

Living by Faith

According to Hebrews

July 2018

Recommended Resources:

- Thomas R. Schreiner. *Commentary on Hebrews.*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2015.
- John Piper. *The Hope of Exiles on Earth (Hebrews 11:13-22)*. desiringgod.org, 1997

Week 3: Faith for the Future

Hebrews 11:12 – Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven”

1. Hallmarks of Faith (Review)
 - a. Jesus is the author and perfecter of biblical faith (12:2).
 - b. Faith is the reality/evidence of unseen hoped for things (11:1).
 - c. Faith believes God is who says he is and rewards His seekers (11:6b).
 - d. God commends those who please Him by faith (11:2, 6a).
 - e. By faith people obey God, often in remarkably unusual ways (11:8).
 - f. By faith people persistently obey God over long periods of time (11:9).
 - g. Fear of God motivates and compliments faith in God (11:7)
2. Faith in the book of Genesis-Part Two
 - a. Sarah (11:11-12) -> Gen 18:9-15, 21:1-7
 - i. (11:11) “By faith barren Sarah received power to conceive, since she considered the One who had promised was faithful.”
 - ii. (Gen 18:9-12)-She laughed at God’s promise at first (Is this faith?)
 - iii. (Gen 18:15)-But she repented in fear when called out by God.

- iv. After being sent away by her husband again (Gen 20) she returned to be his wife and received her reward->birth of the promised son (Gen 21:1-2, 6-7)
- v. (Gen 21: 8-12) She rebuked Abraham for his lack of faith regarding Isaac and God confirmed her rebuke, resulting in the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael.

b. Abraham's offering of Isaac (11:17-19) -> Gen 22:1-19

- i. (11:17, 19) By faith Abraham offered up Isaac and received him back.
- ii. (Gen 22:1-3) He obeyed God's command to offer his "only son" immediately and without question.
- iii. (11:18) Despite the apparent contradiction with God's promise that "through Isaac your offspring shall be named" (Gen 21:12).
- iv. (11:19) Why did he obey and do the remarkable thing? Because of his faith in God to bring Isaac back, even from the dead.
- v. Notice how the Genesis narrative hints that Abraham believed that God would bring Isaac back.
 - 1. (Gen 22:5) To the young men with them he said, "I and the boy will come again to you."
 - 2. (Gen 22:8) To Isaac he said, "God will provide a lamb".
- vi. (Gen 22:12, 16-18) God commended Abraham for his faith and obedience in this matter.

c. Isaac blesses Jacob and Esau (11:20) -> Gen 27

- i. (11:20) By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau regarding the future.
- ii. Background:
 - 1. (Gen 25:23) God declared, "the older (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob)" before they were born.
 - 2. (Gen 25:26) But Isaac preferred Esau to Jacob,
 - a. Because "he ate of his game"
 - b. Despite his poor choices (Gen 25:34, 26:34-35).

iii. (Gen 27:33b) Isaac declared, “Yes, and he shall be blessed!” Despite Jacob and Rebekah’s deception in securing the blessing of Gen 27:27-29.

iv. How is this faith? ->Gen 27:33a provides a clue.

1. “Isaac trembled violently” upon learning of the deception.
2. At that moment he realized that he had wrongly attempted to subvert God’s will by blessing Esau instead of Jacob.
3. His fear of the LORD caused him to tremble and repent of his disobedience.
4. His faith enabled him to align himself with God’s declared will instead and declare, “Yes, and he shall be blessed!”
5. He followed thru by blessing Jacob again and directing him to leave and take a godly wife (Gen 28:1-5).

d. Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph (11:21) -> Gen 48:1-20

- i. (11:21) “By faith dying Jacob, blessed each of the sons of Joseph.”
- ii. (Gen 47:9) “Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life”, he declared to Pharaoh at the age of 130. Jacob’s character had developed from one of a deceiver to that of a man of God.
- iii. (Gen 48:2) When Joseph arrived, dying Jacob summoned strength to sit up in bed (or “lean on the top of his staff” as per LXX).
- iv. (Gen 48:5-6) By faith he claimed Joseph’s Egyptian born sons as his own, fellow heirs of the promises.
- v. (Gen 48:8-20) By faith he promoted the younger son (Ephraim) above the older (Manasseh) despite the protestations of Joseph.

e. Joseph foretells the Exodus (11:22) ->Gen 50:22-26

- i. (11:22) “By faith Joseph made mention of the Exodus and gave directions concerning his bones.”
- ii. (Gen 50:24)-Pharaoh’s right-hand man sought after God’s promises to Israel rather than those of Egypt.

- iii. (Gen 50:24)-Joseph made Israel swear to take his bones to the Promised Land when God finally brought them out of Egypt.
- iv. The saga of Joseph's bones
 - 1. (Gen 48:22)-Jacob gave to Joseph the plot of land he took for himself near Shechem in Gen 33:18-20.
 - 2. (Gen 50:24)-Israel swore to carry Joseph's bones away from Egypt.
 - 3. (Gen 50:25)-Joseph died and was placed in a coffin in Egypt.
 - 4. (Ex 13:19)-Moses took Joseph's bones with him as Israel departed Egypt, 400 years later.
 - 5. (Josh 24:32)-After the conquest of Canaan, Israel buried Joseph's bones in that piece of land that Jacob gave to him near Shechem.

- f. Joseph (together with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob) ended well
 - i. Joseph was an impressive man of faith throughout his life, as Genesis reports, but Hebrews 11 only records his final act of faith. Why?
 - ii. Like his fathers before him, Joseph ended well.
 - iii. It is his final act of faith that seals a lifetime of faithfulness and guarantees that he, like his fathers, will inherit the promises of God.
 - iv. For he too desired a better country, a heavenly one, and to find and dwell in that city whose builder and architect is God (11:10, 16).