

Faith of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
Hebrews 11:20-22

20) By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21) By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. 22) By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Introduction

1. Chapter 11 is teaching us about the nature and fruits of faith.
2. We have examined the faith of Abel, Enoch, and Noah, and began to look at the faith of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob.
5. Verses 8-10 is about Abraham following God in faith
6. Verses 11-12 speaks specifically of Sarah's faith
7. Verses 13-19 tells us of Abraham's faith response to his ultimate test
8. In this lesson, we will look at v20-22 which mentions the faith of the other Patriarchs.

Note: Those who want the full story of Isaac need to study Genesis 17, 21-25.

V. The faith of Isaac is seen in verse 20.

Note these comments about Isaac

- i. The faith of Isaac is previously interwoven with the story of Abraham
- ii. Here in v20, though, we see Isaac in a distinct way
- iii. By faith Isaac blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau concerning things to come

A. Isaac's actions of faith

1. He blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come (v20)

Note: Let us look at what it means for Isaac to bless Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

- i. He blessed them by declaring God's purpose and will
- ii. He resigned (submissive) them up to God in covenant
- iii. He recommended God and religion to them

- iv. He prayed for them
- v. He prophesied concerning them as to their condition and the condition of their descendants as seen in Genesis 27.
 - 1) Jacob's blessing in Genesis 27:27-29
 - 2) Esau's blessing in Genesis 27:39-40
- 2. Consider these thoughts
 - a. Both Jacob and Esau were blessed as Isaac's children
 - i. They were both blessed in temporal good things or good things of this life
 - ii. It is a great privilege to be the offspring of good parents
 - iii. Even the sinful children of good parents do better in this world because God blesses them for their parents' sake
 - b. Jacob received the principal blessing
 - i. Because God saw their hearts before birth, and God knew Jacob desired Him
 - ii. Esau chose the things of life, while Jacob chose the things of God
 - iii. It is God's grace that our new life in Christ which exalts us above others and qualifies us for the blest blessings
 - iv. Let us examine Romans 9 and Hebrews 12 to see why Jacob received the greater blessing
 - 1) v7 tells us that "being descendants of Abraham doesn't make them truly Abraham's children."
 - 2) v7 reminds that "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted, though Abraham had other children, too."
 - 3) v8... Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham's children.

Note: Only those who accept Christ and live for Christ are considered the Children of God.

- 4) Abraham had several other children, but only Isaac received the promise because he was the son of promise.
- 5) Look at verses 11-13

- a) Before Jacob and Isaac were born, before they had done anything good or bad, Rebecca received a message from God.
 - b) The message Rebecca received shows that God chooses people according to His own purposes;
 - c) God calls people, and He does not take into account their works as to being good or bad
 - d) God told Rebecca that He “loved Jacob, but He rejected Esau.”
- 6) Why would God choose one over the other before they were born?
- a) You would think that God would at least wait to see how they conduct themselves
 - b) So, let us look at Esau and Jacob to get an idea of why God chose Jacob over Esau
 - c) First, we need to remember that God is all knowing, and He knows the end from the Beginning
 - i) Therefore, God knew that Jacob would desire the blessing of the covenant
 - ii) God knew that Esau would have no desire for the blessing of the covenant
 - iii) It seemed that Esau wanted the blessing without the strings attached to it which the blessings of the covenant would bring
 - iv) Hebrews 12
 - 1] Beginning with v14, God gives a list of things we are to do
 - 2] Let us look at that list
 - a] Work at living in peace with everyone, and
 - b] Work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.
 - c] Look after each other so that none fail to receive the grace of God.
 - d] Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.
 - e] Notice this about Esau in v16

- i] Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal.
- ii] The KJV called Esau a fornicator and profane person because he rejected his birthright for a plate of lentils
- iii] It is important to note v17

You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.

Note: This reminds me of the five foolish virgins, and of those who do miracles in God's name, but God does not know them because in reality, they do not know Christ.

Note: In Romans 12, God goes on to tell us today that we should not draw back from His presence as Israel did at Mt Sinai, but instead let us come boldly into the presence of God.

B. Let us look at some difficulties of faith that Isaac faced

1. Isaac seemed to have forgotten God's declaration of promise upon Jacob
 - a. Genesis 25:23 tells us that God told Rebecca that Jacob was chosen over Esau
 - b. Did Rebecca tell Isaac about her dream, and he forgot, or did not accept it?
 - c. It seems that Isaac surrender to his natural affection and general custom when it came to blessing his children
 - i. It was natural to want to choose Esau because he was the eldest
 - ii. Also, Esau was Isaac's favorite for Esau was man's man and Jacob seemed to be a mama's boy by staying around the house and learning to cook
2. Isaac was very hesitant when he blessed Jacob, and when he found that Jacob is the one that was blessed, "he trembled very exceedingly." (Genesis 27:33)
 - a. Isaac told Esau that his brother had tricked and stolen his blessing
 - b. Isaac said to Esau that he had blessed Jacob and he would be blessed and this is referring to the covenant blessing passed from Abraham. (Genesis 27:33-35)
 - c. Rebecca and Jacob are not to be justified in how they obtained the blessing.
 - d. Isaac stayed with his blessing placed on Jacob, and Hebrews 11 includes him in this statement "through faith have obtained a good report."

VI. The faith of Jacob is seen in v21.

Note Hebrews 11:21...

21) By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff

- i. As you read in Genesis about Jacob, you find many instances of his faith
- ii. Jacob's life was a life of faith, and his faith was exercised greatly
- iii. For whatever reason, God took, out of many, these two instances in v21 to recount the faith of Jacob, along with those mentioned as we studied the faith of Abraham.

A. Now, let us look at these two actions of faith mentioned in v21.

1. He blessed both the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh

Note these comments

- i. He adopted Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons
- ii. They were born in Egypt, but they became part of the Children of Israel
- iii. Here, we see an example of adoption into the family of God
 - 1) We, born of a different time and culture, are reborn to God's family as God's children
 - 2) We are adopted as Ephraim and Manasseh was adopted to receive the inheritance and blessings of being part of the family of God.
 - a. Jacob made both Ephraim and Manasseh heads of different tribes, as if they had been his own immediate sons.
 - b. He prayed for them, that they might both be blessed of God.
 - c. He prophesied that they should be blessed
 - i. As Isaac did before, so now Jacob prefers the younger, Ephraim
 - ii. Joseph wanted Manasseh the elder to have the right hand of blessing, but Jacob guided by divine direction blessed the younger so the Gentile church, which is the younger, should have a more abundant blessing than the Jewish church, the elder because of Christ.

2. He worshipped, leaning on his staff

- a. Very simply put, Jacob praised God for what he had done for him
 - b. Jacob prayed for those he was leaving behind him that faithful to God would remain in the family long after he was gone
 - c. Jacob did this while leaning on the top of his staff.
 - d. At his great age with death approaching, Jacob in spite of his weakness used his staff to support him while he worship God and prayed for his descendants
 - e. He refused to give in to the flesh, but demonstrated his dependence upon God while his flesh testified that he was a pilgrim here that looked for a city.
- B. Notice the time and season when Jacob was acting in faith
- 1. He was dying yet in faith he worshiped
 - 2. He lived by faith, and he died by faith and in faith.
 - 3. Faith is a part of our whole lives, but it is especially notice when it comes time to die.
 - 4. Faith greatest work
 - a. Is to help believers to finish well
 - b. Is to help the Believer die to the Lord in life and in the Lord at death
 - c. Is to help the believers honor the Lord in patience, hope, and joy
 - d. Is to help the Believer leave a witness behind them of the truth of God's word and the excellency of God's ways
 - e. Is to help the Believer leave a lasting testimony and statement of their faith to and for those who take care of them their dying moments.

Note: The best way we as parents can finish our course is by blessing our families while worshipping our God.

VII. Now, let us look at the faith of Joseph

Note v22...

22) By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

A. What he did by his faith:

Note these thoughts about Joseph

i. v22 said that “he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

ii. This passage of Scriptures is taken from Genesis 50:24-25

24) And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 25) And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

iii. Joseph is famous for his faith even though he had not enjoyed the encouragement of faith like his brothers had

1) Joseph was sold into Egypt.

2) Joseph was tried and tested by temptations, by sin, and by persecution for retaining his integrity.

3) Joseph was tried and tested by advance and power in the court of Pharaoh, and yet his faith held out and carried him through to the last.

1. He made mention by faith

a. Of the children of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt

b. This statement of their deliverance served three purposes

i. It was a warning to caution them against the thoughts of being settled in Egypt because life at the moment was a time of plenty and ease

ii. It was also a statement of hope that would keep them when life in Egypt became harsh and severe, for evidently, Joseph foresaw what was coming

Note: Some thoughts on why things were already becoming difficult.

iii. The statement was also a comfort to Joseph who would not live to see their deliverance, but he died in the faith of their deliverance.

Note: These same statements serve to prepare us for the Lord’s return

i. Just because things are easy for a while, do not fall in love with this world.

ii. When life is harsh and severe, you have the hope of deliverance being on the way.

iii. You may not see the rapture, but you die in faith that rapture will take place.

2. Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones

Note: Consider these thoughts

i. Joseph's bones were to be preserved unburied in Egypt until God led them out of bondage

ii. They were to take Joseph's bones with them when they left Egypt to be buried in Canaan

iii. We should remember that the resurrection is a reuniting of soul and spirit with body

a. Though Joseph lived and died in Egypt, he did not live and die an Egyptian, but as an Israelite.

Note: You do not get it do you? We may live and die in this world, but we do not live and die as an citizen of this world for we are pilgrims and strangers here passing through looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.

b. Joseph preferred a significant burial in Canaan before a magnificent one in Egypt.

c. Joseph is saying that he would go as far with his people as he could, though he could not go as far as he would.

d. Joseph is saying that he believed in the resurrection of the body, which is demonstrated by his body being carried to Canaan.

e. Joseph is assuring them that God would be with them in Egypt, and deliver them out of it in his own time and way.

B. This action of Joseph's faith was demonstrated at the time of his dying

1. God will often gives his people living comforts in dying moments

2. When God gives us these moments as he did with Jacob and Joseph, we should share these thoughts with those around us to motivate and encourage them to continue in faith