

Hebrews 11:13–16

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with my series about Hebrews 11. This installment was a presentation titled “Hebrews 11:13-16.” I want to share some of my comments in this article.

Three main ideas of verse 13

Hebrews 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.”

Notice the three main ideas.

Did not receive the promises

- Hebrews 11 mentioned some positive behavior of 10 people (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Rahab)—and they did *not* receive the promises.
- Hebrews 11 listed six people (Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel) without listing some positive behavior—and they did *not* receive the promises.
- Hebrews 11 mentioned the prophets in general—and they did *not* receive the promises.

Acts 2:29—“Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.”

Acts 2:34—“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand.” ’”

Hebrews 11:39-40—“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”

Saw promises, embraced promises

Notice a few examples of the concept of “see—desire—do.”

Here are examples of “see—desire—do” in the area of sins.

- Genesis 3:6—Eve saw the food—desirable—she ate.
- Joshua 7:21—Achan saw the spoils—coveted—he took them.
- 2 Samuel 11:2-4—David saw the naked woman—inquired about her—he took her.

- Acts 8:18-19—Simon saw the laying on of hands—wanted that power—he offered to buy it.

Here are examples of “see—desire—do” in the area of obedience.

- Matthew 13:44—They saw the treasure—focused on the treasure—bought the field.
- Matthew 13:45-46—They saw the pearl—focused on the pearl—bought the pearl.
- Hebrews 11:13—They saw the promises—embraced the promises—became strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Strangers and pilgrims

1 Peter 2:11-12—“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Sought a homeland

Hebrews 11:14—“For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.”

Colossians 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.”

Not consumed with previous country

Hebrews 11:15—“And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.”

- Exodus 16:1-3—The children of Israel looked back.
- Luke 17:32—Lot’s wife looked back.
- 2 Peter 2:20-22—It is not good when those who have escaped the world become entangled again.

Prepared a city for them

Hebrews 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.”

- Exodus 25:8—God gave instructions for them to build a tabernacle so He could dwell among them.
- Exodus 29:42-44—God planned the tabernacle to meet with the people—because He wanted to dwell among them.
- Leviticus 26:11-12—God put His tabernacles among them, because He was their God and He wanted them to be His people.
- Hebrews 12:22—He talked to them about the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.
- Revelation 21:1-3—He talked to His children about a new heaven, a new earth and the holy city (New Jerusalem)—mentioning that He would dwell with them and be their God.