

Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup> 2012  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Forty Three

1). Heb 11:8 *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.*

a). We have seen in recent weeks the most remarkable way that the scriptures have been put together so as to take real events in the lives of real people, recorded in the Book of Genesis, that have been Divinely orchestrated to teach us great spiritual truth from these events that prophetically look to the coming Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

b). We have seen over and over the truth of that stated in –  
*Isa 46:9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

c). And what encouragement to our faith it is to see this, know this and see the scripture that then describes it.

d). We have seen how the flood of Noah, the confusion of the languages and the scattering of the nations at Babel, the battle with the kings and the destruction of the cities of the plain all speak to us of the same thing, presenting to us different facets of the overthrow of Gentile world power, the final Babylonian kingdom under Antichrist, that will take place upon Christ's return at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation – and all having as their focus the 7<sup>th</sup> Day that will follow – the glorious new beginning of the Kingdom of

Christ - Re 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

e). And we have seen how this spiritual truth can only be seen with the eyes of faith, faith to the saving of the soul, the very thing we have seen described in - Heb 11:1 ¶ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

f). Now clearly this spiritual truth is not revealed to us for our intellectual gratification, but for the purpose for which it is given – Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.* 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

g). Just as surely as we would know the end of God's plans purposes revealed through the opening chapters of our Bible so we will just as surely know that - 2Co 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

h). And that being the case we will, if we have faith to the saving of our soul, organize our lives in accordance with the truth of scripture and patiently endure as we run our race of faith.

2). Ge 19:27 ¶ *And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.*

a). We see Abraham here in the 'high country', on the mountain in the place where he stood before the Lord – And here is a significant truth for ourselves, we need to stay in that pictured in the 'high country', the coming Kingdom, and not go down into that pictured in the cities of the plain, the present world system under Satan - Col 3:1 ¶ *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

Eph 2:6 *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

b). The enemy of our soul however, will constantly seek to draw us away from our high calling, but our focus will need to remain steadfast as we become single minded with respect to our focus and we may take as our example Nehemiah as he was re-building the walls of Jerusalem –

Ne 6:1 ¶ Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm. 3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

c). We must not leave the work, for it is a great work, and go down to the plain because it may well cost us our life in the age to come – it is for a good deal more than effect that the Lord says to His disciples –

Lu 17:32 *"Remember Lot's wife.*

d). And while we are at it lets also remember Lot who finds himself on the mountain, but not standing before the Lord as Abraham, but hidden in a cave, in a place of darkness and shame – And the reason he ended up there? Simply because he left the 'high country' – just as we see in - Ge 13:12 *Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.*

3). Also we must not leave the work, for it is a great work, and go down into the plain for the very reasons seen in our opening scripture this morning – 9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

a). The land of promise was covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through an unconditional, everlasting covenant - Ge 35:12 *"The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."*

b). Yet despite this land being theirs we see that Abraham, and we must assume Isaac and Jacob also, – *waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

c). In other words they were waiting for the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly City with heavenly blessings – the celestial real estate that is exclusive to the 7<sup>th</sup> Day.

d). Therefore we may know absolutely that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew full well that they were never going to possess the land during their lifetime and this is exactly what the scripture records - 13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

e). And we see here that they ‘all died in faith’ – they all died having the absolute certainty that what God had promised, and confirmed by covenant, He would yet still do – they all died having the absolute certainty that God would raise them from the dead in order to give them their inheritance in that future Day – the Day of their promises that they had seen ‘afar off’. And even though the Day and the fulfillment of the promises were afar off they were ‘assured of them’ and ‘embraced them’.

f). Even though they dwelt in the land that God had given to them ‘they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth’. They lived, geographically, in the very place that was theirs by promise and yet they neither wanted it nor laid claim to it in the time frame in which they lived, waiting instead for God’s timing not their own – thereby walking by faith and not by sight.

g). What a contrast there is in this with Abraham’s nephew, Lot – Ge 19:1 ¶ *Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.*

h). The gate of the city is always the place where the governance of the city would take place and although Lot knew full well the depravity that was going on around him he still embroiled himself in Sodom’s affairs. He was neither a stranger nor a pilgrim, but an active participant. Sodom was his home and he was not looking for another nor did he desire another – thereby walking by sight and not by faith.

4). Heb 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them*

a). This was not Lot.

b). Abraham, Isaac and Jacob declared plainly that they were seeking a homeland, but they were not looking for a homeland within the parameters of the time and space in which they lived. V16 clearly says that had they just been looking for somewhere to call home they could have remembered [called to mind] Ur of the Chaldeans and they could have returned there. But for them, nowhere on the planet, not even the land of their birth, nor the land

covenanted to them was 'home'; rather they waited for a better country, a heavenly country.

c). A letter written to a person called Diagnetus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century records this concerning Christians – 'They inhabit their own country, but as sojourners: they take part in all things as citizens, and endure all things as aliens: every foreign country is theirs, and every country is foreign.'

d). Although this is certainly not scripture that which is described is without doubt that which we see exemplified in our verses from Hebrews.

e). And without being redundant this is the very perspective that we are to have ourselves concerning our geography – Where we live is not the issue, the laws of the land are not the issue, the nature of the government is not the issue; government can either make our lives easier or more difficult, but that is not the issue either – the issue is simply this, we have been promised a homeland, a heavenly Kingdom and this is what we look for, this is what we long for, this is what we organize our lives in expectation of and as we wait for that glorious Day we declare through our attitude and our actions as well as our confession that we are 'strangers and pilgrims' upon the earth.

f). We take part in all things as citizens, just as our 2<sup>nd</sup> century counterparts did, as we obey the laws of the land and pay our taxes –  
Ro 13:1 ¶ *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 ¶ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

g). And we do this for 'conscience sake' as it is fitting and right in the eyes of God that we should; but we do these things as resident aliens, out of respect for the fact that this is not our home and we are therefore sojourners. And then in another sense we do this in order to survive in a hostile environment – 2Ti 2:4 *No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

h). Neither must we be sucked in to being a collaborator with our enemy, scripture is quite clear as to that - *Jas 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

i). Mt 12:30 *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

j). We are then, from a natural perspective, model citizens in the eyes of the world and the irony is that we are such because our citizenship is elsewhere - *Php 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

k). This then is all a case of aligning our thinking and our attitude with the Word of God in respect of this – and this can only happen by the transforming of our minds; which brings us back to receiving with meekness the implanted word.

l). We have no document to prove where our citizenship lies, it is once again a matter of faith – believing that which God has said – and it is only by believing this, by having faith, that we can ever hope to have our thinking in the right place – and only in this way that we can have the proper perspective, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, on our present location within time and space.

m). The promises remain ‘afar off’ for us also, although I guess not quite as far as for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and we need to embrace them after a similar fashion – and again, whether we live or die, are raptured or not, does not matter at all – God is faithful; and He will prove Himself to be a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him – there is no doubt.

5). And if we were in any doubt about the Lord’s faithfulness, the scripture we began with this morning tells us - *11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude-innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.*

a). It was ‘Sara herself’, the Sara who had once doubted - *Ge 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" 13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' 14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." 15 But*

*Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"*

b). It was this same Sara who then believed, who then 'judged Him faithful who had promised' – and as a consequence she bore a child 'when she was past the age', fathered by a man who was 'as good as dead' – as nothing is 'too hard for the Lord'.

c). And so, for our own doubt, if we should have any – just go and look at any Jewish community anywhere as these are the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob – the very ones whose lineage comes from the son born to a barren old woman and a man as good as dead.

d). And we could then go to any church in the land and see those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ – the Jewish Messiah who came through the same lineage.

e). We can then with our own eyes see those who are as many as the stars in the sky and as innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

f). The very fact that we are here today is testimony that He who promised is faithful – there is no doubt - *Ga 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

g). And just as life came through the power of God to the dead womb of Sara so we who were dead in trespasses and sins have been made alive in Christ - *Eph 2:1 ¶ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 ¶ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.....19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a*

*holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

6). Heb 11:16 *But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

a). Because of the faith shown by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with regards to God's promises and the Heavenly City – because they looked for that which is to come and believed that God would fulfill His word, because they believed that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, we find the most remarkable statement here in our verse – 'Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God'.

b). When God makes Himself known to Moses, what does He say to him? Ex 3:6 *Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father-the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*

c). When Moses is to return to the Children of Israel to deliver them from Egypt what is he to say to them? - Ex 3:15 *Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'*

d). The scriptures abound with reference to the God of the universe being the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and we will now realize that this is not just to distinguish Him from any other god, but as the God of those who have faith to the saving of the soul, the God of those who believed and then organized their lives accordingly.

e). Now the corollary of this would be that the God who is not ashamed to be the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, would be ashamed to be the God of those who do not have faith like theirs. That the God of the universe would feel shame to be associated with those Christians who call Him their God and yet live their lives apart from faith to the saving of the soul is really quite shocking; but again we would see from this the overwhelmingly, paramount importance of faith to the saving of the soul.

f). As we remember a verse we have studied in past weeks – Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

g). We can now add a further detail to this – we must believe that He is who He says He is, and what have we now learned? He is the God of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob – and they believed that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him – and by this faith they had a good testimony –

Heb 11:1 ¶ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.*

h). It is a tantalizing thought that God might not be ashamed to be called our God and perhaps after some fashion reference to that is made even now within heaven.

i). And then finally, for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and indeed for all those who have the same faith to the saving of the soul - *He has prepared a city for them.*

j). There is a city with foundations whose builder and maker is God that has been prepared for those who will receive it by faith; a city described as Ga 4:26 *but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

k). A city of rulership waiting for those who will occupy it during the 7<sup>th</sup> Day and beyond - Re 3:12 *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.*

Re 21:2 *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

7). And as we close for today let's remember the words of our Lord to His disciples - Joh 14:1 ¶ *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 ¶ "And where I go you know, and the way you know."*