

RTS Women's Study: The Book of Hebrews

#27: Hebrews 11:8-22: The Hall of Faith (#2)

Intro: Which home are you looking forward to?

I. A Better Home (v.8-10)

A. Abraham's difficult challenge

- Abraham was told to leave his comfortable home but didn't know where he was going! (v.8)
- Even when Abraham arrived in the promised land, he lived like a foreigner in tents (v.9)
- Here's the point: Abraham obeyed God with very little knowledge of what God was up to!

B. What allowed Abraham to have this kind of radical obedience?

- Throughout the passage we are told that he did all of this "by faith"
- And what is that Abraham believed? He knew God had a better city for him (v.10)
 - We might have expected that Abraham believed because he was looking forward to this great new earthly land
 - But instead he was looking forward to a different land altogether!
- Key point: Even Abraham knew the physical land of Canaan was not his ultimate reward. It was always heaven he was looking forward to!

II. A Better People (v.11-12)

A. Abraham's difficult challenge

- Abraham was not only looking forward to a place but also to a *people*
- Remember, God had promised him that his descendants would be like the "sands on the seashore" (Gen 22:17)
- But there was one little problem: Sarah was "past the age" (v. 11) and he was "as good as dead" (v.12)

B. So how do Abraham and Sarah respond to this challenge?

- We are told they believed! Sarah received the promise "by faith" (v.11)
- The result is that God kept his promise: Abraham had descendants like the stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore (v.12)

III. A Better Hope (v.13-16)

A. The essence of faith: It is forward looking

- We tend to think of faith has looking *backwards*: Did the events of the Bible really take place?
- But the patriarchs had a faith that looked forward. *They believed without seeing!*
 - They died “not having received the things promised, but having seen them greeted them from afar” (v.13)
 - This is the definition of faith from earlier: “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (11:1)
 - In other words, they had hope!

B. Evidence that the patriarchs had a forward-looking faith

- They longed for a heavenly homeland! Again, our author is concerned with where we consider our home to be
- If they had only been longing for an earthly home, “they would have had opportunity to return” there (v. 15)
- Instead they were looking for “a better country, that is a heavenly one” (v. 16)

IV. The Ultimate Test (v.17-22)

A. God tested where Abraham’s hope really was

- In v.17 our author mentions the story of Genesis 22 where God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac
- Abraham had every reason to doubt: How could God keep the promise of his great offspring if his only son were dead? (v.18)
- But Abraham’s faith was so strong that he even believed God could “raise him from the dead” (v.19)
- Key point: Isaac’s “death” and “resurrection” anticipate what Christ would do later

B. Abraham’s offspring shared his same faith

- Isaac believed, Jacob believed, Joseph believed (v.20-22)
- Faith tends to run in family lines!

Discussion Groups

1. Do you struggle to put your hope in a heavenly home rather than an earthly home? Be honest with the group about where your hope currently lies.
2. When you think about your faith, does it only look backwards or does not also look forward? What steps can we take to focus more on our future hope and reward?
3. How do you respond when God asks you to do something that makes no sense? What lessons can we learn from Abraham about how to handle such times?