

~Hebrews~

Lesson 28 – By Faith...Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

We are working our way through the book of Hebrews, specifically chapter 11, and understanding why Paul chose these examples of faith. So far we have covered Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham.

- Remember that Paul is writing to Hebrew Christians to build them up and focus their attention back on the New Covenant with Jesus Christ
- And it is a New Covenant by faith and not works
 - But faith is not a New Covenant principle
 - He is reminding the Hebrew Christians that even the saints of Old lived and **walked by faith**, and were made righteous by faith

We have three verses to cover this week, but there is a lot that happens in this text.

- We will be covering three Patriarchs: Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
- The account of these men is more than half the book of Genesis; from chapter 22 through chapter 50, the end of the book.
- The one commonality that Paul shows in the examples of these three men is they all died in faith looking to the future promise, and they had great faith in the process of dying

Obviously, we can't cover all 28 chapters, so I want to focus on what Paul is focused on. A future hope of the Messiah unto the Resurrection and Eternal life.

- This is the Promise unto all who have faith in Jesus
- And just like with Abraham, it is so important to see **when God specifically spoke to these men**. (these instances are highlighted **GREEN**) Because where God's Word is, you will find faith.

Isaac and Jacob were men of faith, but just as we are, they were not perfect. But the most important thing is they believed in the **One True God** and they had faith in the **Promise**.

- The Promise of the Messiah to come in Whom all nations would be blessed unto the Resurrection and Eternal Life.

At first glance, these next three verses seem like an odd choice to reference these men of faith, but a careful look, knowing the premise of this chapter is a chapter of hope in a future with Jesus, will enlighten our thinking.

- Paul is focused on the end of all three of their lives, namely the blessing **"concerning the things to come"**

Let's read our Hebrews account:

Hebrews 11:20-22 ²⁰ **By faith** Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau **concerning things to come**. ²¹ **By faith** Jacob, **when he was dying**, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. ²² **By faith** Joseph, **when he was dying**, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Concerning things to come. This is the focus of Paul concerning this entire chapter and we see it here with these three Patriarchs: Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

- all three exploits of faith concern their hope in the future promise that does not manifest in their lifetime

So let's look at each of these men's lives and glean out the promise of a future hope

Isaac

Hebrews 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Isaac followed God his entire life was blessed by God, but that does not mean he was perfect. In fact, he was far from perfect as we all are, but he had an obedient and submissive heart toward the **One True God**.

- Isaac was submissive to Abraham and God when offered to the Lord, Gen 22:9
- Isaac was submissive to allowing a wife to be chosen for him, Gen 24:62-66
 - Notice Isaac was meditating in the field when Rebekah arrived, v. 63, showing a humble heart toward God
- Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife because she was barren
 - He didn't take another wife. He was patient and trusted God, Gen 25:21
 - Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah, Gen 25:20, and 60 when Jacob and Esau

were born, Gen 25:26

- Isaac was 75 years old when Abraham died, Gen 25:7, and Scripture tells us that God blessed Isaac after Abraham's death and Isaac dwelt in Beer Lahai Roi, Gen 25:10-11
- There was a famine in the land and God told Isaac not to go to Egypt during the famine, so Isaac obeyed and stayed in the land of Canaan moving to Gerar, Gen 26:1-2
 - It was after this obedience that God blessed Isaac by speaking to him saying,

Genesis 26:3-4 ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

- God blessed Isaac and he became very prosperous in the land of Gerar, Gen 26:12
- Isaac continued to sojourn in the land being even submissive to the Philistines who were jealous of Isaac because of his wealth, Gen 26:13-22.
 - Some would argue being even too passive in these things
- Isaac moved to Beersheba and the Lord spoke to him again, Gen 26:24-25

Genesis 26:24-25 ²⁴ And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." ²⁵ So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

At this time in Isaac's life he is 100 years old, Gen 25:26, 26:34, but we do not have record of God speaking to him again for 30 years when he hears from the Lord to pronounce the prophecy and blessing over his children.

- At the time of Jacob and Esau's blessing, Isaac is probably around 130, the twins are around 70.
- It seems as though Isaac is going through some sort of depression and is craving the satisfaction of his flesh rather than his spirit and he thinks will be dying soon, Gen 27:2
 - There is no record of Isaac hearing from God for 30 years and Isaac is mostly blind, Gen 27:1.
- Isaac wants to pronounce his blessing on his sons, but he is not thinking clearly and proceeds to bless Esau with the principal blessing, Gen 27:4.
 - This is a blessing coming out of his flesh and not by the will of God.

Genesis 27:2-4 ² Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. ³ Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. ⁴ And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

This was not the will of God. God had spoken to Rebekah while she was still pregnant with the twins telling her that "*the older shall serve the younger*", Gen 25:23

- I would assume that Rebekah told this to Isaac and Isaac should have been thinking this way at the time of the blessing.

Another instance that should have persuaded Isaac away from giving the blessing to Esau was the account when Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of soup.

- This is a very sore spot in God's eyes and most people don't realize the severity of what Esau did here.
- After Esau sold his birthright to Jacob the Word says:

Genesis 25:34 ... Thus Esau despised his birthright.

The fact that Esau despised his birthright means he despised the Promise of Abraham which is the promise of the Messiah. He rejected the promise that in him and his Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

- The fact that the Messiah would come through the loins of Abraham was well known in that family and to say that he despised the birthright was in fact rejecting the Christ.
 - This is why God said "*Jacob I love and Esau I have hated*" Rom 9:9-13, Mal 1:3
 - God told Rebekah that two nations were in her womb, Gen 25:23
 - There was a war between the two, Gen 25:23, Rom 9. Edom would revolt against Judah, 2 Kings 8:20, Gen 27:40
 - Even to the point that Obadiah prophecies about Edom's revolt and judgement over 1,000 years after Esau, Ob 1:10, 11, 2 Kings 8:20
 - Edom revolted against the authority of Judah and made a king over themselves
 - This was a violation of the blessing/prophecy, "*the older will serve the younger*", Gen

25:23, 27:40

- Edom did what Esau did and rejected the line in which the Messiah would come through, namely the line of Judah.

Isaac is not walking by faith and should not be planning to give Esau the blessing.

- Rebekah hears Isaac's plan, so she devises her own plan.

Genesis 27:5-29 ⁵ Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. ⁶ So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, ⁷ 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.'

⁸ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. ⁹ Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. ¹⁰ Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." ¹¹ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. ¹² Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." ¹³ But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me."

¹⁴ And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶ And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷ Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

¹⁸ So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." ²⁰ But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought it to me." ²¹ Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." ²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." ²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. ²⁴ Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." ²⁵ He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." ²⁷ And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed. ²⁸ Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. ²⁹ Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!"

- This is one of those grey areas where Rebekah knows the will of God, Isaac is only thinking with his flesh and savoring the meat that Esau is going to bring him, so Rebekah deceives Isaac.
 - I am not saying this is right, but Rebekah is trying to take a stand for the will of God.
 - We see something similar with Rahab who we will read about in a couple of weeks.
 - She is in the hall of faith, and she got there by lying.
- We see the hand of God at work in this event.
 - Even though Isaac thought he was blessing Esau, God was speaking through Isaac and pronounces the blessing on Jacob, Gen 27:28-29

How could Paul say that Isaac blessed his sons, Jacob and Esau by faith?

- Once Esau comes in from the field and Isaac realizes he gave the promise to Jacob instead, he realizes that this was the providential hand of God at work
 - It is at this point that Isaac's soul revives, he gets out of his depression and walks by faith
 - He knew this was the conviction of God because we read:

Genesis 27:30, 33 ³⁰ Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

³³ Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed."

- Isaac doesn't try to recant his blessing and in fact, he continues to bless Esau with the eyes of faith knowing that God is speaking through him, Gen 27:39-40
- Isaac humbled himself to God's will and providence
 - Isaac knew Esau could not carry on the lineage of the Messiah because he "despised his birthright", Gen 25:34

A little later on, Isaac calls Jacob back to him and pronounces the blessing again saying, Gen 28:3-4

Genesis 28:3-4 ³ "May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples; ⁴ And give you the **blessing of Abraham**, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham."

- It was these latter two blessings that were **by faith**, Gen 27:39-40 and Gen 28:3-4
- I believe the Word of God woke him up out of his depression and he lived another 50 years to be 180, Gen 35:28-29
- Paul tells us the blessing was by faith because Isaac blessed concerning things to come.
 - It was concerning the promise of Abraham to him and to his Seed, the Messiah.
- Isaac knew he would leave this life without the promise being fulfilled and therefore he passed the blessing onto his son **by faith**.
 - To the son whom God chose **by faith**

Jacob

Hebrews 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph...

After Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, Esau becomes very angry and makes a vow to kill Jacob, Gen 27:41

- Rebekah tells Jacob to flee to Haran, Gen 27:42-43
- Isaac tells Jacob, while in Haran, to take a wife from Laban, Gen 28:1-2

On the way to Haran, God blesses Jacob, Gen 28:13-15, Jacob's Ladder.

Genesis 28:12-15 ¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

- Jacob accepts the Promise and **builds and alter to the Lord in Bethel**, Gen 28:18-22
- Jacob believes and worships the **One True God**

Jacob finds Laban in Haran and works for 14 years to get his wife Rachael and Leah, Gen 29

- Jacob has 12 children by his two wives and their handmaidens, Gen 29:31-30:24, 35:18

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Reuben (Leah) ◦ Simeon (Leah) ◦ Levi (Leah) ◦ Judah (Leah) ◦ Dan (Bilhah, Rachael's handmaid) ◦ Naphtali (Bilhah, Rachael's handmaid) ◦ Gad (Zilpah, Leah's handmaid) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Asher (Zilpah, Leah's handmaid) ◦ Issachar (Leah) ◦ Zebulun (Leah) ◦ Joseph (Rachael) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ephraim ▪ Manasseh ◦ Benjamin (Rachael)
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After 20 years of being with Laban, Gen 31:41, Jacob leaves Haran to come back to live in Canaan, Gen 33:18

- On his way Scripture says the **angels of God met him**, Gen 32:1
- Jacob also reconciles his relationship with Esau, and on the way to meet him, Jacob **reminds God** of his promise, Gen 32:12

Genesis 32:12 **For You said**, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' " (in other words, "you have to protect me")

That night Jacob is alone and wrestles with God **demanding that He bless him**, Gen 32:22-32

- **God changes Jacob's name to Israel**. Gen 32:28

Jacob come to Shechem, his daughter Dinah is raped by the Amorites, Gen 34:2

- Simeon and Levi retaliate, Gen 34:25

God tells Jacob to move south to Bethel, Gen 35:1 and God pronounces the blessing on Jacob and his Seed, Gen 35:11-15

Genesis 35:11-12 " Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. ¹² The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants (Seed) after you I give this land."

- Jacob continues south to Bethlehem where Rachael dies giving birth to Benjamin, Gen 35:16-20
- Later, Jacob then moves further south to Hebron, Gen 37:14
 - It is at this point that Joseph's story begins and is sold into slavery in Egypt when he travels back north to find his brothers in Dothan, Gen 37:17
 - Joseph lives in Egypt and is blessed by God and has two sons by the daughter of an Egyptian priest, Gen 41:45, 50-51
 - Manasseh and Ephraim
- Because of the famine, Jacob (Israel) and his children travel to Egypt and are protected in the famine, Gen 47:27

Hebrews 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

Paul chooses to focus on the blessing of Joseph's sons and not the eleven children of Israel (the prophecies on his other children are fairly dismal and bleak all except for Joseph's)

- Lets read the account of Jacob blessing Joseph's sons

Genesis 48:1-22 ¹ Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. ³ Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me ... and blessed me, ⁴ and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' (this is the promise of Abraham and it is only quoted in this blessing, not on the children of Israel)

⁵ And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. ⁶ Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁹ ... And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them."

¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!" ¹² So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him.

¹⁴ Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, ¹⁶ The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

¹⁷ Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. ²² Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

- It was by faith that Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph because this blessing was concerning things to come just as Isaac's blessing on Jacob.
 - It is in this blessing that Jacob adopts Joseph's sons into his family.
 - This is a type of Gentiles being grafted into the root and fatness of the blessing, Rom

11:16-18

- The promise to Abraham and his Seed is a promise of Resurrection unto Eternal life.
 - This is the Adoption of Sons that Paul speaks of in Romans 8:23

Hebrews 11:21 ... worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

- This symbolizes **Jacob's faithfulness in God**
 - He leaned on God and trusted in God's Word and promise

Genesis 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan **with my staff**, and now I have become two companies.

Joseph

There are many things Paul could have used as examples of great faith from the story of Joseph.

- Joseph's life is full of faith building exploits, but Paul is concerned with a faith on the future hope of the Promise.
- Lets read the Hebrews account

Hebrews 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure (Exodus, ἔξοδος) of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

- At first glance this just seems weird that Paul would pick this example, but lets read the account in Genesis

Genesis 50:24-25 ²⁴ And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and **bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.**" ²⁵ Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "**God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.**"

- Now it makes sense
 - This has everything to do with the Promise of Abraham.
 - The Exodus out of Egypt is the point that the Children of Israel became a nation, thus allowing the Promise to be fulfilled.
 - This was the next necessary step for the Messiah to come into this world

Hebrews 11:22 ... and gave instructions concerning his bones.

- This refers to Jacob's blessing on Joseph when he said, "*God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers*", Gen 48:22.
 - This was a prophetic word concerning the Resurrection.
 - Ex 13:19, Josh 24:32 is record of the Children of Israel bringing Joseph's bones with them out of Egypt.
- Joseph, not willing to be left in Egypt, desired to be in the land of Promise
 - Even after spending the majority of his life in Egypt, his dying faith was to be separated from Egypt
 - **He had his eyes fixed on the hope of the Promise**
 - **The hope of the Resurrection unto Eternal life**
- It was this statement that showed his yearning heart for God.
 - Never succumbing to the ways of Egypt, but staying fixed on the **One True God** and His Promise

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (even as they were dying)

Hebrews 11:13

As believers, the hope of the Promise unto the Resurrection and Eternal Life must be our focus.

Even though we **live** in the world, we cannot let our hearts **join** with the world,

We must be fully assured of the Promise that is to come by faith.