

# Hebrews 11:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

## Analysis

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**For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.** The patriarchs' words and actions 'declare plainly' (emphanizousin, ἐμφανίζουσιν, 'make manifest' or 'show clearly') that they were pilgrims seeking a homeland beyond this world. Their confession of being 'strangers and pilgrims' (v.13) revealed hearts set on heavenly realities, not earthly possessions. The Greek patrída (πατρίδα, 'country' or 'homeland') signifies belonging, citizenship, and ultimate allegiance, not merely geographic location.

By living as temporary residents in Canaan, dwelling in tents, and refusing to settle permanently despite having opportunity, the patriarchs testified through lifestyle that their true home lay elsewhere. This pilgrim mentality characterized their entire existence—they held earthly possessions loosely, prioritized God's promises over immediate comfort, and oriented hopes toward eternal inheritance. Their faith wasn't merely intellectual assent but a whole-life orientation toward God's future grace.

This principle applies to all believers. We are 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth' (1 Peter 2:11), citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) whose 'citizenship is in heaven' (Philippians 3:20). Our confession through word and deed should make plain that we seek a better country. The Puritans called this 'heavenly-mindedness'—not unpractical escapism but proper valuation of eternal over temporal realities, enabling faithful earthly living by keeping ultimate priorities clear.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchs lived as nomads in Canaan for generations, never possessing the land God promised except small burial plots. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in portable tents, moved frequently, and owned little permanent property. This temporary, unsettled existence contrasted sharply with surrounding peoples who built permanent cities and established kingdoms. Yet the patriarchs voluntarily chose this lifestyle in obedience to God's call, demonstrating that faith values future divine promises over present earthly security. For first-century believers facing persecution and displacement, this example powerfully encouraged prioritizing eternal over temporal concerns.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What aspects of your life and speech 'declare plainly' what country you truly seek—earthly comfort or heavenly glory?
2. How should the reality that we are pilgrims affect our relationship with money, possessions, and earthly success?
3. What practical changes would demonstrate that you value eternal realities above temporary circumstances?

## Interlinear Text

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οἱ	γὰρ	τοιαῦτα	λέγοντες	ἐμφανίζουσιν	ὅτι	πατρίδα
G3588						
For	such things	they that say	declare plainly	that	a country	
G1063	G5108	G3004	G1718	G3754	G3968	

ἐπιζητοῦσιν

they seek

G1934

