

“By Faith Isaac Blessed His Sons”

Hebrews 11:20

INTRO:

Have you ever meditated on the providence of God? Some raise objections to the Bible’s teaching about God’s eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, and sovereignty. They have trouble conceiving of a God who has no beginning and will have no end -- Who exists outside of time and yet can act in time. Their finite minds wrestle vainly with thoughts of a God who knows everything and cannot learn anything. They stumble over the reality God’s ability to do anything that He wants to do. But most of all, they cannot allow that God is sovereign over all that He has created. This is tragic because these folks cannot begin to understand or appreciate the wonder of God’s providence. God’s providence exists because God is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and sovereign.

If He were not, He could not govern the universe that He created. If God were not eternal, He could not have created His universe and transcend it. If He were not omniscient He could not know what will happen next in His creation. Were He not omnipotent, He could not accomplish His will. If He were not sovereign, some uncontrolled circumstance could frustrate, or even destroy His perfect plan for the ages. Praise God, He is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and sovereign. We see this truth in action in the blessings described here in **Hebrews 11:20**. *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”* For, were not God the sovereign God of providence, Jacob would not have been blessed, and God’s plan would have been hindered. We will look at this statement and the history it summarizes in terms of two parts.

- I. The Circumstances of the Blessing -- Genesis 27:1-41*
- II. How Was This Blessing Done By Faith?*

I. The Circumstances of the Blessing -- *Genesis 27:1-41*

A. The account of Isaac blessing Jacob is a familiar story. Before we look at the record itself we need to see some things in the setting. In **Genesis 25:23-26** we find the record of the birth of Jacob and Esau.

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

We need to see here that from their birth Jacob and Esau’s future was known. God revealed it to Rebekah. It seems logical to assume that she told Isaac. I think had she not, God would have told us.

B. Now we move ahead to **Genesis 27:1-4**--we find the account of how Isaac prepared to give the family's blessing to confirm the birthright to Esau. How could Isaac do this? Some suggest that Isaac forgot the direction that God had given. I would suggest that Isaac may have convinced himself that since the giving of the blessing was the Father's decision, if God wanted it done otherwise, He would have told Isaac personally. Whatever Isaac's rationale, he deliberately chooses to give the blessing to Esau in direct opposition to God's command. Esau is not pure in this situation either. He had already sold his birthright to Jacob. He did not deserve the blessing, but was he going to tell Dad that? Not on your life!

C. Rebekah was listening in on the conversation (**v. 5-10**). As soon as she heard the situation, she had a plan. It looks like Jacob came by his scheming honestly. True, Isaac has decided to ignore the plan of God and do his own thing. Now Rebekah decides to flaunt the will of her husband and to cook up this tremendous deception to still get the blessing for Jacob, her favorite. You know the story. Jacob was to get two kid goats and Rebekah was going to make the *"spicy meata balla"* for Isaac!

D. Jacob's response to his mother is instructive (**v. 11-17**). Is Jacob appalled at his mother's deception? Not at all, he is only concerned with what he sees as an obvious weakness in the plan. Mom, I am smooth, Esau is hairy. Rebekah is sharper than Jacob gives her credit. She has every detail covered.

E. So, finally, in **vs. 18-27**, the deception is carried out. I am amazed at Jacob's brazenness. He lies without being detected. On top of that, he invokes the name of the LORD to make God an accomplice to his sin (**v. 20**).

F. The blessing is as eloquent as it is prophetic (**v. 27-29**). He promised Jacob physical blessing, political power, and leadership of the household and divine benefits.

G. While Jacob leaves Isaac's tent flush with the taste of victory, this victory is short lived. Esau comes in and Jacob and Rebekah's con game is quickly discovered (**v. 30-40**). Esau is crushed, so he presses his father for a blessing, and Isaac gives him a prophecy, but it is not a pretty one (**v. 39-40**).

Now that we have this record clearly in our minds we need to ask and answer the question posed by our text in **Hebrews 11:20**.

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

II. How Was This Blessing Done By Faith?

We might ask, looking at this record of **Genesis 27**, how was faith involved in this blessing? In the first place, Isaac thought he was blessing someone else, so how could the blessing be legitimate? Second, Isaac was in disobedience to the revealed will of God. How then could this blessing be done in faith?

A. To answer these two questions we need to look at two aspects of this blessing that were done by faith. First, faith was involved in the nature of the blessing. That is what the writer of Hebrews meant when he pointed out that this blessing was “concerning things to come.”

1. When Isaac blessed Jacob, even though he was convinced it was Esau, faith was involved because he believed the promises that God had given, Abraham, his father about the future of his line. This was not a blessing of *“I hope God will do good things for you.”* He said, God grant you these things. In Isaac’s mind, these blessings would be given to his son, by God!

2. Likewise, when he finally gives the blessing to Esau. Isaac knew that these promises and prophecies would likewise come true. He had faith that God would carry out these things. So, if faith was not exercised anywhere else in this passage, at least in the nature of the blessings that Isaac gave, he exercised faith.

B. We find Isaac’s faith also in his refusal to remove the blessing from the first blessed. Look at **Genesis 27:31-33** and take note of Isaac’s response when Jacob’s ruse has been discovered.

“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.’ And his father Isaac said to him, ‘Who are you?’ So he said, ‘I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.’ 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.’”

This shows us the real character of the man, and is unquestionably an act of faith.

Isaac trembled because he recognized God had providentially stepped in and caused him to give the blessing to Jacob. I think at that moment it occurred to Isaac that the prophecy given to Rebekah was true and that the blessing properly belonged to Jacob after all. He was shaking with a fear of God

What do we learn from all of this?

1. First, we learn that God is able to work out His will and purpose in spite of our determination to do otherwise. He is able to overrule sin to accomplish his righteousness. If God’s purpose was frustrated because of sin, there would be little hope that God’s purpose and will could be done in our lives. Don’t fall for the fallacy that somehow Satan brings evil and trouble in our lives and God only brings the good. So that somehow God has fallen asleep while Satan has harmed us. Remember **Job 1:21 22**

“And [Job] said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

2. When we recognize God's overruling providence in our lives, we need to accept it. God had been clear to Isaac and Rebekah about His will for their sons. They needed to obey it. When God stepped in and overruled Isaac's choice, he did not fight it, he accepted it. God only shuts one door to open another! **Romans 8:28**, is still true: “

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

3. Finally, we must never take what God has said lightly. Isaac did and God stepped in to correct his wrong move. What God says God means.

When God said,

“the wages of sin is death,”(Romans 6:23)

He meant it. He also said,

“As many as received Him to them gave He the power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”(John 1:12)

Will you believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior today?

4. Do we recognize the Providence of God actively at work in our lives? We need to think about it and thank God for it.