

FOCUS FOR THE UNFORESEEABLE
“These and They”

FOCUS

Heb. 11:11-16

Heb. 11:13 **These** all died in faith, 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.

14 For **they** that say such things declare plainly that **they** seek a country.

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

16 But now **they** desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called **their** God: for he hath prepared for **them** a city.

Our theme for this year is...

VISION

20/20

HIS VISION.

OUR FOCUS.

During these challenging days of the present pandemic, many people, including believers, are facing issues that a few months ago were simply **unforeseeable**. **Life is, unfortunately, a series of unforeseeable events.** For the next few weeks we will observe what the Bible says about how to handle such trying events, "**how to focus on the unforeseeable.**"

For the last few weeks we have been considering several individuals in the Bible that faced unforeseeable challenges in their lives: The last couple of weeks, focusing on Abraham.

Abraham is considered the “father” of the Jews, Muslims, and the Christians. His introduction in Heb. 11, does not mention any details about his background, does not mention when he lacked faith and was disobedient, but begins with his first major step of faith – leaving home.

I. FAITH TO LEAVE...THE FAMILIAR

II. FAITH TO LIVE...THE FOLLOWING

Heb. 11:9 **By faith he sojourned** in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

- A sojourner knows that the current residency is temporary.

III. FAITH TO LEARN...THE FOUNDATIONS

Heb. 11:10 For **he looked for a city which hath foundations**, whose **builder and maker is God**.

- A. The Awaiting of the Promises – “For he **looked** for a city which hath foundations...”
- B. The Architect of the Premises – “...whose builder and maker is God.”

This account of Abraham is broken up with the passage from Heb. 11:11-16. There is not a specific name given to all those who faced the unforeseeable, simply a designation of “These and They.” There is no doubt that included in this group are those whom we have already observed. But there consider that there is another group who are unknown to mankind, but not unknown to God. A similar group is mentioned later in Heb. 11:36:

Heb. 11:36 **And others** had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: ...

38 (**Of whom the world was not worthy:**) **they** wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And **these** all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

This morning we will take a good look at “These and They” in order to see what they had in common, and how we should conform to their example for us today:

I. “THESE AND THEY” DIED, 11:13a “These all died in faith...”

A. Encountering the Unforeseeable – “These all died...”

- The inevitable unforeseeable for each of us is to die:

Heb. 9:27 And as **it is appointed unto men once to die**, but after this the judgment:

- When considering our “end,” let’s focus upon “These all died in faith...”

Psa. 39:4 **LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.**

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

B. Embracing the Unreachable – “ ...not having received the promises...”

- The Old Testament Israelites did not, literally, see the fulfillment of the unconditional covenants.
- Life has many unfulfilled dreams and desires – keep walking by faith!

II. “THESE AND THEY” DECIDED 11:13b

“...seen...persuaded...embraced...confessed...”

Heb. 11:13b “...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.”

- Notice how the four verbs show the actions of the faithful regarding God's promises:

A. The Confrontation – “seen”

Original Word: ὁράω

Transliteration: horaó

Definition: to see, perceive, attend to

Usage: I see, look upon, experience, perceive, discern, beware.

horáō – properly, *see*, often with *metaphorical* meaning: "to see with the mind" (i.e. spiritually see), i.e. perceive (with inward spiritual perception).

<https://biblehub.com/greek/3708.htm>

- Faith is “seeing the unseeable” – Heb. 11:1 – mentally grasping that which is still out of reach, but, knowing the promises are true = having faith in the Promiser!

B. The Confidence – “persuaded”

Original Word: πείθω

Transliteration: peithó

Definition: to persuade, to have confidence

Usage: I persuade, urge.

Peíthō (the root of *pístis*, "faith") – **to persuade; (passive) be persuaded of what is trustworthy.**

The Lord persuades the yielded believer to be *confident* in His preferred-will (Gal 5:10; 2 Tim 1:12). **(*peíthō*) involves "obedience, but it is properly the result of (God's) persuasion"**

<https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3982.htm>

- Persuasion to embrace the promises is based upon confidence in all that is trustworthy = the Promiser and His promises are true!

Rom. 8:37 Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**

38 For **I am persuaded**, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

C. The Commitment – “embraced”

Original Word: ἀσπάζομαι

Transliteration: aspazomai

Definition: to welcome, greet

Usage: I greet, salute, pay my respects to, welcome.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/782.htm>

- A spiritual “hug” is given to soul-satisfying, encouraging promises.

D. The Confession – “confessed”

Original Word: ὁμολογέω

Transliteration: homologeó

Definition: to speak the same, to agree

Usage: (a) I promise, agree, (b) I confess, (c) I publicly declare, (d) a Hebraism, I praise, celebrate.

homologéō – **properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ("confess"); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse).**

[*homologéō* ("confess") means to *speak the same thing*, i.e. "assent, agree with, confess, declare, admit" (Vine, Unger, White, *NT*, 120).]

<https://biblehub.com/greek/3670.htm>

- A confession is an identification of agreement, that has affected one's lifestyle.

Rom. 10:9 That if thou shalt **confess** with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For **with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;** and **with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

III. "THESE AND THEY" DECLARED, "...declared plainly...seek a country."

A. The Unapologetic Declaration – "...declared plainly..."

Original Word: ἐμφανίζω

Transliteration: emphanizó

Definition: to exhibit, appear (in person), to declare

Usage: I make visible (manifest); hence: I report (inform) against; pass: I appear before.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/1718.htm>

- The effect of salvation upon a person is so profound and dynamic, that a radical change is manifested and becomes a “living declaration” of identification with Christ.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore **if any man *be* in Christ, *he is a new creature***: old things are passed away; **behold, all things are become new.**

B. The Unabated Destination – “...seek a country.”

Original Word: ἐπιζητέω

Transliteration: epizéteó

Definition: to inquire for

Usage: I seek after, desire, search for, make inquiries about.

epizētéō (from *epí*, "on, fitting" intensifying *zētéō*, "seek," see there) – **properly, seeking that follows through on the *personal objective of the seeker*** (note the force of the prefix, *epi*).

- In spite of the challenges of life, stay focused upon the ultimate destination – ETERNITY.
- The “seeking” is a personal objective in order to be “with Christ.”

Original Word: πατρίς

Transliteration: patris

Phonetic Spelling: (pat-rece')

Definition: of one's fathers, fatherland

Usage: fatherland, one's native place.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/3968.htm>

- Without focus guided by the compass of the heart, we have a natural propensity to wander.

IV. “THESE AND THEY” DETERMINED, 11:15-16

Heb. 11:15 And truly, if **they** had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, **they** might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now **they** desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called **their** God: for he hath prepared for **them** a city.

- The seed thoughts of straying lie dormant in the memory of past experiences.

Original Word: μνημονεύω

Transliteration: mnémoneuó

Definition: to call to mind, to make mention of

Usage: I remember, hold in remembrance, make mention of.

mnēmoneúō – to recall by memory (without implying anything was previously forgotten).

<https://biblehub.com/greek/3421.htm>

- Instead of being “mindful...from whence they came out...” a believer presses forward.

Phil. 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but **this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,**

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

- The focus should be on something “better” – “...an heavenly” residence where there is fellowship with God – “for he hath prepared for them a city.”

Summary

- As pilgrims and strangers in this present world, focus upon God’s promises, by faith.
- Wrap your life around Christ, His promises, His future fellowship.

Conclusion

“These and They” have one special attribute in common – they were men and women, like us, that had opportunity to face a time that was previously UNFORESEEABLE. Just like us, they had faults, fears, failings, and then facing a moment when they needed strength, and made a decision to walk by faith regardless of the circumstances. We must be resolved to do the same!

seen = knowing the promises → the Introduction

persuaded = confidence of the promises → the Instruction

embraced = hugging the promises → the Inspiration

confessed = agreeing WITH the promises → the Identification

Jn. 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**