

Strangers and Pilgrims

November 29, 2015 · AM · <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/2015/strangers-and-pilgrims-1/>

“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.”

Hebrews 11:13

The Text

1. Hebrews 11:13-16 introduces us to a heavenly perspective of great men and women.
 1. These are God’s heroes of the faith, and we should want to learn much about them.
 2. We must examine ourselves, individually and corporately, to be more like them.
2. Those considered directly here are Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob (Hebrews 11:9).
 1. Consider that they sacrificed relatives, homes, houses, friends, jobs, comfort, etc.
 2. This is how a husband and wife should function – fully committed to God alone.
3. They did not directly receive fulfillment of promises e.g. land, posterity, blessing, etc.
 1. They saw fulfillments in the future, were convinced of them, and embraced them.
 2. Abraham saw Jesus in the future and rejoiced in what He saw of his Seed (Jn 8:56).
 3. Their faith was such that they had evidence of fulfillment (Heb 11:1 cp Rom 4:21).
 4. They walked by faith, not by sight, though they could see far less than we can see.
4. They committed their lives to these unfulfilled promises and felt out of place on earth.
 1. They were strangers (not residents or citizens) and pilgrims (only passing through).
 2. They did not find anyone or anything on earth to satisfy their souls (Ps 73:25-26).
 3. Paul was more mindful of heaven than earth (II Cor 4:17 – 5:7; Phil 1:23; 3:18-21).
5. They were not mindful of their former home – Mesopotamia – with foolish sentiment.
 1. Though they did not realize the promises fulfilled – just the prospect was enough.
 2. They chose by faith to forget things they gave up to follow Jesus Christ with zeal.
 3. All of Jesus Christ’s true disciples forsake persons/things and never return to them.
 4. Thinking sentimentality about this world’s things is belly-worship (Phil 3:18-19).
 5. They do not look back to consider what could have been theirs (Luke 9:62; 17:32).
6. God is not ashamed of those men/women who forsake things here (II Cor 6:14-18).
 1. God promised He would be with Abraham, if he would be a sojourner (Gen 26:3).
 2. If you even allow anyone or anything to compete, you are not a disciple of Jesus.
 3. God has promised the best and deepest relationship with those forsaking this life.
 4. Your best life now is not by getting earthly stuff but by flushing all earthly stuff.
 5. The only way to fulfill life is to lose it for Jesus as a pilgrim (Matt 10:39; 16:25).

7. Run your race before these faithful heroes (12:1) ... are you a stranger and pilgrim?

The Pilgrims

1. Our nation's Thanksgiving Day was three days ago, so briefly remember the Pilgrims.
2. These Englishmen (and women) had already chosen to separate from the state church.
 1. The influence of Wycliffe, Huss, Calvin, Luther, etc. had roused religious revival.
 2. Henry VIII had defied the pope around 1534 to claim headship of English church.
 3. Baptists and God's elect in other groups stood up against popery and Anglicanism.
 4. They were called Separatists, Independents, Brownists, for rejecting a state church.
 5. They did not compromise as many Puritans, who stayed in the Church of England.
 6. This brought them quickly into conflict with the government; see laws of 1592-93.
3. They were of lower middle class, unlike the cultured Puritans of upper middle class.
4. They first moved to Holland for relative calm and protection they could have there.
 1. Fearing a loss of English culture and needing greater prosperity, they moved again.
 2. They were known as Pilgrims for moving from England to Holland to America.
 3. William Bradford (1590-1657) referred to these believers as saints and pilgrims.
 4. Daniel Webster (1782-1852) called them Pilgrim Fathers at bicentennial in 1820.
5. They suffered on the trip to America and terribly in first months at Plymouth Rock.
6. They were not Baptists, but they were quite closely related to Baptists in several ways.
7. Running our race before these heroes of the faith ... are you a stranger and pilgrim?

What is a Stranger?

1. It is a Bible term, so we should understand it, especially in Heb 11:13 and I Pet 2:11.
2. We understand the strange woman of Proverbs to be a woman that does not belong.
3. Stranger. One who belongs to another country, a foreigner; chiefly (now exclusively), one who resides in or comes to a country to which he is a foreigner; an alien.
4. A stranger is a person that does not belong to the place where he temporarily resides.
5. Israel had strangers among them after the exodus, Gentiles that were not full Jews.
6. Paul combined stranger with both alien and foreigner for us Gentiles (Eph 2:12,19).

What is a Pilgrim?

1. It is a Bible term, so we should understand it, especially in Heb 11:13 and I Pet 2:11.
2. Pilgrim. One who travels from place to place; a person on a journey; a wayfarer, a traveller; a wanderer; a sojourner.
3. We believe Bible pilgrimage as traveling or wandering (Gen 47:9; Ex 6:4; Ps 119:54).
4. A pilgrimage is primarily traveling or wandering, not necessarily visiting a holy site.
5. No wonder John Bunyan chose the word for his famous book, The Pilgrim's Progress.

What is a Bible Stranger and Pilgrim?

1. It is a child of God that does not consider his real life or goals to belong to this earth.
2. He is a stranger in the earth, because he is a foreigner and alien to other men's lives, not becoming attached to things that others find to be their goals and purpose in life.
3. He is a pilgrim in the earth, because he is only traveling through this life to heaven.

Strangers and Pilgrims are Sojourners

1. Sojourn. To make a temporary stay in a place; to remain or reside for a time.
2. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob were sojourners – temporary residents (Heb 11:9).
 1. He did not own enough land for the sole of his foot, but he was the friend of God!
 2. He and his sons described their lives as those of sojourners (Gen 23:4; Ex 12:40).
 3. They sojourned 215 years in Canaan and 215 years in Egypt; watch the commas!
3. Jehovah considered His people strangers and sojourners with Him (Leviticus 25:23).
4. We must pass the time of our sojourning in this life in fear of God (I Peter 1:17).

Examples of Strangers and Pilgrims

1. Abel was different from other worshippers and rejected approval of family (He 11:4).
2. Enoch walked with God quite differently than other men to please God (Heb 11:5-6).
3. Noah condemned the world by his righteous life of not being attached (Heb 11:7).
4. Abraham, and his holy wife Sarah, left all for an unknown earthly future (He 11:8-16).
5. Rebecca gladly left her mother to join Isaac as a stranger and pilgrim (Gen 24:54-61).
6. Joseph was a stranger in rich Egypt, but he ordered his bones carried out (Heb 11:22).
7. Moses had it all, but he rejected all attractions for affliction with God (Heb 11:24-26).
8. Ruth left all for Israel with some of the Bible's most precious words (Ruth 1:15-17).
9. David had to sojourn, and he missed God's house (I Chr 29:15; Ps 39:12; 119:19,54).
10. David was a stranger and pilgrim in his marriage to Michael (II Sam 6:20-23). Glory!
11. Daniel did not look for comfort, ease, popularity, success ... but obeyed and prayed!
12. Anna was a stranger to life's comforts and a pilgrim to the temple daily (Lu 2:36-38).
13. Jesus demoted His natural family, chose a life with no place for His head, and endured the cross, despising its shame (Matt 12:46-50; 8:18-22; Luke 11:27-28; Heb 12:2-3).
14. Paul flushed all for Christ; death was better than anything but service (Phil 1:22-24).
15. What about the martyrs? Did they have the right attitude and perspective about life?
16. William Screven and 28 Baptists from Kittery, ME left all for Charleston, SC in 1690.
17. Sarah Pierpont (1710-1758), the stranger and pilgrim wife of one Jonathan Edwards.

Another Text

1. Peter wrote elect Jewish Christians as spiritual strangers and pilgrims (I Pe 2:11-12).
2. He besought them – to supplicate, entreat, implore – by begging entreaty to seek God.
3. The warnings in context teach being God's chosen people needing to live holy lives.
 1. He chose us to be His peculiar people, zealous of good works (2:9-10; Titus 2:14).
 2. He had already warned about time sojourning in this world in fear (I Peter 1:17).
4. This life is temporary and has more temptations and troubles than profit and pleasure.
 1. What is your worldly war? What are your fleshly lusts? What wars against you?
 2. Are you fighting this war as you should? Are you getting rid of all fleshly lusts?
 3. This world, its philosophy, people, and practices, must not influence us much.
5. It is our duty and privilege to live exemplary lives to glorify God to His elect people.

Another Text

1. Paul used Jesus as an example of not finding any continuing city here (Heb 13:12-14).
2. Certain animals of the Day of Atonement were burned outside the camp of Israel.
3. Jesus died outside the city of Jerusalem paying for the sins of His people by death.
4. We should be willing to go to Him outside the camp of others and bear any reproach.
5. Remember, Jesus went outside God's camp, for those in it were compromising rebels.
6. Even Jews of Jerusalem had no continuing city on earth – our Jerusalem is in heaven.

What do you Mind?

1. Abraham et al were strangers and pilgrims for not minding Mesopotamia (Heb 11:15).
2. They did not think or look back sentimentally about what they gave up (Luke 17:32).
3. Abraham did not consider how God would cause conception in Sarah (Rom 4:17-21).
4. Belly worshippers mind earthly things – think about them too much (Phil 3:18-19).
5. Christians are to have the mind of Christ Jesus, who gave up all for God (Phil 2:5).
6. Christians gird up the loins of their minds to reject this world's bubbles (I Peter 1:13).
7. What are earthly things? – house, education, profession, wealth, family, landscaping, children's education, vehicles, clothes, appearance, athletics, hobbies, etc.

You will be Strange

1. Your family, friends, colleagues, and this sinful world will think you weird (I Pet 4:4).
2. What did they say of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, and Paul? They blasphemed!
3. You will be strange even to other Christians, for most are not strangers and pilgrims!
4. Reject their solicitations; they will solicit for foolish or sinful reasons (Pr 1:10,14-15).
5. Strange things will happen, as persecution, but it should not move you (I Pet 4:12,12).

6. The more the world and Christians compromise and change – the stranger we will be.

How do you Sojourn?

1. Peter gave a glorious reminder of how to live for our Father in heaven (I Peter 1:17).
 1. It includes girding up your mind to be sober and to hope for eternal things (1:13).
 2. It requires obedient children that reject natural lusts of earthly ignorance (1:14).
 3. It requires holiness in every part of your life because of God's holiness (1:15-16).
 4. God has no respect of persons – He does not adjust His standards for you (1:17).
 5. He judges based on your works –actual deeds – not your intents or feelings (1:17).
 6. You have a little time on earth – this context should produce fearful living (1:17).
2. Take up your cross daily – there must be loss, pain, sacrifice (Luke 9:23). Is there?
3. The world will hate you – unbelievers will despise a holy, sacrificial life (Jn 15:19).
4. The people of our sojourn are His fully dedicated children (Ps 122:1,8; 42:4; 84:10).
5. Earth is not your home, if a Christian; earthlings, even family, are not your people; heaven is your home, and those people going there and already there are your people.
6. Jesus responded profitably as a pilgrim to those wanting to hold on (Matt 8:19-22).
7. Redeem time by buying it back through trading uses that consume it (Eph 5:16).
8. America is not our nation – you are citizens of a holy nation far greater than America.
9. Strangers and pilgrims drop weights others live for to be kingdom servants (He 12:2).
10. Take a stand – not in thought or word, but in deed – to be a true stranger and pilgrim.
11. A real stranger and pilgrim, a disciple indeed, continues in Christ's word (John 8:31).

Get Less Attached

1. All that is in the world is not of the Father and incompatible with Him (I Jn 2:15-17).
2. Jesus calls for hatred and forsaking of earthly things (Luke 14:26; Mark 10:28-30).
3. Lot compromised for Sodom and sought a little city; his wife looked back to her ruin.
4. Everything here has a hot future! Its future melting should affect you (II Pet 3:10-14).
5. Jesus angrily warned those following Him to ignore earthly appeals (Luke 14:15-24).
6. What is your infatuation? What must you have? How do you compromise with earth?
7. Examine happiness, enthusiasm, priorities, time, choices, security, and sentimentality.
8. Married Christians should live some ways as if single (I Cor 7:29-32). Think children.
9. Even your Christian spouse on earth will not be your spouse in heaven. Grasp this!
10. Set your affections, your ambitions, your passion, your need in heaven (Col 3:1-4).
11. Friendship with this world – its people and things – is to be the enemy of God (Ja 4:4).
12. While detaching from this world's people and things – think of Zion (Heb 12:22-24).

Conclusion:

1. What traits from Higher Ground? Christ-centered, eternal perspective, spiritually minded, personal holiness, personal devotions, spiritual warfare, etc.
2. An appropriate prayer? Lord, do not let me get too close to family, house, job, etc. When have you?
3. Some in our church have left much, most, or nearly all in comparison to others. They are His jewels.
4. My job is ambassador to warn you of coming accounting/judgment and how you should live now.
5. Three parents died in the last four years – the difference in attachment to earth or heaven was clear.
6. Two things you have heard recently, zeal and thanksgiving, if done with your might mark a pilgrim.
7. There are only a few with the zeal to take the strait gate and narrow way by rejecting all in the world.

For Further Study:

1. Sermon Outline: [Sojourn Here in Fear](#).
2. Sermon Outline: [Belly Worshipers](#).
3. Sermon Outline: [Spiritual Adultery](#).
4. Sermon Outline: ([PowerPoint slides](#)), [Inputs](#).
5. Sermon Outline: [Biblical Separation](#).
6. Sermon Outline: [Jesus Is Lord](#).
7. Sermon Outline: [Your Body Is the Lord's](#).
8. Sermon Outline: [What Is a Christian?](#)
9. Sermon Outline: [The Sword of Christ](#).
10. Sermon Outline: [Good Christian Heretics](#).
11. Internet Document: Jonathan Edwards' essay about [Sarah Pierpont](#).