

# ALL THESE DIED IN FAITH

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HEBREWS 11:13-16 • TV-015B

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By

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### **Hebrews 11:13-16**

*“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. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 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.”*

I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of **Hebrews chapter 11**. Let me read two or three verses of Scripture beginning with **verse 13**. Now, I’m speaking today on the subject: **“THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH.”**

And the Scripture reads in **Hebrews 11:13-16**: *“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. They plainly declare that they seek a country, (a better country) wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He hath prepared for them a city.”* *“These all died in faith.”*

It used to be the custom years ago to write an inscription on the tombstone of a departed friend in memory of his life or in memory of his faith. I’ve always enjoyed walking through the old, old, cemeteries and reading these epitaphs.

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On Charles Haddon Spurgeon's tombstone which I visited in London England several years ago, you will find these words:

**“Ever since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply  
Redeeming love has been my theme  
And will be till I die.”**

Another marker which I saw in an old cemetery in which is buried John Newton, John Bunyan, and Isaac Watts and some of these great, old, hymn writers; I found another marker on a tombstone which read, “Till He comes,” that's all. It had the name of the parted believer in three words, “Till He comes.”

They buried M.T. Martin, one of the great preachers of the state of Mississippi, many, many, years ago, almost a hundred years ago. And on his tombstone they wrote his name in five words, “A bond slave of Jesus Christ.” Now that tells a lot, doesn't it, “A bond slave of Jesus Christ?”

Job, in **Job 19:23** wanted these words written on his marker. He said, *“Oh that my words were printed in a book, oh that they were graven with lead in the rock forever. I know my redeemer liveth and on this earth shall stand and the worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh, I'll see the Lord, whom I shall see for myself and not another. I know my redeemer liveth.”*

I read a story one time about a terrible devastating flood which took place in one part of our country in which many people were killed. And the body of a small boy they found later on, after the flood was over; they found the body of this little fellow, three, four, or five years of age.

And he was never identified and no one ever claimed him. So they took him and buried him in the grave and someone erected a tombstone over his little body and wrote two words. They didn't have a name but they wrote two words, “God knows.”

And I believe in our text today we have the believer's epitaph, the epitaph which God has written for every believer. Now God almighty presides over the death and over the burial of all His people just like He did over the death and burial of Moses. *“Precious in the sight of the Lord, (the Scripture says) is the death of His saints.”*

He seems to erect a giant mausoleum over the bodies of all His people who sleep in Jesus and seems to write these words over that mausoleum *“These all died in faith,”* all of them, in the same faith. *“There's one Lord, one faith, on baptism. And these all died in faith.”*

The poem goes something like this:

**“We shall sleep but not forever  
There'll be a glorious dawn  
We shall meet to part, no never  
On that resurrection morn**

**From the deepest caves of oceans**

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**From the desert and the plain  
From the valleys and the mountains  
All His sheep shall rise again**

**We shall sleep but not forever  
In a lone and silent grave  
Blessed be the Lord who taketh  
And blessed be the Lord who gave**

**In that bright eternal city  
Death shall never, never, come  
And in His own good time He'll take us  
From this world to His eternal home."**

I want to be honest with you. *"I want to keep back nothing that is profitable unto you. I have not shunned to declare unto you all (the whole) the counsel of God."* I want to be true to your soul because God called me to preach the Gospel, not to please men, but to preach the Gospel.

And I want you to listen carefully to me while I preach to you today on the subject, the believer's epitaph: **"THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH."**

I heard a story back years ago about a lawyer in Memphis Tennessee, a man who belonged to a church there, a prominent church. He belonged there for many years. He attended every Sunday morning and every Sunday night.

He was there 10 or 12 or 13 years. He was stricken with a fatal heart attack. They put him in Intensive Care. He was dying; he knew it. His wife knew it and the doctor knew it. And he told his wife to send for the pastor, the pastor of his church. He had been his pastor for 10 or 11 years. They only permitted the pastor to come in Intensive Care for a few moments.

But he came in and this man, the lawyer, was lying there on the bed. And the pastor came in, a liberal pastor, one who like many today, did not preach the Word of God faithfully, one who was more interested in entertaining people than edifying people, one who kept back much of the Scriptures because it would cause controversy and maybe lose membership.

But he came in and stood by the bedside of this dying lawyer. And the lawyer looked at him and said, "Pastor; I've listened to you preach now for ten years. I've attended every service every Sunday. I didn't expect to die this soon. And I want you to know that I'm on the threshold of eternity and I want you to know this; you have not prepared me for this hour. You have failed me."

I don't want to fail you and I want you to listen to what I'm going to say on this subject today. I'm going to deal with three things:

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First of all: These all died in faith.

Secondly: What was the faith in which they died?

Thirdly: How did this faith affect their lives?

Now, the Lord, talking about Abraham, Enoch, Abel, Moses, Noah, and Sarah. *“These all died in faith, Hebrews chapter 11, the rollcall of the faithful, God’s Hall of Fame, so to speak, “these all died in faith.”*

The first thing I know about this; listen to it: Abel, Abraham, Moses, Noah, and Sarah; these all died. Even though they had faith they died. And faith is not going to keep you from dying. Faith is not going to keep you from illness or from dying.

Abel died as well as Cain. Moses died as well as Pharaoh. David died as well as Saul. Jacob died as well as Esau. Peter died as well as Judas. And believers die as well as unbelievers. *“These all died.”*

Abraham died, Moses died, and Noah died. Faith is not going to keep you from illness or from death. The Scripture tells us that one of Paul’s companions was a man named Trophimus. And one day Paul wrote this letter and said, *“I have left Trophimus behind because he was very sick, very sick.”*

And then he talked about, *“Epaphroditus who was sick nigh unto death.”* That was another one of his companions. And the Scripture tells us, *“The Lord loved Lazareth.”* But he died. And unless Christ returns soon you’re going to die and I’m going to die.

And the first thing we learn from this text; *“These all died in faith,”* is these all died. *It is appointed unto men once to die.”* And we need to consider it and think about it.

Now another thing I notice about this is *“These all died in faith.”* That means and what I’m going to talk about now is vital and you listen carefully to it. *“These all died in faith,”* that is they continued in faith all their lives and when they died, when they came to the hour of death they were still in that faith of Christ. They were confident in that faith until they died.

Now it seems to me that present-day religion; I see these programs on television where the hundreds and thousands walk down the aisle and recite a little prayer and that’s supposed to fix them up for eternity. That’s supposed to take care of everything and make sure they are ushered into the presence of God one of these days, no matter whether they continue in the faith, continue in Christ, continue in love, or continue in faithfulness or not.

But that’s not true! Our Lord tells us, *“He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”* Now I have no hope for the individual who does not die in faith. I have no hope for the individual who does not continue in Christ, *“holding fast the profession of his faith firm unto the end.”* That’s what the Scripture says.

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Listen to Paul's testimony: *"I am now ready to die, (to be offered). The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."*

Now my friend; the great object of faith is Christ. But the great mark of faith is perseverance. The Scripture says, *"The righteous shall hold his way. And he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger."*

Now you know what I'm saying is true. You go to any church in this city or any other city and read their rules and you'll find hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of names on the church roll who never darken the door of the church, who never pray, who never read God's Word, who never worship God almighty, who live very evil, sinful, worldly lives, who have no interest in the Gospel.

They made a profession of faith in a revival meeting or in a high-pressured campaign or something like that. And they claim that they're saved. And John said this; John in **1 John 2:19** says, *"They went out from us but they were not of us. For if they had been of us they would no doubt; (underscore it), have continued with us."*

*"These all died, how, in faith?"* They didn't die looking back to an old experience that stayed old. They didn't die claiming when they were ten years old they joined the church. They didn't die claiming there was some water sprinkled in their face when they were eight days or ten days or twenty days old. They didn't die claiming they got some kind of religious experience in a high-pressured Hollywood-type evangelistic campaign; they died in faith, they died in faith.

Thirdly: These people died in faith, that is, they never got beyond faith, they never got beyond faith. This is important, Abel, Abraham, Noah; read that **11 chapter of Hebrews**, Moses; my, what a rollcall. Wouldn't you have liked to have walked with that crowd? Wouldn't you have liked to belong to that group, that inner circle, Abel, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Enoch, all lived by faith in the promises of God?

And they died believing and embracing those promises and they never got beyond trusting God and they never got beyond looking to Him by faith. They died in faith, they died in faith. *"We walk by faith, not by sight"* the whole journey. *"The just shall live by faith,"* the whole journey. These died in faith.

I'm suspicious of people who are forever demanding signs and wonders. They said in Christ's day, "Show us a sign. Show us something marvelous, some miracle. Do the miracles here you did in Capernaum." Christ said, *"No sign shall be given but that of Jonah (that's the Word of God, that's the only sign)."*

I'm suspicious of people who claim visions and dreams and new revelations, to supersede faith, to go beyond faith. Is not faith enough? We're justified by faith. We're saved by faith. We're redeemed by faith.

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Someday I shall see Him face to face. But now I see through a glass dimly. Someday I shall know as I am known. Faith is going to give way to sight. Faith is going to give way to reality. But now I know in part, I prophecy in part.

When that which is perfect is come; then that which is in part shall be done away. But until that which is perfect is come, until I see my Lord face to face, I walk by faith. And I never get beyond faith; I believe, you believe.

And this faith in Him is sufficient. It's sufficient to live by and it's sufficient to die by. Abraham died by it. Moses died by it. Abel died by it. And Paul died by it. He said, "*I believe God that it shall be even as He told me.*" That's sufficient.

"*These all died*" but they died in faith, they died in faith. They didn't die out yonder somewhere pouting on the side of the hill; they died in faith. They died on the firing line. They died trusting Christ.

And they died in faith believing the Word of God. They didn't have any, they didn't have any visions and signs and telegrams from heaven; they died in faith.

Now watch this; what was the faith in which they died? Now this is important. You read on down in **Hebrews 11:13** there and it says, "*These all died in faith not having received the promises.*"

What does that mean? It means this, not having received the fulfillment of the promises. Now they had received the promises but not the fulfillment. Adam had been told by God that the seed of woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, destroy the power of the serpent, shall redeem and deliver His people from the power of the serpent.

But Adam never did see that seed, talking about Christ. Christ came 4,000 years later. Adam never did see that seed, the fulfillment of that promise. He had the promise but not the fulfillment. He accepted it by faith.

Abraham did not see his seed as the sands of the seashore and the stars of the sky. God said, "*Abraham; I'm going to give you a son and through that son you're going to have so many seeds, so many people. They'll be more than the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore.*" He never saw that come true. He had the promise but not the fulfillment.

Jacob did not see Shiloh in whom all nations would be blessed. "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh comes (the King of peace).*" Jacob never saw Him but he had the promise.

Isaiah never did see, "*Him who was wounded for his transgressions.*" He wrote about Him. "*He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of my peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.*"

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He never had the fulfillment of that promise but he had the promise. And that's the faith in which they lived and fought and in which they died. And you and I have not seen the coming of Christ yet. He says, "*I go away but I'll come again and receive you unto myself.*" You haven't seen that; you have the promise.

"And I shall raise you from the grave. Because I live you shall live. They'll bury your body but I'll bring it out of the grave." That's a promise but you haven't seen it. "And I'll take you to glory and you shall forever live with me." You haven't seen that fulfilled yet.

So you see, like them, we have the same faith. We have a greater revelation than they had. We have a more extensive revelation but we live by promises too just like they did, same faith. They saw them afar off.

Christ said, "*Abraham saw my day.*" He saw my day, just like I see His day, His second coming, the resurrection, the day of glory. I see it, not with these eyes. I've been preaching 30 years and Christ never has come in my bedroom and sat down at the foot of the bed and talked to me. He doesn't need to; I have His Word. I believe Him without that type of thing.

"*Moses wrote of me,*" Christ said. He never saw Christ but he wrote of Him. Job saw his Redeemer with eyes of faith. And if our faith is the faith of God's elect; we'll see afar off, every promise as if it were already fulfilled with eyes of faith, with eyes of faith.

I've never heard His voice. I've never seen His form in the flesh. But with a heart of faith and with eyes of faith and with a soul confident in His Word; Him who can never lie, I believe Him, I've seen it.

And then it says this and actually; did you know faith is better than sight? If you had, if you had a choice between seeing a vision of the Lord and having His Word; which would you take? Now think; don't answer too quickly there, you think a minute.

Do you know what Peter said; I'll let you look it up in **2 Peter 1:18-19**? Peter told about going yonder on the Mount of Transfiguration. He was with James and John and our Lord when they went on the mountain, when Christ was transfigured right in front of their eyes and His glory shone all about them and Moses and Elijah appeared to them.

And Peter was telling about that. He said, "*I heard the voice of God speak and I saw the Lord transfigured before my eyes.*" Well he goes on in the next verse, **2 Peter 1:19** says, "*But we have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto you do well if you take heed for the Scriptures came not in old times by the will of man, (but by the will of God). Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*"

In other words, Peter says; "You're better off with the Scriptures than you are with visions because your eyes can deceive you and your ears can deceive you."

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Now people who take drugs and dope will tell you that. They see things that aren't there. They hear voices that aren't there. And Satan can give you a vision. And Satan can give you voices. But Satan can't give you God's Word.

And God's Word can never lie. I'd rather have the Word of God than a vision. That's Scriptural. Peter says, "*But we have a more sure word of prophecy.*" The Word of God is better than any dream, vision, or voice you've ever seen or heard because it's true. "*The glory of man is like the flower of the field; it fadeth away but the Word of God endureth forever.*"

Another thing about their faith; they saw afar off and they were persuaded of these promises and embraced them. Now listen to me; this is important. Their faith was not mere lip-service. Christ said, "*You call me Lord with your lips but hearts are far from me.*"

Their faith led them to act on the promise. They had the promise of God. They believed it. They were persuaded of it and they embraced it. Abel embraced the promise and offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

Moses embraced the promise, went to Egypt and delivered the children of Israel. Noah embraced the promise; He believed God and he prepared an ark. Abraham embraced the promise; he believed God and put his boy on an altar and raised a knife to slay him.

And this is the faith that saves. It's a faith that not only receives the promise of God and believes the promise of God but acts on it. "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" Believe, confess, and act on your faith. It's not faith if you don't act on it.

Now watch this: How did this faith affect their lives, as we close with this? "*They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth.*" They sought a better country. They were strangers on this earth by birth. They were born of God.

They were not of this world, even as Christ is not of this world. We're citizens of a heavenly kingdom. They were strangers in interest, "*What shall we eat, what shall we drink, whether withal shall we be clothed? These things the Gentiles seek. Seek ye first the kingdom of God.*"

They were strangers as to continuance; they knew that their lives on this earth would not be long at the longest. I read about a little girl who was born blind or an accident happened at birth and she was rendered blind. She was blind for many years. The family was very poor. Finally they took her to a doctor when she was up nine or ten years of age.

And they found out through a special operation that her sight could be restored. So they somehow got the money and the operation was performed. And the girl stayed in the hospital for a long time and finally it came time to take off the bandages.



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And the doctor said to the mother, "I'd like for her to be at home when we remove the bandages. Now I'm not sure the operation was a success but I hope so." So she was home and they took her out in the back yard. The doctor was there and the mother and the father and some friends.

And they sat the little girl down in a chair and the doctor stood behind her. And the mother and father went over and stood in front of her and back behind them was a beautiful red rosebush framed by one of those white lattice affairs, the blue sky, the floating white clouds, the green, fresh, cut lawn.

And the doctor stood behind the little girl and he took the scissors and with great anticipation he cut the bandage that covered her eyes and it fell away. She blinked a few times and her eyes watered a little bit and she shielded them against the light and then she opened them gradually. And she looked and tears started streaming down her cheeks and she said, "Mom; why didn't you tell me it was so beautiful, why didn't you tell me?" And the mother ran and grabbed her and said, "Honey; I tried to but you were blind and you couldn't see, you couldn't see."

My friend; you can only see that better country, that beautiful country, God's country, by faith, by faith in Christ. You're blind and you can't see. I wish I could tell you how beautiful it is but God will have to give you eyes to see!