

## THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY

(Heb. 11:8-19)

### Introduction:

1. In Heb. 12:2, we read that Jesus, for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. In the passage read for us one might say, Abraham for the promised land set before him endured the leaving, the sojourning, and the dying a stranger in a strange land.
2. Abraham was a great man of faith, a great example to us all. Will we follow his example unto paradise?
3. We have been given the same commands as Abraham. Let us consider...

### Discussion:

#### **I. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out (v8).**

- A. Abraham and his family were living in the city of Ur when he received the command to leave his country (Gen. 11:27-12:4; Acts 7:2-4).
  1. The city of Ur (which means the city of “flame” or “light”) was located approximately 140 miles SE of Babylon (Tenney’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary).
  2. Ur was a highly advanced port city with evidence of indoor plumbing. A school was established there and it was a center of learning for the area. The religious consisted mainly of Nanna the moon goddess with ziggurats, etc.).
- B. The family stopped in Haran (about 600 miles NW of Ur) for a span of time. It was not until Abraham’s father Terah died that Abraham, Lot and other of his family continued on the journey to Canaan (about 400 miles from Haran to Shechem). We don’t exactly why the delay or the family break up, but surmising from what we learn from the Bible it would seem that idolatry was an issue that had to be dealt with and finally separated from (Josh. 24:2, 3; Gen. 31:19; 35:2).
- C. The point being, this was a BIG deal to uproot an entire family and all their possessions to leave a comfortable, convenient city for what? An unknown country occupied by extremely immoral people 1000 miles away?
- D. Christians have also been asked to come out of our country to a place that God will show us.
  1. It is not a physical removal (John 18:36; 17:15-17; Rom. 6:17, 18; 8:1, 5-9) though there are aspects of that (1 Pet. 4:1-7).
  2. The command to Abraham to “come out” has been directly given to Christians as well (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).
  3. We too have been promised a new home that will be ours, but we do not know all about it (1 John 3:1, 2; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21, 22).
  4. The question is, will we come out, will we come out all of the way? Remember the church (ekklesia = literally the called out) is an assembly of God’s people who no longer assemble with the world.

#### **II. By faith Abraham dwelt as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents (v9).**

- A. Even though Abraham was the friend of God he lived his whole life in tents as a pilgrim. He never received the promised land in his lifetime (save for a patch of ground to bury his wife and himself-Gen. 23:17-20).

- B. Like Abraham, we will never receive our promised land in this physical life (1 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 4).
- C. The test of our faith, as with Abraham, is whether we remain faithful to God and separate from the world, or will we go back to where we have come out of (Heb. 11:15; 2 Pet. 2:22; 10:19-39).
- D. Truly, by faith Abraham waited for the city whose builder is God (Heb. 11:10).

**Conclusion:**

1. A summation of this lesson would be: will we believe, will we walk in belief and remain faithful unto death. It is a summation of God's appeal to mankind: will we come to Him, will we remain with Him no matter what we face.
2. Another way of putting it would be: "he who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16); and "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7); and "be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10b).
3. Consider Heb. 11:15, 16. The country within which we live is filled with many pleasures and enjoyable pursuits. But God has offered a much better country for those who will walk humbly with Him in faithful obedience. It is a walk filled with pleasures and joy inexpressible. Do not allow yourself to become infatuated with the world. Be like Abraham and desire a better country, whose maker is God. And don't let anything, not even death, keep you from that eternal joy.
4. Invitation.