heavenly city for them, and I think, that this city, is that, of which, the apostle John, is speaking, in, Revelation 20, when John says, and I beheld, the new Jerusalem, coming down, from God, out of heaven, as a bride, adorned for her husband, and he gives the dimensions, of this, new Jerusalem, and this is going to be, quite a city, it's going to be a cube, it's going to be inhabited, by literally, untold millions of people, and it's going to be, large enough, to accommodate everybody, and if you were to, situate it here, in the western hemisphere, it would extend, from, [29 : 03] Atlanta, Georgia, to, Colorado, that's pretty good size, square, cube, now, where exactly, it's going to be located, we don't know, but it's called, the new Jerusalem, so guess what the number one, prospect for that would be, probably Israel, and, it is during this time, and in this situation, that Christ is going to be, ruling and reigning, so, verse 17, by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up, Isaac, and the word tried, simply means, he was put to the test, he was examined, to see what he was made of, and you know, a question might legitimately, be asked, well, if this was done, just to show God, that Abraham would be faithful, and compliant, with what God required of him, didn't, or shouldn't God know that, before he ever put Abraham, to the test, I mean, doesn't God read the hearts of men, and knows what's in them, and didn't he know, that Abraham, would be faithful, and obedient, without putting him to the test, sure he did, sure he did, well, why then did he do it, did Abraham know, did Abraham know, that he would really, really, be able to go through, with this, when the time came, to put the knife, to his son's throat, so approved Abraham, and what about, what about Isaac, listen, Isaac was not, a three year old boy, Isaac was old enough, and big enough, to carry the firewood, that they were going to use, to light the altar with, he was a teenager, Isaac was probably, a strapping, sixteen year old, and as they make their way, up this Mount Moriah, which by the way, is the very place, where the temple, is going to be

built,

Mount Moriah, the high elevation, there in Jerusalem, and as they made their way, up that mountain, and Isaac is carrying, this wood, on his back, probably, to start the fire, to burn the sacrifice, he says, father, I got the wood, where's the sacrifice, he had no idea, that he was to be, the sacrifice, and God said, I mean, Abraham said, God will provide, and can't help, but wonder, what was going through, Abraham's mind, but he knew this, he knew this, because, God, had promised him, seed, and because, God said, in, Isaac, shall thy seed, be called, he knew, God, God was somehow, going to have to do, something, no matter, what it took, to fulfill that promise, about Isaac, being, the seed, that would perpetuate, the line, even, even, if he has to, raise Isaac, from the dead, he's going to do that, now, let me tell you, that, is faith, and that's the kind of faith, that Abraham exercised, reading on, he had received the promise, he had received the promise, he offered up his only son, of whom it was said, that, in,

Isaac, shall thy seed, be called, and, that of course, implies, that, if for any reason, Isaac isn't around, and Isaac can't produce, that's it, there is no seed, you know, it stops right there, it stops with the death of Isaac, and that's the end of it, yes, Joe, my God, made him go through that, faith statement, action, as a witness to, and in, our lives, we show faith, it's witness to others, may he, absolutely, absolutely, and, it's a witness, for us, for us, and for all of the generations, that have lived since Abraham, remember that verse, in, in Romans 15, 4, Paul said, whatsoever things, were written aforetime, that he had to be thinking of, is the whole Old Testament, all of these things, that they had records of then, and the things that were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience, and that word patience, in the Greek, hupomone, we've looked at that before, it means staying power, it means, the ability, to hang in there, under, stress, under, difficulty, it's staying power, that's the meaning of the word, patience, in the Greek, that we, through patience, and comfort, of the scriptures, might, have, hope, and guys, how, have we defined, the Greek word for hope, in times past, anybody remember, what does hope, really mean, assurance, confidence, absoluteness, when we use the word hope, in our common vocabulary, it always has a question, mark after it, because we don't know, so we hope, it won't rain tomorrow, and spoil the parade, and what we mean is, it might, and it might not, we'll know, which it's going to be, but we hope, it doesn't rain, and people say things like, you ask them, are you sure of heaven brother, well,

I, hope so, and they think, that anybody, who says, they're sure of heaven, as being cocky, or, they're thinking, what do you mean, you know you're going to heaven, how could you know that, you, you must think, you are really good, and, they, totally missed, the whole point, we, are sure of heaven, not, not because, we are good, but because, God is good, and gracious, and gave his son, to provide a way, for us, we are not deserving, of heaven, and anybody, who thinks they are, isn't going, isn't that something, wow, won't be any braggarts, in heaven, everybody that's there, is going to know, they're there, because of somebody else, and that somebody else, is Jesus Christ, so, we can be sure, of heaven, because we are confident, of the integrity, of God, that he cannot lie, so, he had received, the promises, offered up, his only begotten son, of course, this is all a beautiful, type of,

[36 : 40] God offering up, his son, and Isaac, is the type of Christ, and it just fits, the picture beautifully, and as he's about to slay, you know, he finds the, the animal, in the thicket, and spares, Isaac's life, it's a beautiful account, and Cheryl, thank you again, for taking such good care, of us old codgers here, we do appreciate it, thank you, I appreciate you all, being here guys, you hope you have, a great day, and live it up, for the Lord.