

HEROES OF THE FAITH, THEN AND NOW

Isaac, Jacob, Joseph - Faith in the Future

TEXT: Heb. 11:20-22

Introduction: The lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph span over 260 years. Each of them is listed in God's Hall of Faith in Heb. 11. When we ask the question, "Why are they listed?" we are tempted to offer many answers. For if we go back to the O.T. accounts of their lives, we can find numerous moments of faith for each of them. Yet strangely, most of what we would label as examples of the faith of these three men is not referenced at all in Hebrews. Instead, the focus of the attention of the Holy Spirit is upon a similar event in the lives of all three men, and it is the reason each of them is given to us as an example of heroic faith. See if you can catch it as we read these three verses.

Heb. 11:20-22 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when 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 departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Why are Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph listed here in the Hall of Faith?

I. ISAAC, JACOB, AND JOSEPH ARE LISTED AS HEROES OF THE FAITH BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED GOD'S DECLARATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE.

A. Isaac blessed Jacob over Esau to be the son of the covenant. (Gen. 27:28-29, 28:3-4)

1. God told Isaac and Rebekah this before the twins were born.
2. Jacob tricked Isaac into pronouncing the blessing.
3. Later Isaac realized the providence of God and reaffirmed the blessing.
4. Isaac believed God's declarations about the future!

B. Jacob blessed each of his twelve sons, prophetically declaring the future of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Gen. 49:1-28)

1. His pronouncements declaring the will of the Lord have all come true concerning the destiny of each of the sons and the tribes that would bear their names.
2. Of special interest is his declaration that the rulers of the nation would come from the tribe of Judah (the third born!), including the one who would become the Eternal King. The physical lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ was through the tribe of Judah.
3. Jacob believed God's declarations about the future!

C. Joseph declared that God would lead His people out of Egypt and back to the land He had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Gen. 50:24-25)

1. He believed it so firmly, that he told them not to bury him in Egypt but to take his bones with them back to the promised land for burial.
2. Joseph believed God's declarations about the future!

II. GOD HAS MADE CERTAIN DECLARATIONS TO US ABOUT THE FUTURE.

There may be questions or debate about the order and details of these events, but if you believe what the Word of God says, you cannot deny the fact that these things have been declared by God for the future.

A. There is going to be a rapture, a snatching away of believers.

1. *1 Thess. 4:16-17* ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
2. *Mt. 24:37-42* ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women will be grinding at the mill*: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
3. For those of us who are saved, this is glorious news. But this is not good news to the lost.

B. There is going to be a terrible time of tribulation upon the earth.

Mt. 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

During this seven years of unparalleled disaster and crisis upon the earth, over half of the population of the earth will die. Most of them will be lost!

The rapture and the tribulation to follow can happen at any moment. Nothing remains prophetically to be completed before these events can take place.

If this happened this afternoon, how many of your loved ones, how many of your friends, how many of your neighbors would end up for eternity in hell.

C. Until the rapture, God's plan to offer His salvation to man is through the church.

Matthew 16:18 ...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

That is why we are beginning this project together called "Embracing Bay".

1. Beginning Sunday, Aug. 29 and throughout the month of September
2. Five nights a week, Sun thru Thurs nights for 2 hours
3. Eight phones
4. We are going to call the people of Bay County, 8,000 of them
5. Invite them to a special Sunday here at SABC and to stay for lunch
6. Ask if they have something in their life they would like us to pray about. And then we really are going to pray, and send cards, and continue to invite, invite, invite.

And right now, some of you are silently asking, Bro. Mike, why in the world should I do that?

Why should I give my time to call total strangers?

Why should I risk someone getting angry with me for calling them about church?

Why should I want to invite people to church who could already be going to church if they really wanted to?

And there are a lot of answers I could give, like...

Nobody is a stranger to God. He knows their name ... and their longings ... and their hurts. He wants to bring them into His Forever Family and give them life.

He even loves the bitter and the angry, enough to pray for the ones who put the thorns on His head and the spikes in His hands.

Already the Holy Spirit is working in some of the people we are going to call. He is orchestrating the events of their lives to make them ready when they have never been ready before.

But here is the main reason I would give you: Because your call or your prayer could be the very thing that God uses to totally turn someone's future around.

Your call, your prayer, your gift of service to the Lord through "Embracing Bay" could well be the very thing God uses to change someone's future for eternity.

III. AS BELIEVERS, WE AFFIRM OUR FAITH IN THE FUTURE GOD HAS REVEALED IN HIS WORD EVERY TIME WE PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."