



JESUS

Up **C**lose and **P**ersonal

A Study of Hebrews | The Pastors' Bible Study 2013-2014

Hebrews 11:17-29

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Vicky Jones, Associate Pastor Equipping Ministries

Hebrews 11

¹⁷ By faith **Abraham**, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

²⁰ By faith **Isaac** blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

²¹ By faith **Jacob**, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

²² By faith **Joseph**, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

²³ By faith **Moses'** parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. ²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

Reflection Questions

1. Today's text includes an All Star roster of many of the great heroes of the faith: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. (See the back of this page for a generational chart.) Reflect upon what you might know about these heroes. This week, open up your Bible to Genesis any where after chapter 12, and read about one or more of them. What did you discover in your reading? How flawed or "human" were they? Why do you think they considered heroes?

2. The text says that they lived “by faith.” What does living by faith mean to you – as a theological idea, and also in your life experience? Are the two different? What can you share about living “by faith?” You might consider journaling in order to be clearer about what it has meant to you to live “by faith.” Consider that such a written testimony would be a gift to your family members and friends to encourage them in the same way that these stories of these heroes encourage us. Finally, how would your life be different if living “by faith” was your consistent go-to way of life?

3. Jacob’s life was a rip-roaring adventure! He had the gall to trick his older brother out of the family blessing that is supposed to go to the oldest son, and then Jacob had to flee for his life! You might remember also how then he wrestled with the angel of God, and later fell in love with beautiful Rachel and worked for many years to marry her. It’s strange to think that the writer to the Hebrews skipped over all of Jacob’s adventure stories and chose to include this final scene at the end of Jacob’s life. Here (see Genesis 48:8-22) Jacob seems so mixed up and feeble-brained that he blesses the wrong (younger) son of Joseph! Joseph tries to tell him that he’s blessing the wrong son, but Joseph insists upon blessing the younger son Ephraim. God’s choices are not always our choices. How does this idea fit in with the stories of the other heroes in today’s text?

