

BELIEVERS' HALL OF FAITH



WHO ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO SEE IN HEAVEN?

When we read Hebrews, chapter 11, we find the “hall of fame” or more accurately, the “hall of faith”. For every person or group mentioned, the verse starts with “By faith”. None of them attained eternal life without faith. It is the same for us today.

¹Now **faith** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by it the elders obtained a good report. – **Hebrews 11:1**

Read the chapter first. We read of “promises” in verse 13 and “promise” in verse 39:

¹³These 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**

What were these promises? Many promises were made to the saints in the past: of a Saviour to come (Jeremiah 33:14-15); eternal life on Earth (James 2:5); rest (Hebrews 4:5); a land (Deuteronomy 19:8); and to rule the Earth (Romans 5:13). They never received these promises although they were aware that these would become reality in the future.

THE SITUATION TODAY

Who do you know, or have known, that have already joined the ranks mentioned in Hebrews 11, that would stand out as someone you look(ed) up to in your life? Would you want to meet them in heaven and hear the names called out, and Jesus say to them “Well done, good and faithful servant”? Who would you list in your hall of faith?

In your life there have been many people that God sent on your path when you needed guidance or support. In many cases we may not even have been aware of them, but they had a definite influence on our lives. We will one day be surprised at whose faces we see, people that we never thought would “make it”. Well, they made it, through faith. Who can you think of that will join you? Parents? Grandparents? Friends? Colleagues? Your pastor? Often the ones who had the most influence in forming our lives of faith are the ones who were not always on the foreground, not seen by the masses, and never given any credit. They are the intercessors who quietly and in private took us to the presence of God by praying for us when we did not even know we needed prayer. They will be there, for sure.

When I look at the living testimonies of people around me, and I think that they will join me in heaven, I am truly humbled. Many of them are people that in their lives have achieved infinitely more than I ever did or will. However, they counted their fame for nothing when comparing what they have on Earth with what awaits them in Heaven. Many of them did not achieve a lot in terms of how the world views success. Some of them have already passed away, in which case this verse applies to them:

³⁹And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the **promise**: ⁴⁰God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. – **Hebrews 11:39**

What promise did they not receive? They all lived lives of faith, hoping for the coming of the Messiah. Even the New Testament believers that had already passed away when this verse was penned by the apostle Paul did not receive this promise, and neither did he. He wrote about the end times and the coming of Jesus Christ as Messiah, but he himself did not experience the event. Why? Look at verse 40 and experience the incredible goodness of God: He is waiting for people today to give their lives to Him so that they can be included in the group to receive the promise and that the older saints would not be made **perfect** (the revelation of Jesus Christ, and resurrected bodies along with their resurrected spirits) without us joining them! Have a look at the last two verses of the Revelation of Jesus given to John:

²⁰He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ²¹The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. – **Revelation 22:20**

After all that Jesus had shown John, he returned to his home on Patmos. He saw the future but had to continue living in his present time. When Jesus tells him “Surely I come quickly” John confirms his wish “Even so, come Lord Jesus”. Since then millions have agreed with John – that Jesus would come to fulfil the promise of Hebrews 11.

You and I are not guaranteed that we will experience the personal coming of Jesus Christ as the rapture of the church while we are alive. We may already have passed away when that day comes. Of course, we may also still be alive when it happens, in the blink of an eye. However, we, along with all believers of all ages, will be included:

¹⁵For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord **shall not prevent them which are asleep**. ¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸Wherefore comfort one another with these words. – **1 Thessalonians 4:15-18**

Those who “are asleep” are the believers of all ages that have already died without experiencing the promise. They will rise first. They are waiting for Jesus to collect all of us, alive at the time, along with them, to receive our eternal reward. Our eternal reward is based on the blessed hope we have, which is the appearing of Jesus:

¹¹For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹²Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ¹³Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; ¹⁴Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. – **Titus 2:11-14**

CONCLUSION

Never lose focus of the blessed hope! What may have been far in the future for saints of the past, is so much closer for us today (Romans 13:11). Live, be the light, be the salt, as an example to everyone around you but also stay focused on the heavens, for that is where your redemption will come from.