

Faith for the Future

Hebrews 11:1, 20-22

The man of faith is a man of VISION. Faith is a vision of the FUTURE. It concerns "*things hoped for*" (v. 1) and "*things to come*" (v. 20). Faith "sees" the future and brings what it "sees" into the present (v. 13).

Shakespeare called the future, "the undiscovered country." However, for a Bible believer, the future is not undiscovered, only *unexperienced*.

Faith is based on God's promises (vs. 9, 11, 13, 17, 33, 39). All promises await a future fulfillment.

Our faith in the future is demonstrated by our actions in the present. What you do today is determined by—

- (1) Decisions you have made in the past and,
- (2) WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE FUTURE. If you believe it is going rain, you will carry your umbrella with you.

➡ For example, consider SALVATION.

- The Bible says there is coming a future judgment — HELL.
- I trust Jesus' finished work on the cross to save me from hell.
- Now I have an eternal home in HEAVEN.

Our stewardship theme this year is "Investing in the Future"—We have a vision of the future for Bible Baptist Church and by faith we invest in it.

Faith for the future is illustrated in the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Their actions in the present revealed their confidence in the future.

I. **ISAAC blessed his children** (v. 20 cf. Gen. 28:1-4)

A. The "*things to come...*" for your children will be determined by your "blessing" upon them now.

- HOW DO YOU "BLESS" YOUR CHILDREN? "*Blessing*" is how you prepare them for their future.
 1. Teach them RESPONSIBILITY (instead of rights).
 - a) Make them responsible for their present actions. You are not helping your children when you continually bail them out of trouble or excuse their bad behavior.

- b) If you remove the painful consequences that come from wrong behavior, there is no motivation to deter your children from doing the same thing again.

This can be clearly seen in the case of 16 year old Ethan Couch. While recklessly driving drunk, and on Vellum, at speeds of 70 mph, he lost control and plowed his father's Ford F-350 into a group of people killing four of them. His defense attorney claimed he suffered from "affluenza"—the harmful effects of affluence. The term "affluenza" has been used to refer to an inability to understand the consequences of one's actions because of financial privilege. One psychologist testified that affluenza rendered Couch "too spoiled to know right from wrong." (See Prov. 29:15)

2. Teach them CHARACTER. Leaving your children a large financial inheritance is not as important as leaving them a heritage of character. If they have character, they will not need a financial inheritance. Without character, they would waste any financial inheritance left to them (Eccl. 2:18-19)!
 - Work ethics
 - Obedience
 - Authority
 - Honesty
 3. Teach them skills (balance a checkbook; live by a budget)
 4. Teach them salvation (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15).
- B. Give your children a good example to follow.

ILLUS—Several years ago the *Christian Life and Faith* magazine did a comparison of two families in American history. In 1677 an immoral man married a licentious woman. Nineteen hundred descendants came from the generations begun by that marriage. Of these, 771 were criminals, 250 were arrested for various offenses, 60 were thieves, and 39 were convicted of murder. 40 of the women were known to have venereal diseases. These people spent a combined total of 1300 years in jail and cost the state of New York almost \$3 million.

The other family was the Edwards Family. The third generation included Jonathan Edwards, the great New England revivalist who later was president of Princeton. Of the 1,344 descendants, many were college professors. 186 became preachers of the Gospel. 86 were state senators, 3 were Congressmen, 30 were judges, and 1 became Vice President of the United States. No reference was made of anyone spending time in jail or in poverty.¹

HOW ARE YOU BLESSING YOUR CHILDREN concerning "*things to come?*" Will your children remember you for your faith and your walk with God?

II. **JACOB—blessed his grandchildren** (v. 21).

- The "blessed" now becomes the "blesser." We are to be channels of blessing, not reservoirs.
- Jacob is a very illustrious Bible character. However, God passes over 147 years of his life to the closing scene of his life when he is DYING... BLESSING... WORSHIPPING... and LEANING.
- A. Bless your grandchildren by doing your best to give them godly parents.
 - I don't want my children or grandchildren to use me as an excuse for their backsliding because I was bad example of a Christian.
- B. Bless them by staying true to the Lord to your deathbed.
 1. I don't want to die backslidden. I want to go out worshipping Jesus. DYING FAITH
 2. Give your grandchildren a death-bed testimony of a life lived for God!

III. **JOSEPH blessed his nation** (v. 22 cf. Gen. 50:24-26).

- A. By sustaining them in famine, instead of harboring a grudge.
- B. He believed the vision he received from God 20 years earlier (Gen. 37:5-7). Because of his faith in that vision, he endured 20 years of adversity... hatred... lies... temptation... and broken

¹ *The Ohio County Times-News*, Feb. 1, 2007, p. 9-A

promises while suffering as he "*laid in the iron*" (Ps. 105:17-18).
Faith for the future got him through.

- C. He left a heritage of HOPE that lasted 400 years (Gen. 50:24-25).
1. This promise gave the Jews hope throughout 400 years of slavery (fulfilled in Ex. 13:19).
 2. We also have a PROMISE that someday God will visit us (Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thess. 2:19; 4:13-18).
 - Like Joseph, our bones won't be left in Egypt either. OUR FUTURE IS NOT IN EGYPT. If our future is in heaven, that is where we should be investing (Mt. 6:19-21; John 6:27).

SUMMATION:

1. If you continue living the way you are right now, what will the future be like for your children?
2. What am I doing about the future of my church and my nation?

➡ THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICA

1. America started as a CHRISTIAN nation.
2. Christian values paved the way for CAPITALISM (connected with initiative, character, freedom).
3. For capitalism to succeed, we must assume the responsibility of COMMISSION, CHARITY, and CHARACTER. "What am I doing with my capitalism?"
4. When commission is neglected the result will be CONSUMERISM, COMFORT and COMPLACENCY. [GREED]
5. Consumerism brings COMPROMISE and deterioration of character.
6. Compromise is accompanied by excused CRIME.
7. Excused crime is evidenced by CORRUPTION in all areas of society.
8. Corruption ends with world-wide CHAOS.

That will be the FUTURE of America, if our focus is not upon step #3.