#### Lesson 16 Hebrews 11:20-22

VERSE 20[[1]](#footnote-1)

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

Isaac’s life was primarily observations of the miracles God did in the life of Abraham, his father. Scripture makes no mention of mighty deeds He accomplished. Yet, he is mentioned in this list of those who pleased God by faith.

1. **Isaac saw many miracles in his life even before his father, Abraham, passed away.**
2. **He knew the story of the promise to his mother and father that they would bear Isaac, and that God would establish His covenant with him.**

***Genesis 17:19***

*Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name* *Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant,* *and* *with his descendants after him.*

1. **Isaac saw that God chose him, not Ishmael, as his heir of the promise.**

[***Genesis 21:10***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+21:10&version=NKJV)

*Therefore she said to Abraham, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.”*

1. **He saw (and was certainly thankful for) the lamb which God provided instead of himself.**

[***Genesis 22:13***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+22:2&version=NKJV)***-14***

*Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind*him was*a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said*to*this day, “In the Mount of the Lord it shallHe be provided.”*

1. **He saw that God had kept his blessing to Abraham: “Blessing I shall bless you.”**

[***Genesis 24:1***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24:1&version=NKJV)

*Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.*

1. **He knew of the divine and miraculous selection of Rebekah as his wife.**

[***Genesis 24:4***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24:4&version=NKJV)

*You shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”*

[***Genesis 24:63***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24:63&version=NKJV)***-67***

*And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. 64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, “Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?”*

*The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took a veil and covered herself.*

*66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.*

1. **As God had spoken, he was the only heir of Abraham. However, some gifts were given to the children not born of Sarah (after Isaac was born). Abraham sent them east.**

[***Genesis 25:5***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25:5&version=NKJV)

*And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.*

1. **As a very touching tribute to their father, Isaac and Ishmael both buried him.**

[***Genesis 25:9***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25:9&version=NKJV)

*And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite,*

1. **After Abraham died, God kept his covenant with Abraham concerning Isaac.**
2. **God blessed him.**

[***Genesis 25:11***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25:11&version=NKJV)

*And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac.*

1. **Although his wife, Rebekah, was childless, God granted Isaac’s prayer to let her conceive. She gave birth to twins: Jacob and Esau.**

[***Genesis 25:21***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25:21&version=NKJV)

*Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

1. **The blessing of Isaac was by grace (unmerited). He blessed Isaac because of Abraham.**

***Genesis 26:1-5***

*There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 Then the Lord appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5****because Abraham*** *obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”*

1. **This is a type of the blessings we receive due to Christ’s obedience.**

[***Romans 5:19***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:19&version=NKJV)

*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.*

1. **He, like his father, had flaws. The blessing he received was not based on his perfect behavior, but was given by grace.**

[***Genesis 25:28***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25:28&version=NKJV)

*And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

***Genesis 26:6-11***

*So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 7 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, “She is my sister”; for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” because he thought, “lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.” 8 Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. 9 Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?”*

*Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’”*

*10 And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us.” 11 So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”*

[***Genesis 26:12***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+26:12&version=NKJV)

*Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him.*

1. **The actual account of Isaac blessing his two sons is full of deceit and anguish.** Jacob, in obedience and cooperation with his mother, Rebekah, tricked Isaac into giving him the best blessing. Even so, a man of flawed character had faith to bless his sons and believed that what he said would come to pass. **Even when he discovered that he had blessed Jacob and not Isaac, he did not retract the blessing.**

***Genesis 27:26-41***

*Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near now and kiss me, my son.” 27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said:*

*“Surely, the smell of my son  
Is like the smell of a field  
Which the Lord has blessed.***28***Therefore may God give you  
Of the dew of heaven,  
Of the fatness of the earth,  
And plenty of grain and wine.***29***Let peoples serve you,  
And nations bow down to you.  
Be master over your brethren,  
And let your mother’s sons bow down to you.  
Cursed be everyone who curses you,  
And blessed be those who bless you!”*

**30***Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.***31***He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that your soul may bless me.”*

**32***And his father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?”*

*So he said, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.”*

**33***Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, “Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and* ***I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed****.”*

**34***When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me—me also, O my father!”*

*35 But he said, “Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing.”*

**36***And Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”*

**37***Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?”*

**38***And Esau said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.*

**39***Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:*

*“Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,  
And of the dew of heaven from above.***40***By your sword you shall live,  
And you shall serve your brother;  
And it shall come to pass, when you become restless,  
That you shall break his yoke from your neck.”*

**41***So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”*

1. **Even though Isaac preferred one son over the other, was not honest about his wife, Rebekah, and showed favoritism toward Esau, the faith he had in God’s promise while blessing his two sons, gave him an honorable mention in the faith hall of fame.**

*There was nothing to be seen for faith to rest on; nothing that gave the smallest ground for hope; nothing to make it even probable (apart from what he had heard and believed) that his descendants, either Jacob or Esau, would ever possess the land which had been promised to them” (E.W.B.) There was no human probability at the time Isaac spoke which could have been the basis of his calculations: all that he said issued from implicit faith in the bare Word of God. A.W. Pink*

*With most precious confidence Isaac disposed of Canaan as if he already had the peaceable possession of it. Yet, in fact, he owned not an acre of that Land, and had no human right to anything there save a burying-place. Moreover, at the time he prophesied there was a famine in Canaan, and he was an exile in Gerah. “Let people serve thee, and let nations bow down to thee” (Gen. 27: 29) , would, to one that viewed only the outward case of Isaac, seem like empty words. Ah, my brethren, we too ought to be as certain of the blessings to come, which God has promised, as if they were present, even though we see no apparent likelihood of them. A.W. Pink*

*It may be objected against what has been said above, that, from the account which is supplied in Genesis 27, Isaac “blessed” Jacob in ignorance rather than “by faith.” To this it may be replied, first, the object of faith is always God Himself, and the ground on which it rests is His revealed well. So in Isaac’s case, his faith was fixed upon the covenant God and was exercised upon His sure Word, and this was by no means negatived by his mistaking Jacob for Esau. Second, it illustrates the fact that the faith of God’s people is usually accompanied by some infirmity: in Isaac’s case, his partiality for Esau. Third, after he discovered the deception which had been played upon him, he made no effort to recall the blessing pronounced upon the disguised Jacob— sweetly acquiescing unto the Divine Sovereignty— but confirming it; and though with tears Esau sought to change his mind, he could not. A.W. Pink*

VERSE 21

By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

**1. The Lord told Rebekah that the older twin, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob. Thus, before Jacob had done one thing, God called Him.**

***Genesis 25:21-23***

***Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord (by faith) for his wife, because she was barren; and*** *the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.*

*23And the Lord said to her:*

*“Two nations are in your womb,  
Two peoples shall be separated from your body;  
One people shall be stronger than the other,  
And the older shall serve the younger.”*

***Romans 9:10-13***

*And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac****11****(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),****12****it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.”****13****As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”*

**2. Jacob’s life reflected his name—supplanter. Even in birth he tried to take advantage of Esau.**

***Genesis 25:24-26***

*So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. 25And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. 26Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; so his name was called Jacob.*

**3. Jacob deceived Esau into giving him his birthright.**

***Genesis 25:29-34***

*Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom.*

*31But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”*

*32And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?”*

*33Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.”*

*So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

**4. Jacob went along with mother’s plot to steal Esau’s blessing.**

**5. Even though Jacob was obviously flawed, he had faith in God, and God chose Himself to be called the LORD God of Israel.**

***Genesis 32:24-29***

*Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.”*

*But he said,* ***“I will not let You go unless You bless me!”***

*27 So He said to him, “What is your name?”*

*He said, “Jacob.”*

*28 And He said, “****Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.****”*

*29 Then Jacob asked, saying, “Tell me Your name, I pray.”*

*And He said, “Why is it that you ask about My name?”* ***And He blessed him there.***

**6. At the end of his life he blessed Joseph’s sons, for which he is commended in Hebrews 11 because he had faith to bless his grandsons, and to put the younger above the older as he believed God was desiring.**

***Genesis 48:8-22***

*Then Israel saw Joseph’s sons, and said, “Who are these?”*

*9 And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place.”*

*And he said, “Please bring them to me, and I will bless them.” 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!”*

*12 So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them near him. 14 Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said:*

*“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,  
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, 16 The Angel who has redeemed*

*me from all evil,  
Bless the lads;  
Let my name be named upon them,  
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;  
And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”*

*17 Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father’s hand to remove it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.”*

*19 But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.”*

*20 So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!’” And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.*

*21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.”*

*In spite of all his faults and failings (and each of us is just as full of the same), Jacob dearly prized his interest in the everlasting covenant, trusted in God, and highly esteemed His promises. A.W. Pink*

*But it was during the closing days of his life that Jacob’s faith shone most brightly. When giving permission for Benjamin to accompany his other sons on their second trip to Egypt, he said “God Almighty (or “God the Sufficient One”) give you mercy before the man” (Gen. 43: 14). This was the title under which the Lord had blessed Abraham (Gen. 17: 1), as it was also the one Isaac employed when he blessed Jacob (Gen. 28: 3): thus in using it here, we see how Jacob rested on the covenant promise. A.W. Pink*

*Notwithstanding the weakness of old age, he abode firm in faith and in the vigorous exercise of it. Here in the verse before us, we behold Jacob recognizing and asserting the covenant which Jehovah had made with his fathers. This is the very life of faith: to lay hold of, draw strength from, and walk in the light of the everlasting covenant, for it is the foundation of all our blessings, the charter of our inheritance, the guaranty of our eternal glory and bliss. A.W. Pink*

*It has been well said that “Though the grace of faith is of universal use throughout our whole lives, yet it is especially so when we come to die. Faith has its great work to do at the last, to help believers to finish well, to die to the Lord, so as to honor Him, by patience, hope, and joy, so as to leave a witness behind them of the truth of God’s Word and the excellency of His ways, for the conviction and establishment of all that attend them in their dying moments” (Matthew Henry). A.W. Pink*

1. **Notice that God calls Himself the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” He identifies Himself with them even though none of them were perfect. Their lives are more a reflection of God’s power and grace than their own. This should encourage us.**
2. **Relationally:** Even though we ourselves are not perfect in that we experience weakness emotionally or physically, God is still our God because we believe in Him and His promises.
3. **Experientially:** God can work in our lives and will do miracles for us and through us, not because of our power or holiness, but because of His grace and our faith in Him. We do not earn His blessings or promises.
4. **The Byline of Our Lives:** There will be many good works we do by grace through faith in this life, but whatever is to be said of us, let it begin with the words, “By faith—.”

VERSE 22

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

***Genesis 50:22-26***

*So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father’s household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23 Joseph saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph’s knees.*

*24 And Joseph said to his brethren, “I am dying; but* ***God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” 25 Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.****”26 So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.*

***Exodus 13:18-19***

*So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.*

*19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.”*

*At the early age of seventeen Joseph was carded away into a foreign country, into a heathen land. There he remained for many years surrounded by idolaters, and during all that time he, probably, never came into contact with a single child of God. Moreover, in those days there was no Bible to read, for none of God’s Word had then been committed to writing. Yet amid all sorts of temptations and trials, he remained true unto the Lord. Thirteen years in prison did not embitter him; being made lord over Egypt did not spoil him; evil examples all around, did not corrupt him. A.W. Pink*

1. **It is curious that this is the only byline for Joseph since his life is a glowing example of righteous living. His life is often seen as a type of Christ’s in that He was falsely accused, rejected evil, endured hardships, was exalted to power, and became a way of salvation for the Children of Israel. Why is none of this mentioned?**

*It may strike some of our readers that the apostle made a strange selection here from the remarkable history of Joseph. No reference is given unto his faithfulness to God in declaring what He had made known to him (Gen. 37: 5), his chastity (Gen. 39: 10), his patience under affliction (Ps. 105: 18, 19), his wisdom and prudence (Gen. 39: 22; 47: 14), his fear of God (Gen. 42: 18); his compassion (Gen. 42: 24), his overcoming evil with good (Gen. 45: 10), his reverence to his father, and that when he was advanced unto outward dignity above him (Gen. 48: 12), his obedience to his father (Gen. 47: 31); instead, the whole of his memorable life is passed over, and we are introduced to the final scene. But this seeming difficulty is at once removed if we bear in mind the Spirit’s scope in this chapter, namely, to encourage the fearful and wavering Hebrews, by bringing before them striking examples of the efficacy and sufficiency of faith to carry its favored possessor safely through every difficulty, and utimately conduct him into the promised inheritance. A.W. Pink*

*Faith is gifted with long-distant sight, and therefore is it able to look beyond all the hills and mountains of difficulty unto the shining horizon of the Divine promises. Consequently, faith is blessed with patience, and calmly awaits the destined hour for God to intervene and act: A.W. Pink*

1. **Though faith results in good works, we must not see good works as sufficient unto themselves in pleasing God. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not asking us for a long list of accomplishments.** He is asking us to believe in Him until the end of our lives. It is our faith that pleases God. The works are just a by-product.
2. **In every area of our lives with which we struggle, the answer is not to “try harder” or “do our best”.** The solution lies in our faith in God’s grace to bring the resolutions and accomplishments. In many ways, our imperfections are His to deal with as He works His power in our lives. We simply cooperate with the power He has placed within us. Let us enter that rest of total trust in Him.

# *Ephesians 2:8-10*

***8****For by* ***grace*** *you have been saved* ***through faith****, and that not of yourselves; it is the* ***gift*** *of God,****9****not of works, lest anyone should boast.****10****For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

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