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THE HOLY CITY GOD IS BUILDING

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 100
HEBREWS 11:14-16 and 23

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Our existence on this earth is an insult to Satan and he hates us. We are here by the grace of God and Satan doesn't like that one bit. This time of Bible study is when we get our news broadcast from heaven and is our chance to hear what God has to say to us.

Before we look at these next verses, let us get a corrected translation of verses 12 and 13 of Hebrews 11.

Verse 12

"Therefore, from the source of one hopeless couple was born Isaac, and these same ones (Abraham and Sarah) having become sexually dead (in contrast to Genesis 15:5) just as the stars in the heaven in number and the sand which is by the lip of the sea innumerable."

Verse 13

"According to doctrine resident in the soul, all these died under the principle of dying grace, not having received the surpassing grace promises but having seen the same from a distance, and having saluted and embraced them, also having acknowledged that they were strangers and the passing through types on this earth."

HEBREWS 11:14 "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." We begin with the explanatory "gar" plus the present, active, participle of lego. This is historical present and means it is a past event viewed with the reality of a present occurrence. So it means, "For they who say." Next we have toioutos and this means "such things." These "such things" which they affirm in their souls comes from doctrine.

(Illustration--God told Noah to build an ark. Arks had never been built before and Noah had nothing to go by except the specific plans God gave him. But he saw this in his soul and worked for 120 years getting this ark ready and he won over his wife and his three sons and their wives and eight souls were saved. This is an illustration of how a man can see "such things" because God tells him about them. That is exactly the same thing we have here. They actually saw that city that was one day coming.)

The phrase "such things as these" refers to divine viewpoint and this divine viewpoint will change all future history.

Next we have "declare plainly" and this is the present, active, indicative of emphainizo and this means to make clear, to explain. So this means "they make it clear." "That they seek" and this is the present, active, indicative of epizeteo and it means to strive for something, to strain for something. They were striving for surpassing grace. These are the people who wade through all human viewpoint and the stupid things that clutter up life and they actually get to the heart of God's message for them. They understand the issue and stay with it. This is the kind of person who has the grit and moral courage to keep on taking in doctrine even when the going gets hard. They will not be distracted by attractive inducements. They knew there was something more that was coming and they strained and reached out toward it.

Thus far in this verse we have "For they who say such things as this make it clear that they keep striving." Then we read "for a heavenly fatherland." This means a resurrection body, all sin gone, we are finally at home with God and are living in maximum blessing. One day these things will be ours, and when we glorify God in time, it leads us to eternal things, the forever things, a surpassing grace country.

Verse 15 "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." When you see this in Greek, the words kai and men should be translated "And, on the one hand." Next we have a second class condition from ei. It says, "If they had been mindful (but it is a second class condition and that means they were not mindful). "Had been mindful" is the imperfect, active, indicative of mneemonuo and it means to keep on remembering. So thus far in this verse, we have, "And, on the one hand, if they had been remembering" (but they didn't remember). This simply means they didn't look back to their native land of Ur. They didn't look back. (And actually they had gone out into the "sticks" compared to Ur. It was the most advanced city in the world of that time. They actually had developed a fantastic system of air conditioning and they had a sewer system. There was certainly nothing like this out in Canaan). So we have, "If they had been remembering the country of their origin but they did not." Next we have "from whence" from apo hos. Next we have the aorist, active, indicative of ekbaino and it means "from which they had originated." Next we have the imperfect, active, indicative of echo and it means "They might have had." The word for "opportunity" is kairos and it means favorable time. Next we have the aorist, active, infinitive of anakampto and it means "to bend back, to turn back."

The Same In Every Generation

People in every generation always have these same temptations. We are always hearing voices that tempt us to turn back. The purpose of this is to test character and to see what people are really made of. So look what we have in this verse--"And, if on the one hand, they had continued remembering that country from which they had originated, but they did not, then they would have had opportunity to have circled back in reversionism toward Ur."

Look at some truths that comes from verse 15.

1. Reversionism in its various stages encourages us to get off the glory road and stay off. The glory road is the road of super grace, dying grace and surpassing grace.
2. Once reversionism takes over in our minds there are many human viewpoint programs lying in ambush ready to take over.
3. Negative volition toward doctrine creates opportunities for human viewpoint to come in and this opens the door for divine discipline and if this continues long enough, then the sin unto death takes over.
4. In our illustration before us, notice the determination of the patriarchs who never looked back. If they had a temporary setback, they would rebound and get back on the right road.
5. The best answer to life's problems is Bible Doctrine in the soul. When failure and sin come, the only road is the road of confession, rebound and then a new start.

Verse 16 "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Back in verse 15 we had "And, on the one hand." Now this verse begins with de and nun and it should be translated "But on the other hand, as a matter of fact." Next we have "they decided" and this is a present, middle, indicative of orego and it means "to desire and strive for something." They desired in the past but in this historical present, it is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence. So thus far in this verse we have, "But, on the other hand, as a matter of reality they themselves desire and strive for something better." These are the people who reached super grace and this made them realize that there was something better coming ahead. The word "better" is the objective genitive singular of the comparative adjective kreisson and is the comparative of agathos. This something better is dying grace and surpassing grace. When you take in maximum doctrine and you really walk with God, you know there is something still better than this, and this something better will last forever.

So look what we are building up to in these verses-- Verse 14--"For they who say such things as these make it clear that they keep on striving for a country, a future." Verse 15--"And if, on the one hand, they had continued remembering that country from which they had originated, but they did not, then they would have had opportunity to have circled back." Verse 16--"But on the other hand, as a matter of reality, they themselves desire and strive for something better..."

Focus Your Mind On That Word "City"

We are going to be making an intense study of the importance of this word "city" in these verses we have before us. God is preparing a city and we are going to see just how wonderful that city is going to be. Heaven is designed to glorify God. Heaven is a demonstration of what God can do. This is why we call it the road to glory. Next in verse 16 we have the word "Wherefore" and this is the inferential conjunction dio and it means that an important conclusion is coming up.

Next we have ho Theos meaning "The God." "Is not ashamed" is the present, active, indicative of epaischunomai. Next we have "to be called" and this is a present, passive, infinitive of epikaleo, and it means "to be designated, to be surnamed." Next we have "their" from autos and this refers to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Sarah and two others whom we will see a little later in this study. So we translate this autos "the same ones." So this should read, "Therefore, the God is not ashamed of the same ones to be designated, to be surnamed their God."

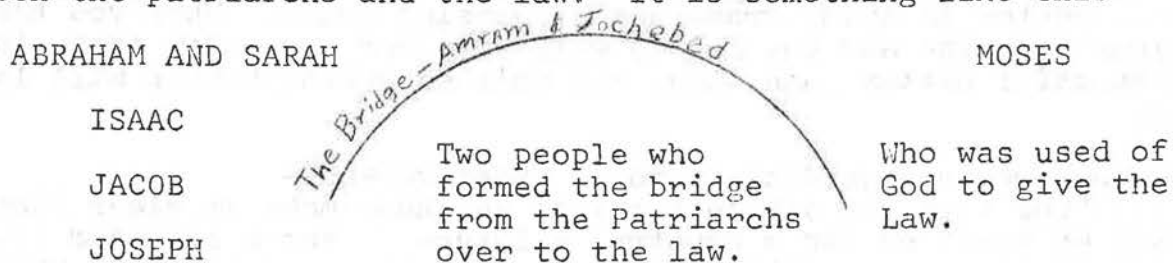
Next we have the explanatory particle "gar" translated "for." Then we have "he hath prepared" and this is an aorist, active, indicative of etoimazo and this is a dramatic aorist. God himself has done this. Then we have autos and it means "for them." Now we have the word polus meaning "city."

Let us notice the scripture where we meet this word "city." We saw it first in Hebrews 11:10, "For he looked for a city." Literally this says, "For he himself kept waiting for a city." Here we meet this word again in Hebrews 11:16. Later we will meet the city in Hebrews 11:23. It is also in Revelation 21:2 and Revelation 21:10 and all the rest of the chapter describes that city.

(You recall we studied crowns recently--The crown of life, the crown of glory, and the crown of righteousness. Crowns to the members of the royal family of God are the same as the city will be to these Old Testament super grace heroes.)

To understand the meaning of this word "city" we will skip down to verse 23 and pick up some new information.

HEBREWS 11:23 "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." "By faith" should be translated "By doctrine resident in the soul." Then we have the word "Moses" and the way you read it in English, you would think Moses was the subject in this sentence. But Moses is a baby and had not as yet been taught any doctrine. Moses is not the subject in this verse. Moses is the object in this verse. Two other people not mentioned by name are found to be the subject here. These two people bridged the gap between the patriarchs and the law. It is something like this--



The Holy Spirit is now going to tell us who these two people were. Moses will be the subject in verse 24, but he is the object in verse 23. The subject in verse 23 is the parents. Levi was the half-brother of Joseph. The son of Levi we are interested in here is a man called Kohath. Kohath had a son named Amram, and Amram married his aunt named Jochebed. (Later on Moses will write in the law in Lev. 18:12 that it is not right for a nephew to marry his aunt. It just should never be done. But God had a purpose in bringing these two people together as we will see.)

Amram and the word means "high people" or "people of high society." Jochebed means "whose glory is Jehovah." In Exodus 6:20, Jochebed is called the sister of Amram's father, which means Amram was her nephew. So, Amram married his aunt Jochebed which is contrary to Leviticus 18:12.

(What is the explanation? Here we see God overruling in these events and quite evidently Amram and Jochebed were right man and right woman. This marriage was the will of God.)

Amram and Jochebed had three children. Miriam, who was five years older than Moses. Aaron, who was three years older than Moses and the youngest child was Moses.

Look now at Hebrews 11:23. The words "When he was born" is the aorist, passive, participle of gennao. This is a temporal participle and is correctly translated "when he was born." He is not the hero in this verse. He is the subject and hero in the next verse, but in this verse two other people are in the center of the stage. Moses in verse 23 is just a helpless baby and the real attraction in this verse is "the city." Moses is the object in this verse, not the subject. He is only three months old when this verse is over. Next we have the words "was hidden" and this is an aorist, passive, indicative of krupto. So what we actually have thus far is this--"By reason of doctrine resident in

the soul of his parents, when Moses was born, he was hidden." Then we have the word trimnos meaning "three months." Then we have hupo pater meaning "by his parents."

Look At This Important History

1. Moses was born about 1520 B.C.
This is a very important date because a very important dynasty was ruling the Egyptian Empire of that day. (At this time this was one of the strongest empires in the world.)
2. This is the 18th Dynasty of the New Egyptian Empire and the Pharaoh was Aminoteph the First. Aminoteph the Second will be the Pharaoh when the Exodus will take place. Thutmose I was the Pharaoh at the time of the birth of Moses and he had no male heir, but a famous daughter named Hatshepsut. Later on she will marry Thutmose II.
3. When Moses was born Thutmose I was the ruler. Exodus 1:15-16 gives us the order of Thutmose I to have all the males killed at birth. Verses 17-22 also add information about how the midwives responded. This was the way the Pharaoh would cut off the slaves and rob them of their power.
4. In Exodus 2:1 we read how Amram married his aunt Jochebed.
5. Please notice that Exodus 2:2 says that Moses was a beautiful baby. The Hebrew word for "goodly" is tobe and it means beautiful. Now you don't have to have an ounce of doctrine in order to hide a baby three months. They wanted him to live. You don't need doctrine in order to do this. All you need is a big fat emotion and sentiment. It is normal for people to want their baby to live. Moses lived to be 120 and he was magnificent looking all his life. He was a powerful man physically. But the edict was out, "Kill him" and all other baby boys.
6. But please notice that in Hebrews 11:23 the Holy Spirit tells us something that we do not pick up in Exodus 2. So we have, "By means of doctrine resident in the soul, when Moses was born, he was hidden three months by his parents." And they didn't hide him because he was beautiful but they hid him because they had doctrine in their souls.
The whole truth comes out on this phrase, "Because they saw he was a proper child."
7. The translators of the King James Version translate this "proper child." The word "proper" doesn't mean beautiful. "They saw" is the aorist, active, indicative of horao. This is a constantive aorist and it gathers up into one whole all the doctrine they knew about God's provision for Israel and their future. They knew the 400 years that God had spoken about to Abraham was soon to come to a close. Amram and Jochebed had accumulated a lot of doctrine. Later Moses would write it down in Genesis 15:13-15. The word "child" here is from paidion and it means "infant." The problem is with the word "proper." This word magnified the word "Infant." This is an adjective in the accusative case and the word is astios.

8. The whole meaning of verse 23 in Hebrews 11 turns on this one word astios for it means pertaining to a city. The translators didn't know what to do with this word and they settled on "proper." But it means an infant pertaining to a city. So look what we actually have in what Amram and Jochebed saw when they looked into the face of this boy. They didn't see it in the face of little Miriam, or in the face of that mouse Aaron, but they saw it in the face of this baby Moses. So we read, "By means of doctrine resident in the soul, when Moses was born, he was hidden three months by his parents because they saw an infant pertaining to a city."
9. Get Five Points From This Corrected Translation.
- a. There is a city in this context which is very important, and it is mentioned in Hebrews 11:10 and Hebrews 11:16.
The city reminds the Old Testament saints of the same thing that crowns stand for when mentioned in connection with the New Testament Saints.
 - b. The city is related to surpassing grace blessings and the reward the patriarchs will have in eternity.
 - c. The city is a part of God's paragraph for them concerning surpassing grace.
 - d. The point is this--The parents of Moses had so much doctrine in their souls that when they looked into the face of that baby they named Moses, they saw the future deliverer of their people. This was God's way of speaking to them and they saw deliverance coming.
 - e. They saw that preserving Moses from the wrath and cruelty and slaughter of Pharaoh was part of their super grace function resulting in their surpassing grace reward.
They knew that Thutmose I had given the edict for the babies to be killed but they saw in this baby God's plan and that's why they hid him for three months. They defied the edict of the Pharaoh because of doctrine in their souls.
Acts 7:20 in the dying speech of Stephen says the same thing.

The Eternal Holy City

The eternal Holy City is used to designate the surpassing grace blessings that will come to the Patriarchs of Israel.

Hebrews 11:10, "He kept waiting with anticipation for a city."

Hebrews 11:16, "For he hath prepared a city for those same ones."

Hebrews 11:23, "Because they saw an infant pertaining to a city."

Acts 7:20, "And it was at this same time when Moses was born and he was an infant pertaining to a city."

God saw this boy pertaining to a city and these Godly parents looked at him and saw him in the same way. The moment Moses was born God said to them, "This man is destined for that city."

It will be good to read again Revelation 21 as we close this emphasis on the city.