

The Patriarch; Part 1

During the past several months we have been discussing the heroes of faith, found in Hebrews, chapter 11. The key to being a hero of faith is found in Hebrews, chapter 12 and verse 1: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith". In other words, the key to chapter 11 was this: The reason the saints listed in chapter 11 are called heroes, is because when they did miss it, they layed aside every weight and the sin that did so easily beset them; they ran with patience the race that was set before them.

We pointed out in our last issue, that Abraham was at the pinnacle of his faith when he offered Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. We also pointed out, from Romans, chapter 4, that strong faith is progressive. "[Abraham became] strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform". If God makes a promise, He can perform it. If God has given you a promise, quit trying to help God; quit trying to bring it to pass yourself. Trust in God; follow His commands; He will bring that promise to pass.

In this issue, we are going to begin studying the lives of Isaac's sons, Jacob and Esau. Beginning in verse 20 of Hebrews, chapter 11, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff". Notice again, verse 20, "By faith Isaac". The name Isaac means, "laughter". The reason he was called laughter is because when he was promised to Abraham and Sarah, Sarah laughed. Abraham also laughed. I do not believe their laughter was in total unbelief; they laughed because they looked at the condition of their bodies. There are times when God can promise you something and you know it is going to come to pass; but it almost makes you laugh looking at the circumstances.

Isaac was forty years old before he married Rebekah, and in those forty years, he never lifted a finger to find a wife. Abraham had to do it. Often we read in the Word about the great men and women of God, and fail to realize that God calls ordinary people. This is why, as we study their lives in greater detail, we learn that they

had shortcomings; they had failures. But their shortcomings and failures are to encourage us; because if there was hope for them, there is hope for us. God does not call perfect people, but He does take nobodies and makes somebodies out of them. Again these heroes of faith were not great when God called them; but He made them great as they began to follow after Him. For forty years Isaac hung around the house and did not do much until his father finally went out and found Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah fell in love, were married, and Rebekah bore two sons to Isaac. Genesis chapter 25, verse 20, “And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord”. In other words, Rebekah said, “If God answered my prayer, what is going on inside of me? What is all this warfare going on inside?”

Verse 23 continues, “And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger”. Note that phrase, “the elder shall serve the younger”. The elder was Esau and the younger was Jacob. Verses 24 and 25: “And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau”. The name Esau means “hairy”. He was covered with hair all over. Verse 26: “And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel: and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them”. At sixty years old, twenty years after he was married, Isaac had his twins. The name Jacob actually means “a heel catcher”, and that is what he did. Jacob did not do a whole lot on his own; he was always using other people to accomplish his own goals - his own ends. Esau is going to be the one who was the favorite of his father, but Jacob is going to be the one chosen by God. In the natural, Esau was a much better man than Jacob. He was a man’s man, a hunter and all-around man, and his father was very pleased with him. Jacob was the one who was always chiseling, always so conniving, and always planning schemes.

In the book of Romans, chapter 9, beginning in verse 10, we are going to find out why one son was accepted and the other was rejected. A few issues back, we

learned that Abraham had two sons. Of the two sons, one came through his wife and one came through a handmaid. The son that came through his wife was Isaac; the one that came through the handmaid was Ishmael. Often, if you ask people why Isaac was accepted and Ishmael was rejected, they will say that it was because Isaac was born legitimately, while Ishmael was born out of adultery. My friend, I want you to know that God does not accept you because of natural birth; God accepts you because of faith. The reason one son was accepted and one was rejected was because one was of faith and one was not of faith. One did not accept the Lord, and one did accept the Lord. This truth can be traced to the next generation, in that Isaac had twin sons. They both came through his wife, Rebekah, yet one was accepted and one was rejected. Again, natural birth is not the key; it is the new birth. I do not care how super you are in the natural; how many friends you have; how sweet you are; God does not accept you according to your outward works. God accepts you according to the new birth. That is what is being brought out in these verses of scripture.

Beginning in verse 10 of Romans, chapter 9, "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (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;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger". Here is a quote from Malachi, chapter 1, verses 2 and 3. Malachi lets us in on something that Moses, when he wrote Genesis, did not tell us; and that was the fact that God make a promise before Jacob and Esau were born. He said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated". God hates unbelief. We found that out in Hebrews, chapter 11 and verse 6, "Without faith it is impossible to please God". My friend, if you do not please God, then you displease God. If faith pleases God, it must be unbelief that displeases God. God knew and could see far into the future concerning Jacob and Esau. He knew one would accept Him, and one would reject Him. Because of that, He chose one of them, even in the womb. Again this verse says, "As it is written (from Malachi, chapter 1, verses 2 and 3), Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated". Jacob was the one, in the natural, who was not very good; yet God accepted him. Esau, in the natural, was the pleasant man; yet God did not accept him.

Many of us are familiar with the story of Jacob and Esau, but let us review it briefly. Esau had come in from hunting one day, and he was very hungry. Since he was the firstborn, he had received the birthright from his father. Remember, that in

the nation of Israel, the firstborn in the family always received a threefold blessing. First, the priesthood of the house, second the rulership of the house and thirdly they received a double portion of the inheritance. Again, Esau came in one day from hunting, and was very hungry. It just so happened that Jacob was making some food. (The Old Testament calls it pottage.) Esau smelled the food and said, "Why don't you give me some of that?" Naturally, Jacob grabbed on to the heel of the situation and responded, "Yes, I'll give it to you if you give me your birthright". The birthright was so insignificant to Esau, that he sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. In other words, spiritual things were not very important to Esau. Spiritual things were important to Jacob, but only as a means to an end: to get the blessings and prosperity for himself. Jacob was the favorite of his mother. Esau was the favorite of his father, and because Rebekah favored Jacob, she planned a way for Jacob to receive the blessings of the firstborn.

Genesis relates this story. Chapter 27, beginning in verse 23, we read: "And he (Isaac) discerned him (Jacob) not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him". Jacob came in with goats' hair on him to confuse his father. He came in smelling like the great outdoors, and when he came in, he was to trick his father into believing that he was Esau so that he could have Esau's blessing. Jacob had already taken Esau's birthright, now he was going to take his blessing. Remember, God had said before they were born, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated". But Isaac is trying to change God's mind - he is trying to work against God by blessing Esau, his favorite son. Rebekah knew the will of God, and at this time, Isaac did not. That is why Rebekah slipped in and helped Jacob to receive the blessing. Verse 23 says again: "And he (Isaac) discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven (prosperity), and the fatness of the earth (good crops), and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons

bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee". In other words, what Isaac is saying is, "Your brother will not be blessed unless he bows down to you." A little while later, Esau came in to receive the blessing from Isaac, but Isaac had just blessed Jacob with the blessing that should belong to the firstborn.

Genesis, chapter 27 and verse 35, continues: "And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted (or 'chiseled') me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Verse 39, "And Esau his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above." In other words, Isaac says, "You are also going to be blessed." Notice the condition of the blessing in the next verse: "And by the sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother."

Esau was crying to his father, trying to get his father to take back the promise he gave to Jacob to give to him; but Isaac is beginning to understand that, even though Rebekah and Jacob have tricked him, they have tricked him into doing what God had said in the very beginning, was right. Isaac offers a blessing to Esau, but notice the blessing. The Blessing was dependent upon Esau's submission to Jacob.

Verse 40, "Thou shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." In other words, "Esau, the only way to keep from being in bondage to Jacob is to submit to him. When you submit to him, God will pour the blessings out on you."

According to the New Testament, Jacob and Esau are a type of the spirit and flesh. Just as they wrestled within the womb of Rebekah, so does the new nature wrestle against the nature of the flesh.

Again, Isaac said to Esau, "You can only prosper by serving Jacob ." Verse 29 says again, (talking to Jacob), "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee, be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every

one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." Isaac said to Esau, "I do have a blessing for you. The only blessing I have for you is the blessing I promised to Jacob. You will be blessed when you submit to him, and you will have the abundance. You will have the dew. You will have the corn and wine. You will have the blessings that God would desire for you to have, but it only comes as you come into submission unto him."

Isaac had tried to shun the promise of God by looking at the natural things around him—the fact that Esau was a much better son—that Esau made his father proud.

Hebrews chapter 11, verse 20 says, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." Nations would come out of them. God had promised that to Rebekah, and Jacob became the seed, the blessing of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob; again, we have this line coming down that God was using the seed of faith—because they exercised faith in the Lord, God used them and they became the seed of Abraham, through which God was going to cause a nation to rise in this earth, along with a spiritual nation and that spiritual nation is the Body of Christ, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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