

What Does Faith Do?

Purpose of Hebrews: 13:22

- Heroes are not perfect
- Some were not always good examples
- This may encourage some readers who are slipping
- One link binds three examples of faith:
death was near

I. Isaac, 20

Isaac's faith looked beyond death, Gn.27:2-4

1. Blessed Jacob and Esau [note word order]

- Isaac favors Esau (Gn.27)
- God did not need ¹Rebekah's tricks, or ²Jacob's lies to overrule Isaac
- Isaac did not withdraw the blessing; he yielded to God: Gn.27:33; 28:1-4
- Confirmed Jacob's blessing: Gn.25:21-23
- Whole family at fault –
 - Father – son: do wrong thing in wrong way
 - Mother – son: do right thing in wrong way

Isaac's faith looked beyond death, Gn.27:2

1. Blessed Jacob and Esau
2. Isaac planned to change God's will
 - In the end he confirmed Jacob's blessing – Gn.27:33; 28:3-4
 - In blessing Esau, Isaac recognized Jacob's superiority

Isaac's faith looked beyond death, Gn.27:2

1. Blessed Jacob and Esau
2. Isaac planned to change God's will; he confirmed it
3. "Things to come"
 - By faith, Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau – ESV. Cf. Hb.11:1



I. Isaac, 20

II. Jacob, 21

Gn.47:29, *do not bury me in Egypt*

1. Dying

- Jacob is the least commendable of the three, but came to his senses, learned to trust God, not self
- Holy Spirit mentions two items: Jacob . . .
(1) blessed . . . and (2) worshipped

2. Blessed sons of Joseph. Gn.48:8-20

- Contrary to Joseph's wishes, Jacob crossed hands to bless Ephraim the younger...
- Jacob (younger) blesses Ephraim (younger)
- Jacob was not tricked (as Isaac was)
- Younger exalted above older? Ps.78
- Unlikely: these Egyptian princes forsake Egypt for Canaan? Gn.48:5-6
- Expect *'tribe of Joseph'*; instead each separate tribe became double portion to Joseph

3. Text: staff or bed? Hb.11:21; Gn.47: MTTH –

- Hb.11:21, top of his staff: MaTTeH (as LXX)
- Gn.47:31, OT text: head of the bed: MiTTaH
 - Masoretes added vowels later
 - LXX predates Masoretes nine centuries
- 1 K.1:47, David ... bed
- Jacob died in faith

I. Isaac, 20

II. Jacob, 21

III. Joseph, 22

Joseph, Gn.37; 39; Gn.50:22-26

- Rejected by brothers
- Reduced to slavery
- Restrained in prison
- Raised to second in Egypt
- Reconciled to brothers
- Reunited with father

Family problems: though he did everything right
– sold as slave into Egypt. Gn.50:18-21, trust

Falsely accused by Potipher's wife, Gn.37

Friend failure: interpreted dreams, then forgotten

Future emphasis (exodus). [Lk.9:31, Jesus]

Faith. His death encourages readers...

His bones illustrate his conviction (v.1): God
will keep His promises

Promise

Gn.15:13-14

Faith

Gn.50:24-26

Gn.13:15, 17

“to you” (Abraham)

Gn.26:3

“to you” (Isaac)

Gn.28:4

“to you” (Jacob)

“to you” (Joseph?)

Joseph did not receive this
promise directly from God...
Actually fulfilled through his sons

- Ex.13:19, Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you
- Josh.24:32, The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for 100 pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph

I. Isaac

II. Jacob

III. Joseph

IV. Their Reward

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob – 10x in NT

- Mt.1:2, Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob begot...
- Mt.22:31, But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read, what was spoken to you by God...
 - NOT because of fathers...but by faith
 - Issue: what will you do with Jesus?? (Hb.10)

Hb.11:13-17, died in faith

- Did not receive the promise (things promised)
 - 6:15, Abraham received promised son and resurrected son (11:19)
 - Full realization of promises awaited coming of Christ
- Saw them afar off – Greeted... Confessed...
Jn.8:56. Gn.47:9. 1 Pt.2:11
 - Our faith also looks across the unknown future to see eternal blessings awaiting us

Hb.11:14, speech reveals them

- They “seek” a homeland (proves they did not find it here, 15)
- Hope longs for something in future, not in Egypt (on earth...)
- Faith defeats death

Hb.11:16, desire ... heavenly

- We die . . . but our hope lives on. Why?
 1. Because He lives. Gn.50:25
 2. God is not ashamed of them. [Would He delight in apostates?]
 3. City is prepared. Faith looks beyond death. Mt.25:46

Abraham did not know where he was going

Sarah was rebuked for laughing (Gn.18) . . .
before God made her laugh (Gn.21:6)

Abraham didn't understand why he must kill
Isaac . . . but trusted God (Gn.22:5).

Isaac didn't know why he couldn't give Esau
the blessing, but yielded

Jacob couldn't remain in promised land for 20
years for fear of Esau

Joseph didn't know when his bones would be
taken to Canaan, but trusted God. Ps.116:15

“Who else would not have felt it burdensome both to leave his own country and to be driven from every civilized community into pathless places most difficult for the traveler to penetrate? Who would not have turned right about and retraced his homeward way, paying but little heed to future hopes but making haste to escape the present difficulty, thinking it folly to choose acknowledged ills in hope of good things which he could not see?”

– Philo, *On Abraham*