

February 13, 2022

“Faithful Men: Isaac to Moses”

Hebrews 11:20-29,

See **Genesis 25:21-34; 27:1-40...** Isaac believed he was blessing Esau his favorite son, when he was really blessing Jacob, the favorite son of Rebekah. The Lord had said that Esau would serve Jacob, and Jacob, the younger son, would become the son of blessing.

Isaac disobeys what God told him and tries to bless Esau; Rebekah tells Jacob to lie to his father and steal his blessing. In the end, Esau sells his birthright for a bowl of soup. And yet God uses this dysfunctional family to bring blessing to us!

God sovereignly determined to work through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel as the nation of God's called out people (but specifically through the tribe of Judah) through whom came Jesus Christ the Lord.

-----Jews and Arabs-----

Malachi 1:2, “I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, ‘How have You loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ declares the Lord. ‘Yet I have loved Jacob,’” (the *Twelve Tribes of Israel*), the promise was originally made to Abraham (**Genesis 17:7**), “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you...”

Romans 9:11-15, “For though the twins [Jacob and Esau] were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ Just as it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’”

Rebekah's pregnancy with twins was rough, there was a wrestling match going on inside her womb, and she asked, “why am I *this way*?” The struggle was symbolic of the antagonism that would exist between her two sons.

Isaac favored Esau, Rebekah favored Jacob; but God's sovereign plan to bless Jacob's descendants over those of Esau, took precedent over Isaac's love for his firstborn son. God's blessing [according to the rights of first born sons] should have gone to Esau, but God divinely favored Jacob over Esau. God's sovereign hand directs the affairs of men, fulfilling God's purposes and plans.

Abraham's firstborn son (through Sarah's Egyptian maid Hagar) was named Ishmael [lit. God hears]; but it was through his son Isaac [lit. one laughs], that God made His covenant (see **Genesis 16:1-2, 4-12, 15-16; 17:21**).

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God's promise to Israel came through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and even though neither Isaac nor Jacob were firstborn sons, they received the blessing from and covenant with God, according to God's plan and purpose, His will.

The Jews' covenant relationship with God came through their patriarch Abraham (note: God's Word calls them *Hebrews* 18x's OT, 3x's NT; *Jews* 67x's OT, 161x's NT; *Israelites* 6x's OT, 2x's NT).

All true Christians have a relationship with Abraham through Christ (**Galatians 3:29**), “if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.” Our eternal relationship with God is based on Christ, not some ancestral bloodline, culture, or religion; but instead, the sovereign work of God (**John 1:12-13**), “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God,” (**John 3:6**), “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Jacob's name means “deceitful” or “heel-catcher” [lit. One Who Takes the Heel]. We know that Jacob's name was later changed to “Israel” (cf. **Genesis 32:28**), meaning, “he struggles with God” or “God's fighter.” Jacob's descendants are the son's of Israel to whom the Land of Canaan (Palestine) was given, by God.

Esau [lit. hairy] became the father of the Edomites [lit. red people] (cf. **Genesis 36:8-9**), a people “whom the Lord has cursed” (**Malachi 1:3-4**).

Saul fought against the Edomites; David actually conquered them, for a time; but there continued a smoldering hatred between the Jews and the Edomites (Genesis 27:41).

After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D, the Edomites disappeared from history, bringing an end to the descendants of Esau.

*Interesting note: All Arabs, following Mohammed's example, claim descent from Ishmael the firstborn son of Abraham; and yet the Arabs have fought against the Jews relentlessly for over 4000 years; against their own ancestral brothers who came from the line of Isaac, through Jacob (who was Ishmael's nephew).

-----Jews and Arabs-----

Read Hebrews 11:20... By faith Isaac finally believed the revelation which God made to him concerning the future destinies of Esau and Jacob. True faith will eventually bow to God's plan and purpose and act in accordance to God's will. Although our faith is not perfect, because we are just sinners saved by grace, the object of our faith (Christ) is perfect.

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Clearly, it Isaac’s faith wasn’t perfect, but ultimately, he believed God, and accepted Jacob as the one to be blessed with regard to things to come.

Read Hebrews 11:21... Jacob trusted God and worshipped Him to the very end. In this passage we are told about Jacob’s blessing the sons of Joseph (see **Genesis 48:8-19**).

Again we see a younger son being blessed over the first born, birth order and human favoritism cannot thwart God’s plan; God works through whom He chooses.

At the very end of his life, Jacob continues to anticipate the fulfillment of God’s promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and himself, and even though Jacob never saw their ultimate fulfillment, in the end his dysfunctional and fractured family received and passed on God’s blessing to us.

Read Hebrews 11:22... Joseph believes that God is going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and he wants his bones to be taken out when they go (see **Genesis 50:22-26**).

More than 350 years later Moses brought Joseph’s bones out of Egypt into the wilderness (cf. **Exodus 13:19**); it would be several more decades before Joseph’s bones would come to rest in the land of Promise, finally to be buried by Joshua in Shechem (cf. **Joshua 24:32**); this land having been promised to Abraham’s descendants by God (cf. **Genesis 12:6-7**).

These witnesses to God’s faithfulness (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) trusted God for what they could not see, even at the very end of their lives, they continued to believe that God would be faithful to His promise; they are role models for us in the way we are to live out our faith.

God is faithful to fulfill all His promises, even though we may not see them in our lifetime; but ultimately, when all the people of God are gathered together, it shall be finally realized.

Read Hebrews 11:23... Moses’ parents trusted that God would effect a deliverance for their son, that God would save him, even though Moses grew up in the house of Pharaoh, and even though it was Pharaoh who ordered the slaughter of all those Hebrew boys. Moses’ parents fully believed in God and they trusted Him with their son.

Read Hebrews 11:24-28... After Moses grew up he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, for he determined he would not be identified with Egypt, or with the power of Egypt, but instead he would be identified with the people of Israel, no matter what it cost him.

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We are told here that he chose to be associated with his people in their suffering; and although he could have had an easy life, he chose to identify with the Hebrew people, with God’s called-out people.

Moses could have had a life of pleasure and privilege if he would have been willing to follow after the gods of Egypt, but he refused to live like those who rejected the true God. Moses would rather be disgraced and suffer, by remaining true to God, than to have the riches and privilege as a son of Pharaoh.

Moses had every opportunity to be satisfied with the things that this life provided him, and yet he refused to be captured by the treasures of this world.

Hebrews 11 gives us an example to encourage us not to become drawn toward and/or satisfied with the temporary comforts and pleasures of this world, for God is providing us with an eternal and heavenly reward.

Notice again **Hebrews 11:27**, “By faith [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.” The true strength of Moses’ faith is that he believed in the reward that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in a sense, Moses had seen [believed in] “Him who is invisible.”

Moses should have been scared to death at the thought of going up against the Pharaoh of Egypt, the most powerful man in his part of the world. But Moses feared God so much that he had no fear of any man.

Notice again **Hebrews 11:28**, “by faith Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.” The destroying angel of God came over Egypt and killed the firstborn males (human and animal) in all the houses that did not smear lamb’s blood on their doorpost. Moses trusted that God would fulfill His promise not to destroy the firstborn of Israel; Moses obeyed God, instructing the people to smear blood from the Passover lamb on the doorposts of every house.

Notice how living faith is displayed not just by believing, but also by responding to God’s word, believing what God says; and, of course, in this case faith involved looking for an eternal reward, one not seen, and revering God, who cannot be seen.

If you don’t fear God more than you fear those in the world, and seek God’s pleasure more than the world’s pleasure, you will become captivated by the world.

Jesus commands us to love one another, to love our neighbor, and even to love our enemies; He also commands us not to love the world or to become captivated by the things of this world (cf. **1John 2:15-17**).

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God's blessing is the greatest reward in this life (**Philippians 4:12-13, 19-20**).

Truth be told, if we do not recognize and receive the love of God in this world, we will not see heaven; but we'll spend eternity apart from the love of God, in hell.

Read Hebrews 11:29... The people of Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry land; the Egyptians who were chasing them, were drowned.

As we have studied in **Hebrews 11**, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, all had a personal faith that was expressed through personal obedience and perseverance, they were God's men, living out their faith on earth while trusting God for their future in heaven.

If you belong to God through Christ you will seek to be a person of obedient faith (**James 2:17**), "faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."

Titus 2:11-14, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."

1Peter 2:9-10, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, 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."

Pastor Mike

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