

# Hebrews

- I. **Hebrews 11:20-28** . . . By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. [21] By faith Jacob, as 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 exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones. [23] By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. [24] By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25] choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, [26] considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. [27] By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. [28] By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

## II. Prayer

## III. Examples of Faith

### A. The Two Patriarchs and Joseph

1. **Hebrews 11:20** . . . By faith **Isaac** blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.
  - a. The story of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau is told in **Genesis 27:27-40**.
  - b. After God answered Isaac's prayers for a child and Rebekah was pregnant, she asked God why there was so much commotion in her womb. In we read God's response in **Genesis 25:23-26** . . . The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger." [24] When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. [25] Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. [26] Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called

Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

- c. When Isaac blessed Jacob – his second born, he assumed he was blessing Esau – his first born, which means Jacob received the blessing of the first born. Yet when Esau came in for his blessing and Isaac discovered the deception, he did not change his blessing of Jacob or withdraw any portion of it in order to confer it on Esau. And though Esau plead with tears for the “first born blessing,” Isaac’s blessing of Esau sounded more like a curse than a blessing.
- d. Therefore, when it says Isaac blessed his two sons by faith, it is in reference to he and Rebekah knowing from before their birth that God had chosen to fulfill His promise through Jacob – the second born rather than through Esau – the first born. And so by faith in God’s revealed will, Isaac allowed the deception to stand and the blessings to remain as given.

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

- a. The story of Jacob blessings his twelve sons and Joseph’s two sons is found in **Genesis 49:1-27**.
- b. Let me begin with Jacob by saying that whatever we may think of him, he changed and became such a man of God that God calls himself the God of Jacob (30 times) more times than He calls Himself the God of Abraham (17 times). And I am not taking anything away from Abraham here – for Abraham is the father of faith. I am simply trying to show you that we can change and become “people of God who live by faith” in spite of our sinful, selfish, unbelief riddled beginnings, and in spite of our missteps along the way. If we will repent, and by God grace and strength persevere in the pursuit of God and godliness, we can become the person God saved us to be.
- c. The faith of Jacob was in passing on to his twelve sons and two grandsons God’s blessing of the promised inheritance even though they represented the third and fourth generations since God gave His promise to Abraham.

3. **Hebrews 11:22 . . .** By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

- a. This story of Joseph giving instructions concerning taking his body to the Land of Promise is told in **Genesis 50:22-26**.
- b. Joseph's faith is proclaimed as an example for us because he believed God would fulfill His promise even though three generations had passed since the promise was given. Consider:
  - (1) Abraham, Joseph's great-grandfather died without seeing God's promise fulfilled.
  - (2) Isaac, Joseph's grandfather died without seeing God's promise fulfilled.
  - (3) Jacob, Joseph's father died without seeing God's promise fulfilled.
  - (4) And as yet, Joseph had not seen God's promise fulfilled. And even more to his credit, he was content with God fulfilling the promise after he died.
- c. One more point about Joseph. He lived by faith from the time of his being sold into slavery, through his prison years, and through the end of his life.

## B. Moses

- 1. **Hebrews 11:23 . . .** By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a **beautiful child**; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.
  - a. Apparently, there was something "attention grabbing" about the way Moses looked, and this convinced his parents to believe that if they did what they could do to preserve his life, God would protect him and keep him alive for future service.
    - (1) In relation to Moses, the first ones to act in faith were his parents.
    - (2) They were willing to disobey the law of the land and risk the wrath of the King in order to save their son from an early death – and did this in faith that God would honor their decision.
  - b. Just so you know that this statement about Moses being a good looking child has a basis in scripture –
    - (1) **Exodus 2:1-2 . . .** Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. [2] The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that **he was beautiful**, she hid him for three months.

- (a) Interesting fact: Levi was the father of the priestly line in Israel. Moses, his brother Aaron, and his sister Miriam, were the first priests in Israel.
  - (2) **Acts 7:20-21** . . . It was at this time that Moses was born; and **he was lovely in the sight of God**, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. [21] And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son.
  
- 2. **Hebrews 11:24-26** . . . By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25] choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, [26] considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.
  - a. By faith, Moses chose allegiance to God and companionship with God's people over the earth-bound and therefore temporary position, riches, possessions, and pleasures gained by remaining loyal to Pharaoh. **Why?**
    - (1) Moses believed that God would fulfill His promise to Abraham and Abraham's descendants. And in looking through eyes of faith, Moses could see that choosing Egypt instead of God would ultimately result in greater loss than whatever he might gain in Egypt.
    - (2) Let me say this another way. Moses believed the future or eternal outcome of suffering with the people of God would bring a far greater good than whatever good he currently had or could have from the position, riches, possessions, and pleasures offered in Egypt.
  - b. What is the lesson God has for us here? I think there are two lessons that are important for us today.
    - (1) First, don't let the devil or the world deceive you into believing that earthly treasures – such as position, riches, possessions, and pleasures – are the true riches.
      - (a) At their best, the treasures of this world are temporary. At their worst, they turn us against God, they prevent us from loving God, and they keep us from gaining the true riches.
      - (b) To guard against this deception, nurture a life of faith, for then you will live according to God's will and word

so that when the time comes to choose between earthly treasures and God's true treasures, you will, like Moses, make the right choice.

- (2) The second lesson God has for us from these three verses is – the benefits of sin are immediate and very gratifying. Sometimes sin's benefits can be enjoyed for a lifetime. However, the cost of sin always exceeds its benefits so that when it comes time to pay the cost we regret having chosen to sin.

3. **Hebrews 11:27 . . .** By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

- a. Moses' faith in God's protection and submission to God's will was greater than his fear of what the Pharaoh in his wrath could and would do to him for turning his back on Egypt.
- b. As to his enduring, Moses endured the hard life of tending his father-in-law's sheep for 40 years. Yet it was during those years that Moses grew in the grace and knowledge of God – so much so that it is written of him that he was the most humble man on the face of the earth. And it is written of him that he had a face to face relationship with God.
  - (1) Now if you think humility is a stand-alone quality, you are wrong. Jesus showed us that the holiest among us is the most humble – and the most humble is the holiest.
  - (2) Therefore, the testimony to Moses humility is a testimony to his holiness of life. And it is holiness of life that opens wide the door to an intimate relationship with God.

4. **Hebrews 11:28 . . .** By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

- a. Moses knew God intimately from his previous forty years in God's school of discipleship. And Moses knew the power of God from the previous nine plagues God brought upon Egypt to convince them to set the Israelites free.
- b. Therefore, when God said he was sending the Angel of Death to kill the firstborn in every home, and that this tenth plague would bring about Israel's freedom, Moses had every reason to believe Him.

- c. The important lesson here is that it was Moses' faith in the revealed word of God that compelled him to meticulously obey what God said about protecting every Israelite family from the Angel of Death.
- d. And I want to emphasize the two words, "**meticulously obey.**" And why these two words? For two reasons.
  - (1) First, only a lambs blood would protect them.
  - (2) Second, a sloppy or half-hearted application of the blood was very risky for it could leave a family defenseless against the Angel of Death.
- e. And so it is with us. Only the blood of Jesus can save us from the wrath of God against sin and sinners. But his blood must be applied his way.
  - (1) In other words, He is the one who sets the standards and creates the path we are to follow – not us.
  - (2) This means that obeying God's truth in a sloppy or half-hearted way is very risky for it could leave us unprotected.
    - (a) We are prone to think we can love a bit of the world, sinfully satisfy a bit of our flesh and live a good, God-pleasing life of faith at the same time.
    - (b) Yet loving a bit of the world and continuing to sinfully satisfy a bit of the flesh is not a God approved companion to living by faith – it's a contradiction.
    - (c) But we console ourselves in the midst of such contradictions with flowing words about God's love and grace – as if God's love and grace make it possible to live sloppy or partial Christian lives and all will be well.
    - (d) Oh the wisdom, the unsurpassable wisdom of taking God at His word concerning salvation being only in Jesus. And most of us have done that! But it is just as wise to believe God when He says the Christian life is only on the narrow path.
  - (3) To this end I encourage all of us to be like Moses in relation to salvation from the judgment of God. In faith, take God at His word and live as He says to live.

#### IV. Conclusion

A.