

## Hebrews

### Chapter 11:20-40

#### <sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

Precept Austin > In these next 3 verses (verses 20-22) the writer looks at the end of the lives of the next three patriarchs after Abraham to emphasize how their lives (albeit not perfect) were examples of those who remained faithful even to the end of their life (all three are at the end of their lives!) Remember the writer is speaking primarily to Jews who are being tested and tempted to revert to Judaism and he wants these examples of perseverance to the end to encourage his readers that your forefathers did it and so can you.

**By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau** > William MacDonald > Before the children were born, the Lord announced to Rebekah that the boys would become the source of two nations and that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). Esau was Isaac's favorite and, as the elder son, would normally have received the best portion from his father. But Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac, whose sight was now poor, into giving the best blessing to Jacob. When the plot was exposed, Isaac trembled violently. But he remembered God's word that the older would serve the younger, and in spite of his predilection for Esau, he realized that God's overruling of his natural weakness must stand.

Pink > That Jacob's portion far excelled Esau's is clear from Hebrews 12:17, where it is denominated, "the blessing." What that is was made clearer when Isaac repeated his benediction upon Jacob, saying, "And give the blessing of Abraham to thee and to thy seed" (**Genesis 28:4**. Here is the key which we need to unlock its meaning > the "blessing of Abraham" (into which elect Gentiles enter, through Christ) is purely a spiritual thing.

**Genesis 28:3-4** > <sup>3</sup> *May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, so that you may become a multitude of peoples. <sup>4</sup> May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, so that you may possess the land where you live as a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."*

**Even regarding things to come** > Barnes > A blessing was pronounced on each, of a very different nature, but Isaac had no doubt that both would be fulfilled.

Utley > Isaac's blessing of his sons is found in Gen. 27:27ff, while Jacob's first blessing is in Gen. 48:14 for Joseph's sons and later his second blessing in Genesis 49 for his other sons.

**Genesis 27:27-40** > *27 So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said,*

*“See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed; 28 Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine; 29 May peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; be master of your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you.*

<sup>21</sup> *By faith Jacob, as he **was dying**, **blessed each of the sons of Joseph**, and worshiped, **leaning on the top of his staff**.*

**Was dying** > Precept Austin > is in present tense implying he was in the process of dying

**Blessed each of the sons of Joseph** > Guthrie > The blessing which passed from father to son was of great significance to the Hebrew mind. Our writer sees the act as an act of faith. In the case of Jacob, the farewell blessings on each of the sons of Joseph are mentioned as particular evidence of his faith (cf. Gen. 48:16ff.).

**Leaning on the top of his staff** > Guthrie > When Jacob is said to have blessed bowing in worship over the head of his staff, the words follow the Septuagint rather than the Massoretic text, which has ‘bed’ instead of staff.

MacArthur > The two words (“staff”, “bed”) in Hebrew have exactly the same consonants. Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts were copied without vowels. Later Hebrew manuscripts, between the sixth and ninth centuries AD, took the word as “bed.” The LXX, in the third century BC, rendered it “staff,” which seems more likely, although both could be true.

<sup>22</sup> *By faith **Joseph**, when he was dying, **made mention** of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.*

**Joseph** > Wiersbe > The faith of Joseph was certainly remarkable. After the way his family treated him, you would think he would have abandoned his faith, but instead, it grew stronger. Even the ungodly influence of Egypt did not weaken his trust in God. Joseph did not use his family, his job, or his circumstances as an excuse for unbelief.

**Made mention** > Strong’s > to call to mind, to make mention of

**Genesis 50:24-25** > <sup>24</sup> *Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will assuredly take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”* <sup>25</sup> *Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will assuredly take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.”*

**Genesis 15:13-14** > <sup>13</sup> Then God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

**Moses** > Zuck > With this transition to the life of Moses, the writer began to focus on the way faith confronts opposition and hostility, a subject familiar to his readers.

**Because they saw he was a beautiful child** > Guthrie > The fact that the child was beautiful is also mentioned in Acts 7:20 in Stephen’s speech and is derived directly from **Exodus 2:2**. In both New Testament occurrences the same Greek word (*asteios*) is used, which in the papyri is used of elegance in clothing. There was clearly something striking about the appearance of Moses to create such an impression on Pharaoh’s daughter.

**Exodus 2:2** > <sup>2</sup> And the woman conceived and gave birth to a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months.

**Parents** > The above, in the Septuagint, is translated as *they* > <sup>2</sup> And she conceived, and bore a male child; and having seen that he was fair, they hid him three months.

**Beautiful** > Zodhiates says that *asteios* refers to "One who dwells in a city and by consequence is well-bred, polite, eloquent, as the inhabitants of cities may be in comparison with those of the country. Used only of Moses, meaning elegant in external form (Acts 7:20; Heb. 11:23) ... *Asteíos* came to be assumed as one who is fair to look on and attractive, a suggestion of beauty but not generally of a high character ... *Asteíos* belongs to art and to it are attributed the notions of neatness, symmetry, and elegance.

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, **when he had grown up, refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, <sup>25</sup> **choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin**, <sup>26</sup> **considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward**.



**When he had grown up** > Strong's > *megas* > *great*

Robertson > *Having become great*

Guthrie > When he was grown up points to a new development in Moses' story, for now he is in a position to exercise faith on his own behalf, and he does this by refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The tense of the verb refused (*ērnēsato*) points to a specific act of choice.

**Refused** > HELPS > *arnéomai* – properly, deny (refuse); hence, *contradict*, refuse to affirm or to confess (identify with); disown (repudiate).

**Choosing** > Precept Austin > (*haireomai* from *haireo* = to take a particular position for oneself) means to make a choice of one or more possible alternatives and so to choose, select or prefer. The middle voice could be read more literally "having chosen for himself". English = "heresy" (an opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to the truth or to generally accepted beliefs or standards). Moses' "heresy" was a good choice!

**Choosing rather to endure ill-treatment ...** > Expositor's > "The significance and source of this refusal lay in his preferring to suffer ill-usage with God's people rather than to have a short-lived enjoyment of sin ... It was because they were God's people, not solely because they were of his blood, that Moses threw in his lot with them. It was this which illustrated his faith. He believed that God would fulfill His promise to His people, little likelihood as at present there seemed to be of any great future for his race.

Zuck > the writer showed Moses to be a real hero of faith who had an intelligent regard for the eschatological hopes of the nation of Israel. The readers also were to accept "disgrace" and reject "the pleasures of sin," and they would do so if they, like Moses, anticipated their reward.

**Considering the reproach of Christ** > It is much easier to understand this phrase within the context if we remember the "Christ" is a title ("Messiah") and not a name.

**Looking** > Strong's > to look away from all else at an object

Guthrie > The words for he looked to the reward mean that Moses focused his gaze on a nobler target. The verb means 'to look away' implying a deliberate turning from one thing to another.

**Looking to the reward** > Precept Austin > The possibility of reward is the most frequently mentioned motivation for enduring in the faith (for example, see Matt. 5:10-12; 16:24-27; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 John 2:28; Rev. 22:12)."

<sup>27</sup> *By faith **he left** Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, **as though** seeing Him who is unseen.*

**He left** > Strong's > *kataleipo* > to leave down, i.e. Behind; by implication, to abandon, have remaining -- forsake, leave, reserve

Precept Austin > The Greek word *leipo* means "to leave." But the word used here is an intensified form, *kataleipo*, and means "to abandon completely."

Wuest translates it > "By faith he abandoned Egypt"

**As though** > Most of the commentators translate this as "as seeing".

<sup>28</sup> *By faith he **kept** the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them.* <sup>29</sup> *By faith **they passed through** the Red Sea as through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they **attempted it**, were drowned.*

**Kept** > Strong's > to make, do

Barnes > Greek, "he made the passover," which means more, it seems to me, than that he merely kept or celebrated it. It implies that he instituted this rite and made the arrangements for its observance.

Wuest translates it > "By faith he instituted the passover and the sprinkling of the blood"

**They** > Corporate belief?

**Passed through** > Strong's > step across

**Attempted it** > Strong's > a trial, an experiment

Robertson > Literally, "of which taking trial"

<sup>30</sup> ***By faith the walls of Jericho fell down** after the Israelites had marched around them for seven days.* <sup>31</sup> *By faith the prostitute **Rahab** did not perish along with those who were **disobedient**, after she had **welcomed the spies in peace**.*

**By faith the walls of Jericho fell down** > "Believers Score in Battle Over the Battle of Jericho" By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD, FEB. 22, 1990 (New York Times article)

After years of doubt among archeologists, a new analysis of excavations has yielded a wide range of evidence supporting the biblical account about the fall of Jericho. It may well be true that, in the words of the old spiritual, "Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, and the walls come tumbling down."

A study of ceramic remnants, royal scarabs, carbon-14 dating, seismic activity in the region and even some ruins of tumbled walls produced what is being called impressive evidence that the fortified city was destroyed in the Late Bronze Age, about 1400 B.C.

The prevailing view among scholars has been that the city was destroyed some 150 years earlier and thus did not exist at the time of the Israelite invasion, which is believed to have occurred no earlier than 1400 B.C.

*"When we compare the archeological evidence at Jericho with the biblical narrative describing the Israelite destruction of Jericho, we find a quite remarkable agreement,"* Dr. Bryant G. Wood, an archeologist at the University of Toronto, wrote in the March-April issue of Biblical Archeology Review.

**Rahab** > Ray Stedman > Along with the story of Jericho's overthrow, we read the remarkable account of Rahab the harlot. She had heard of Israel's conquests at the Red Red Sea and in the wilderness and expected them to assault Jericho many years before. She knew that their victories came from their faith in God, and she "received the spies with peace" (literally) when Joshua sent them to spy out the city. Her motive was not merely to save her life and that of her family; she was convinced, as she said, that *"the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."* That faith was honored when the walls of the city collapsed and all within were killed except Rahab and her family. That her faith was genuine is confirmed by Matthew when he lists her as one of the ancestors of Jesus. She went on to marry Salmon and became the mother of Boaz, and thus the great-grandmother of David. Faith overcame a sinful life, delivered her from a pagan religion.

**Disobedient** > They had the same information available to them as did Rahab. She believed and was saved by her faith.

Vincent > (The use of the word) here describes the failure to be persuaded that God had given the land to the Israelites, and the consequent refusal to surrender Jericho.

*Joshua 2:9-11* > <sup>9</sup> and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have despaired because of you. <sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup> When we heard these reports, our hearts melted and no <sup>l</sup>courage remained in anyone any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth below.

Vincent > (The use of the word) here describes the failure to be persuaded that God had given the land to the Israelites, and the consequent refusal to surrender Jericho.

**Welcomed the spies in peace** > Vincent > Rahab received the spies without enmity, and did not allow them to suffer harm from others.

<sup>32</sup> *And what more shall I say? For **time will fail me** if I tell of **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah**, of David and Samuel and the prophets,*

**Time will fail me** > Robertson > Literally, (time) "will leave me telling about."

**Me** > (Interesting side note here) Constable > The Greek pronoun *me*, translated "*me*," is qualified by a participle in the masculine gender (*diegoumenon*), which defines the pronoun as masculine. This indicates that the writer of this epistle ("me") was a man and not a woman.

Spurgeon > There are some names in this chapter that we should hardly have expected to see there, the characters mentioned having been so disfigured by serious faults, and flaws, and failings. But the distinguishing feature of faith was there in every instance, especially in the case of Samson.

Pink > The selection made, out of many others who could have been given, is most startling: those whose names we might have expected had been registered on this honor roll are omitted, while others we have never thought of are given a place.

**Gideon** > **Judges 6-7** > Precept Austin > by faith defeated the Midianite army with a small band of 300 men.

Pink > Let him carefully note, first, that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon" (Judges 6:34), which supplies the key to all that follows

**Barak** > **Judges 4** > Precept Austin > with the prodding of Deborah was used by God to defeat the Canaanites

Pink > A further word was given to him, "Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee!" (message from the prophetess Deborah in Judges 4:14): he "heard," "believed," and obeyed, and a great victory was secured. It was by faith in God's promise that Barak went forth against the enormous army of Sisera and vanquished the same.

**Samson** > **Judges 14-16** > Precept Austin > defeated the Philistines several times most notably in his last act of faith in which he himself was killed.

Pink > In the O.T. it is said, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him," but that does not mean he was involuntarily impelled by a Divine power, like a hurricane carries things through the air blindly and unwittingly. No, the Spirit deals with men not as stocks and stones, but as moral agents; enlightening their minds, controlling their hearts, inclining their wills, and supplying physical strength for whatever tasks God allots.



**Jephthah > Judges 11 > Precept Austin > defeated the Ammonites with God's power**

Pink > Yet God, in an especial and extraordinary manner conferred His Spirit upon Jephthah and advanced him to the highest dignity and function amongst His people and prospered him exceedingly.

<sup>33 & 34</sup> *who by faith ...*

- *conquered kingdoms >*
- *performed acts of righteousness >*
- *obtained promises >*
- *shut the mouths of lions >*
- *quenched the power of fire >*
- *escaped the edge of the sword >*
- *from weakness were made strong >*
- *became mighty in war >*
- *put foreign armies to flight >*

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<sup>35</sup> **Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;**

**Women received back their dead by resurrection > Barnes > As in the case of the woman of Zarephath, whose child was restored to life by Elijah, 1 Kings 17:19-24; and of the son of the Shunamite woman whose child was restored to life by Elisha; 2 Kings 4:18-37**

**Tortured > Strong's > *tumpanizó* > to beat a drum, to torture by beating. Usage > I torture, break on the wheel, beat to death**

**Accepting > HELPS > (from *prós*, "towards, interchange" and *dexomai*, "welcome, receive") – properly, to receive in a personal (open) manner; to *welcome* with *warm reciprocity*.**

**Release > Precept Austin > (*apolutrosis* from *apo* = marker of dissociation or separation + *lutroo* = to redeem <> from *lútron* = ransom <> from *luo* = loosen what is bound, loose any person tied or fastened) refers primarily to the payment of a price to ransom but in this context does not involve payment with money. The required "redemption price" was a recanting of one's belief in Jesus, which which would result in deliverance of the recanting person from torture.**

Pink > Two alternatives were set before them: disloyalty to the Lord, or enduring the most excruciating suffering; surrender of the Truth, or being tortured by devils in human form. Freedom from this torture was offered to them in return for forsaking their profession. (Apply this to the reason the Book of Hebrews was written)



36 & 37 *and others experienced ...*

- *mocking*
- *flogging (scourging)*
- *chains and imprisonment*
- *stoned*
- *sawn in two*
- *tempted*
- *put to death with the sword*
- *they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins*
- *being destitute*
- *afflicted*
- *tormented*

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38 *(people of whom the world was not **worthy**), wandering in deserts, on mountains, and sheltering in caves and holes in the ground.*

**Worthy** > (*áxios* from *ágō* = to weigh) strictly speaking means bringing up the other beam of the scales. Having the weight of another thing of like value, worth as much.

39 ***And all these, having gained approval through their faith**, did not receive what was promised,* <sup>40</sup> *because God **had provided** something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.*

**And all these, having gained approval through their faith** > Precept Austin reminds us of the words found in the beginning of this chapter ...

**Hebrews 11:1-2** > <sup>1</sup> *Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.* <sup>2</sup> *For by it the people of old gained **approval**.*

**Approval** (Both in verse 2 and here in verse 39) > Strong's > *martureo* > to bear witness, testify

**Had provided** > Precept Austin > (*problepo* from *pró* = before + *blépo* = see) means literally to see before, to look out beforehand, to foresee, to plan and then to furnish in advance ("prearrangement") or to provide (implying the need is seen in advance). In the NT (the word) is found only in the middle voice and only in this passage. The Amplified rendering picks up the sense - "*Because God had us in mind.*" (The author is speaking to his readers!)