

# **"By Faith"**

**Hebrews 11:1-40**

## **Part 1**

- I. BY IT [*FAITH*] THE ELDERS - VS. 2, 39**
- II. THROUGH FAITH WE - VS. 3**
- III. BY FAITH ABEL - VS. 4; GEN. 4:1-7**
- IV. BY FAITH ENOCH - VS. 5-6; GEN. 5:21-24**
- V. BY FAITH NOAH - VS. 7; GEN. 6:8-22**

## **Part 2**

- VI. BY FAITH ABRAHAM - VS. 8-10, 17-19**
- VII. THROUGH FAITH SARAH - VS. 11-12; GEN. 21:1-3**

## **Part 3**

- VIII. PARENTHETICAL - VS. 12-16 - "STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS"**

## Part 4

Hebrews 11 shifts from the broad theme of living by faith to three rapid, yet profound, examples of the patriarchs exercising faith at the end of their lives. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all looked forward, trusting God's promises beyond their own lifetimes. Their dying actions were not backward-looking or focused on regret, **but anchored in God's covenant and hope for the future**. Each of these blessings is a testament to faith that sees beyond the present.

### I. BY FAITH ISAAC – VS. 20; GEN. 27:27-40; 28:2-3

#### **Faith that submits to God's sovereign plan.**

##### **A. Faith in the unseen future – “concerning things to come”**

Isaac believed that the blessings he pronounced would shape the future of nations, in line with God's promises to Abraham. The phrase "things to come" (*περί μελλόντων*) refers to future, divinely ordained realities not yet visible.

##### **B. Submission to God's order – “blessed Jacob and Esau”**

Though Isaac initially intended to bless Esau, he accepted God's reversal and affirmed the blessing on Jacob (Gen. 27:33). Faith submits to God's sovereign choices, not human tradition.

Romans 9:10-13

<sup>10</sup> And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; <sup>11</sup> (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that

calleth;)<sup>12</sup> It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.<sup>13</sup> As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

#### Malachi 1:2-3

<sup>2</sup> I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

<sup>3</sup> And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

### C. Acknowledgment of redemptive history

Isaac's blessing recognized that the Abrahamic promise would continue, ultimately culminating in Christ through Jacob's line.

#### Matthew 1:2 [and following]

<sup>2</sup> Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Faith yields to God's ordering and speaks confidently of the future He has declared.

## II. BY FAITH JACOB - VS. 21; GEN. 48:5-22

### Faith that worships

#### A. Blessing with spiritual insight

Jacob intentionally crossed his hands (Gen. 48:14) to bless Ephraim over Manasseh (Gen. 48:13-20), showing spiritual discernment by faith, not favoritism. He trusted God's revealed purposes, even when they contradicted cultural norms.

#### B. Worship in weakness

The image of Jacob leaning on his staff speaks of physical frailty, yet he worships God in reverence. Faith worships even in weariness. The Greek verb

for worship (*προσεκύνησεν*) conveys reverence and submission, highlighting faith expressed even in physical weakness.

The reference here is to Gen. 47:31, where it states, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." To make a long explanation of linguistic nuances short: "The passage means that Jacob, rising from his bed to take the oath from Joseph, supported his aged limbs on the staff, which was a type of his pilgrimage (Gen. 32:10), and at the end of the oath bowed his head over the staff in sign of thanks and reverence to God" (Cambridge Bible notes).

#### Genesis 32:10

<sup>10</sup> I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

### C. Vision beyond Egypt

Jacob's actions anticipated God's promise to bring Israel back to the land (Gen. 48:21-22). He died in Egypt but looked toward the promised land, echoing Hebrews 11:13-16.

#### Genesis 48:21-22

<sup>21</sup> And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. <sup>22</sup> Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

#### Genesis 49:29-33

<sup>29</sup> And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup> In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham

bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. <sup>31</sup> There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. <sup>32</sup> The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. <sup>33</sup> And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Hebrews 13:14

<sup>14</sup> For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Even in decline, faith clings to God's promises and gives glory to Him.

### III. BY FAITH JOSEPH - VS. 22; GEN. 50:24-25

#### Faith that speaks of deliverance

##### A. Faith in national redemption

Joseph didn't just believe in Israel's eventual freedom – he *testified* to it as part of God's word to Abraham. The Greek *ἐμνησεν* ("made mention") implies deliberate recollection and testimony.

Genesis 50:24

<sup>24</sup> And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Genesis 15:13-14

<sup>13</sup> And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; <sup>14</sup> And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

### Acts 7:17-18

<sup>17</sup> But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, <sup>18</sup> Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

## B. Hope in personal resurrection

*“...and gave commandment concerning his bones”*

### Genesis 50:25

<sup>25</sup> And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

### Exodus 13:19

<sup>19</sup> And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

### Joshua 24:32

<sup>32</sup> And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

## 1. Burial in the Promised Land as a Theological Statement

Joseph's insistence that his bones not remain in Egypt, but be carried to Canaan, was more than a sentimental connection to his ancestry – it was a declaration that death would not cancel God's promises. His burial was a *prophetic testimony* that the land covenant still stood and would one day include his own future presence.

He believed God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16 would come true – even if it was centuries later.

## 2. Burial reflects belief in bodily resurrection

In the ancient Near Eastern mindset, burial location was not merely ceremonial – it often reflected one's ultimate hope. Joseph's burial request implied:

- "I belong in the land where God will raise His people."
- "I want my remains to rest where God will fulfill His promise to our nation."

This is consistent with Hebrews 11:16, which says the patriarchs sought a heavenly country – a better city prepared by God. Their earthly burial in the land anticipated a future, heavenly resurrection.

### Hebrews 11:35

<sup>35</sup> Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

### Job 19:25-27

<sup>25</sup> For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: <sup>26</sup> And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: <sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

### Daniel 12:2

<sup>2</sup> And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

### 3. Connection to New Testament theology

The Apostle Paul viewed burial with resurrection in mind (cf. Romans 6:4-5). In that same spirit, Joseph's bones were planted in hope (to borrow 1 Cor. 15:42-44 language) – that he would one day rise in the land of promise.

*Acts 7:15-16* recounts that Jacob and the patriarchs, including Joseph, were buried in Shechem. This reinforces that burial location was linked to covenant identity and eschatological hope.

#### *Acts 7:15-16*

<sup>15</sup> So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, <sup>16</sup> And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father of Sychem.*

Joseph's burial command was not just about honoring his heritage. It was a statement of enduring faith in God's covenant, pointing forward to the day when not only would Israel be redeemed from Egypt – but when the dead would rise, and Joseph himself would stand in the eternal land of promise, resurrected and glorified.

#### *Philippians 3:20-21*

<sup>20</sup> For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup> Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Joseph's bones preached a sermon for 400 years – a sermon about the faithfulness of God and the



hope of resurrection.

### C. Confidence in God's timing

Though Joseph saw no sign of deliverance in his lifetime, he trusted the timing and certainty of God's word. His words in Genesis 50:24, *"God will surely visit you..."*, were spoken hundreds of years before the Exodus, yet he spoke them with confidence in God's timetable.

This aligns in a unique way with Habakkuk 2:3: *"For the vision is yet for an appointed time... though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."*

This verse, originally given in a time of national waiting and uncertainty, underscores a truth that Joseph embraced: God's promises may not come quickly, but they never come late. Faith rests not in immediate fulfillment but in the faithfulness of the One who gave the promise.

- Joseph did not panic or doubt because of the delay – he believed God had appointed a time, and that time would come.
- His command concerning his bones (Gen. 50:25) was not only a burial instruction but a confession of God's perfect timing – he was saying, *"When the time comes, and it will, take me with you."*

Conclusion to this point:

Faith, especially at life's end, speaks volumes. These patriarchs could have looked back, but instead, they looked forward, trusting God's Word beyond their lifespans. Each man bore witness that God's promises

were worth holding onto, even when they would not live to see them fulfilled.

Isaac submitted to God's plan, Jacob worshiped in weakness, and Joseph prepared others for deliverance. Their faith still speaks (cf. Heb. 11:4).

Will your life – and your final words – point others to “things to come”?