

Heroes of Faith: Isaac

Isaac was duped, but still had faith God would fulfill His promise.

Key passage: Hebrews 11:20 & Gen 25-27

Hebrews 11:20 *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.*

Gen 25:26-34

27When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a [o]civilized man, living in tents. 28Now Isaac loved Esau because [p]he had a taste for game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. 29When Jacob had cooked a stew one day, Esau came in from the field and he was exhausted; 30and Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me have a mouthful of [q]that red stuff there, for I am exhausted." Therefore he was called [r]Edom by name. 31But Jacob said, "[s]First sell me your birthright." 32Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?" 33And Jacob said, "[t]First swear to me"; so he swore an oath to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and got up and went on his way. So Esau despised his birthright.

What is a birthright?

When twins Jacob and Esau were born, Esau came first, making him the firstborn. As the firstborn son, Esau automatically held the "birthright." A birthright was an honor given to the firstborn, bestowing "head of household" status and the right to inherit his father's estate. The son with the birthright would receive a double portion of whatever was passed down (see Deuteronomy 21:17)

Read Genesis 27

Genesis 27:30-38

30Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of his father Isaac, that his brother Esau came in from his hunting. 31Then he also made a delicious

meal, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that [m]you may bless me." 32His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." 33Then Isaac [n]trembled violently, and said, "Who then was he who hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate from all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." 34When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, me as well, my father!" 35And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing." 36Then Esau said, "[o]Is he not rightly named [p]Jacob, for he has betrayed me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" 37But Isaac replied to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and I have given to him all his relatives [q]as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" 38Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me as well, my father." So Esau raised his voice and wept.

Why was the blessing so important?

... A blessing could be given regardless of birthright. However, a greater blessing was given to the one who held the birthright. [What is the difference between a blessing and a birthright \(Genesis 25\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

A blessing is like a last will and testimony

- Rebekah probably thought Esau would go against his oath to Jacob with selling his birthright. She planned on securing that by tricking Isaac to give the blessing to Jacob instead of Esau. This was the second time Jacob would deceive his brother. The first was his was birthright when Esau was really hungry.

Why would Rebekah be so motivated to persuade Jacob to lie to his father?

Gen 25:23

23And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people will be stronger than the other; And the older will serve the younger." 24When her days leading to the delivery were at an end, behold, there were twins in her womb.

- She knew what God had spoken to her, but lacked the faith for things to unfold naturally. Although it was a sin to lie to Isaac, she chose to intervene and ‘make’ God’s Will happen

What promise did God tell Isaac?

Gen 26:24

And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your [x]descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham.”

Why did Isaac need faith God would fulfill His promise?

- When Isaac was tricked by Jacob, he feared that Esau might kill Jacob & Rebekah believed this too. If Esau killed Jacob, then the avenger of blood (nearest relative) according to custom, would kill Esau. Thus, Isaac would be left with no sons to fulfill the prophetic promise. However, he had faith God would fulfill His promises, because he himself witnessed that God provided many times for him.
- Isaac was 137 years old when this happened. He actually lived another 43 years past this point.

Life Application:

What can we learn from Isaac? He held true to what God told him? What are some ways God speaks to us today?...His word.

John 8:31-33

As Jesus spoke these things, many believed in Him. 31So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. 32Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Do you believe in God’s sovereignty?

Romans 8:28

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

Eph 1:9

And He has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ 10as a plan for the fullness of time, to bring all things in heaven and on earth together in Christ.

In what or who do you put your trust in right now? Insurance, investments, pension, bank account. Who has a bank account? What if that digital asset vanished, would it change your trust in God?

Do we memorize scripture? What is your favorite verse?

- Jesus resisted temptation from the devil by quoting scripture.

Rat Experiment:

This research, in many ways, builds on the work of late Johns Hopkins professor Curt Richter. In the 1950s, he conducted a gruesome experiment with domesticated and wild rats. He first took a dozen domesticated rats, put them into jars half-filled with water, and watched them drown. The idea was to measure the amount of time they swam before they gave up and went under. The first rat, Richter noted, swam around excitedly on the surface for a very short time, then dove to the bottom, where it began to swim around, nosing its way along the glass wall. It died two minutes later.

Two more of the 12 domesticated rats died in much the same way. But, interestingly, the nine remaining rats did not succumb nearly so readily; they swam for days before they eventually gave up and died.

Now came the wild rats, renowned for their swimming ability. The ones Richter used had been recently trapped and were fierce and aggressive. One by one, he dropped them into the water. And one by one, they surprised him: Within minutes of entering the water, all 34 died.

“What kills these rats?” he wondered. “Why do all of the fierce, aggressive, wild rats die promptly on immersion and only a small number of the similarly treated, tame, domesticated rats?”

The answer, in a word: hope.

“The situation of these rats scarcely seems one demanding fight or flight—it is rather one of hopelessness,” he wrote. “[T]he rats are in a situation against which they have no defense ... they seem literally to ‘give up.’”

Richter then tweaked the experiment: He took other, similar rats and put them in the jar. Just before they were expected to die, however, he picked them up, held them a little while, and

then put them back in the water. “In this way,” he wrote, “the rats quickly learn that the situation is not actually hopeless.”

This small interlude made a huge difference. The rats that experienced a brief reprieve swam much longer and lasted much longer than the rats that were left alone. They also recovered almost immediately. When the rats learned that they were not doomed, that the situation was not lost, that there might be a helping hand at the ready—in short, when they had a reason to keep swimming—they did. They did not give up, and they did not go under.

[Reference: The Remarkable Power of Hope | Psychology Today United Kingdom](#)

Do we live it out?

James 2:14

“What use is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can [j]that faith save him? 15If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, [k]be warmed and be filled,” yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17In the same way, faith also, if it has no works, is [l]dead, being by itself.”

Matthew 4:31,32

It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is the smallest of all the seeds that are upon the soil, 32yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants, and forms large branches, with the result that THE BIRDS OF THE SKY can NEST UNDER its shade.”

Faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. **Be a Mustard seed for Jesus!**