

## **EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH – August 2025**

Southview Bible Church \* 135 Bennett Ave. \* Council Bluffs, IA. 51503

Phone: (712) 322-5743 E-mail: pastor@southviewbible.org \* Web Site: www.southviewbible.org

### **FAITH WAITS**

Faith is taking God at His Word. A biblical faith is always connected to the Word of God. True faith is not a matter of subjective feelings, mysticism, or intuition. Rather, it is always in response to God's Word. Faith takes God at His promise. What God has promised may yet be future, but faith believes that God will bring it to pass just as He said. This is where HOPE comes in as it is the certain expectation that God will bring to pass what He has promised. Thus, "faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1).

Abraham is the premier example of saving faith in all the Bible. In the Hall of Faith chapter of Hebrews 11, he is given the longest treatment (Heb. 11:8-19). Abraham was promised by God a special land called "The Promised Land". He was also promised innumerable descendants. Both of these involved a LOT of WAITING, and in fact, Abraham never saw the fulfillment of these promises during his lifetime. He saw the land, but he never possessed it. All he ever really owned was a burial plot (Gen. 23). Yes, he saw a few children born (most significantly the promised child Isaac), but he never saw the fulfillment of innumerable descendants.

The covenant promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:21; 22:16-18) were then passed along to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4), and then to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-14). But it was "by faith" that Abraham dwelt in the land of promise living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, "heirs with him of the same promise" (Heb. 11:9). In doing so Abraham WAITED for a permanent dwelling place – "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10).

At the age of 75 Abraham had already been told he would be made "a great nation" (Gen. 12:2, 4) and shortly thereafter he was told the number of his descendants would be "as the dust of the earth" (Gen. 13:16, cf. 15:5). Through his seventies, then eighties, then nineties, he continued to WAIT! Finally, when Abraham turned 99 God appeared to him and in effect said, "NOW it's baby time!" (Gen. 17). In the birth of Isaac, Abraham finally tasted the beginnings of what God had promised, but he never saw the fulfillment of a great multitude of descendants.

In fact, NONE of the patriarchs saw the fulfillment of either the land promise or that of innumerable descendants. Hebrews 11:13 says, "*These all died in faith not having received the promises but having seen them afar off were assured of them...*". They were assured of the promises, but they never saw the fulfillment in this life. Their faith was "*the evidence of things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1). They WAITED and WAITED and died in faith. They confessed that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13) with the testimony that they were seeking a homeland that would be fulfilled beyond this life (Heb. 11:14-16).

In keeping with the nature of a true saving faith, they never even considered it an option to go back to the old country (Heb. 11:15). True faith does not apostatize (cf. Heb. 10:38-39). Instead, they continued to look forward to a "*better, that is a heavenly country*" (Heb. 11:16; cf. 2 Pet. 3:13). This is God-honoring FAITH! True faith does not revert back to a pre-conversion state. Faith does not go back; rather, it looks forward. It looks forward to what God has promised and will not go back!

This is the nature of a true saving faith that pleases God (Heb. 11:6). The patriarchs WAITED, and WAITED, and WAITED, and eventually died in FAITH awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises. And because of this, "*God is not ashamed to be called their God*" (Heb. 11:16). A core designation for the one true God is "*the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*" (cf. Ex. 3:6, etc.). It is their kind of faith that God identifies with. This is the mark of the truly saved!

**Thot:** True faith will die in faith believing that God will yet fulfill ALL His promises!

***Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald***