

“Here We Are, But Straying Pilgrims”

1. Here we are but straying pilgrims,
Here our path is often dim.
But to cheer us on our journey,
Still we sing this wayside hymn:

2. Here our souls are often fearful
Of the pilgrim’s lurking foe.
But the Lord is our defender
And He tells us we may know:

3. Here our feet are often weary
On the hills that throng our way.
Here the tempest darkly gathers
But our hearts within us say:

*Chorus: Yonder over the rolling river,
Where the shining mansions rise;
Soon will be our home for ever,
And the smile of the blessed Giver
Gladdens all our longing eyes.*

In **Genesis 11**, Terah, the father of Abram left Ur of the Chaldeans to, as **verse 31** says, “**go to Canaan.**” He and his family settled in Harran and became very rich. Then Abram was called by the Lord:

The LORD had said to Abram, “**Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.**

***I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”***

And Abram left in order to obtain the land God had chosen to give him. The Hebrew writer picks up the story:

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

Abraham was “like a stranger in a foreign country,” and understood that life on this Earth is temporary and that we are citizens of a “country” that we will possess and live in throughout eternity. In **Hebrews 11:13**, the Hebrew writer says this about Abraham and the other “heroes of faith: – ***“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.” (KJV)***

Peter says the same thing in **1 Peter 2:9-11** when he says that we “***are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles (KJV: “strangers and pilgrims”), to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.***”

Life wasn't easy for Abraham as he lived his life out here on the earth as a "straying pilgrim." Read the account of his life in **Genesis 17-25**. Yet he lived by faith and received the full benefits of his citizenship in Heaven. We, like Abraham have been promised Heaven if we live our lives as "pilgrims" in service to God. Life will not be easy for us, either, but we have God's strength to overcome.

---Johnny Stephens