

(17) By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which --- figuratively speaking --- he did receive him back.

(20) By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.

(21) By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

(22) By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

(23) By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

(24) By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

(29) By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

(30) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

(31) By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

Think on these things:

- 1) We start off with the statement that Abraham was being tested (v. 17a). Why does God test people? Consult James 1:2-4, 12-15, and 1 Peter 1:6-7.

**James says testing our faith produces steadfastness, which God uses to make believers perfect and complete. We are “blessed” when remaining steadfast under trial and will receive the Crown of Life. Peter adds that proving our genuineness through testing is more valuable than gold, and it will result in praise, glory and honor on the day of Christ’s revelation (2<sup>nd</sup> coming).**

- 2) Abraham, ultimately, was the father of eight sons (Genesis 25:1, 7-9). However, only Isaac, his son with Sarah, was considered the “child of promise” in God’s eyes. If Isaac was the child of promise, why was Abraham willing to sacrifice him that day on Mt. Moriah (v. 19, Genesis 22)?

**As the promised child from God, Abraham had confidence that God would raise him back up to life from death. He even told his servants when leaving them behind at the base of the mountain that he and Isaac would return together after this act of worship on Mt. Moriah. It seems he believed that God would never allow Isaac, the child of promise, to remain dead.**

- 3) Where do you see faith expressed by Moses’ parents (v. 23)?

**As a slave family, they defied Pharaoh and refused to put their infant son to death according to his decree. Rather, seeing Moses as a beautiful and healthy child, they hid him for three months**

from legal authorities before setting him afloat in the Nile River. There, Pharaoh's daughter found him and raised him as her own son (a prince). He was educated as a royal!

- 4) When Moses grew up, what decision of faith did he come to, and why (vs. 24-26)?

Moses was nursed by his real mother for Pharaoh's daughter. He "knew" that he was Jewish, and after seeing abuse and exploitive behavior among the Egyptian slave overseers as a 40-year-old man, he reacted in actions costing him his royal status. He fled Egypt and, from then on, solely identified with the Israelite slaves. He chose this reproach over the wealth and privileged decadent living he knew as an Egyptian prince. Fleeing Egypt, he lived the next 40 years as a shepherd in Midian until God summoned him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

- 5) Why wasn't Moses intimidated by Pharaoh, the most powerful world leader of that time (v. 27, Exodus 3)?

Moses was called upon by the invisible, true living God through the burning bush experience. Having such an encounter, he knew that Who he served was more powerful than Pharaoh.

- 6) Out of all the plagues God sent upon Egypt through Moses and Aaron, why do you think Passover is chosen to represent an act of faith (v. 28, Exodus 12)?

All the other plagues only affected the Egyptians. But Passover required an act of faith to save all the firstborn males, and it required an obedient response from all the Israelites.

- 7) For Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, what future promised blessing were they embracing by their actions in vs. 20-22 (Genesis 50:24-25)? Remember the Jewish reference: The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

They embraced God's promise to Abraham to give him a land for his descendants, the Jews. God's covenant with Abraham was renewed with Isaac and Jacob. Joseph counted on this when he asked that his remains be taken back to the Promised Land for permanent burial.

- 8) Exodus 14 records the events of v. 29. Who showed faith to enter the dry path God created to walk across through the towering walls of water on both sides --- and escape certain death? Do you realize that God set all this up to prove something to Pharaoh (Exodus 14:1-4)?

The Israelites overcame their fear and terror to make the crossing through the sea. When Pharaoh tried to pursue with his armies, God closed the path and drowned the Egyptians. The Exodus verses indicate that God, for His own glory, planned to make an example of Pharaoh.

- 9) Imagine this battle strategy: walk around the city once each day, but on the 7<sup>th</sup> day walk around it seven times and then shout really loud (Joshua 6:1-5). What were the results for the Israelites when they did this?

The exterior walls of Jericho fell down, allowing the Israelite warriors to enter and sack the city. Jericho and its inhabitants were totally destroyed --- except for Rahab's family.

- 10) Rahab's story is amazing. Like Moses, she chose God's people over her own (Joshua 2 and 6:22-27). What other distinction is known about this prostitute from Jericho (Matthew 1:1-6)?

**Rahab the prostitute was absorbed into the nation of Israel and eventually married Salmon, the great-great-Grandfather of King David --- and part of Christ's physical lineage.**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: