

## **“These All Died In Faith ...”**

*“... not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own” (Heb. 11:13-14).*

The words *“these all died in faith ...”* is direct allusion to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: it does not refer to others who were earlier mentioned in the text for, as Barnes observed, to make it refer to all the worthies previously mentioned, would necessarily include Enoch, who did not die. It is of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to whom these words allude. when he wrote, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises.”* Not having received the promises, cannot mean no promises were given them, for surely they were, but *“not having received the promises”* means they had not received the fulfillment of the promises. The word *“promises”* is found twice in the chapter, *“promised”* is found once; *“promise”* appears three times.

As the phrase *“received not the promises”* relates to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, notice that the three all dwelt in the *“land of promise,”* that Isaac and Jacob were heirs with Abraham of the same promise. God promised Abraham (and then Isaac and Jacob) that he would give Canaan to their posterity. They never possessed the land themselves. Certainly the spiritual promises *“in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* was not received by them. It was given to them, but they did not receive the fulfillment of it.

As the writer commended the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so he also commended the faith of some of their posterity. *“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouth of lions ... and these all, having had witness born to them through the faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerned us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect”* (Heb. 11:32, 33, 39-40). It is interesting to note that while it was said of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that they *“received not the promises;”* the same was not said of their descendants. Rather, the writer wrote of these latter ones that *“they received not the promise.”* What is the difference, if any? There is a difference. In the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promises of a great multitude, land, blessing through the seed of Abraham were all yet to be realized. But that was not true of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel for they were part of a nation which dwelt in and possessed the land God had sworn to give their

father. What remained was the promised blessing through the seed of Abraham! Hebrews 9:15f has already been commented upon but refreshing our mind of the passage is appropriate here. *"And for the cause he is the mediator of a better covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."* It took the death of Christ for those under the first covenant to receive the promises of the eternal inheritance. *"Promise"* in both instances is single and refers to the blessing to be bestowed in Abraham's seed. Christ did not shed his blood so that Abraham's family would become a great nation and inherit Canaan. Were those promises the only promises made to him, Jesus would not have died. However, it was necessary that Jesus die that the blessing for all nations to be secured. And it was not until the death of Jesus that forgiveness was an accomplished fact. Earlier forgiveness rested only upon God's promise, not upon reality for the Hebrew writer words are empathetic: *"These received not the promise."*

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