

RESPECT FOR PARENTS **(Part 2 of 5)**

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Abraham distinguished himself as such a man of faith that centuries after his departure from this earthly scene Paul wrote of him that he is “the father of us all” (Rom. 4:16). A summary of his life of faith along with that of his wife Sarah appears in a chapter of the Bible referred to variously as the faith chapter of the Bible and the hall of fame of the Bible: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:8-16).

One tremendous expression of Isaac’s respect for his father Abraham emerges from the time God tried Abraham by telling him to sacrifice Isaac at Mt. Moriah (Gen. 22). While it was a true test of Abraham’s faith, consider that no injury or breach in the respect Isaac had for his father is sustained by the proceedings. The few short sentences recounting the incident in Hebrews are followed by a reference to the faith of Isaac who blessed his children Jacob and Esau “concerning things to come” (Heb. 11:20). His faith was certainly influenced at Jehovah-Jireh and was made all the more personal since the world’s being blessed was dependent on his illustrious future. His ability to speak to his children about “things to come” grew out of Abraham’s faith that had he taken Isaac’s life at Mt. Moriah Abraham was “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (v. 19).

The respect of Jacob's children, known historically as the twelve tribes of Israel, is evident in the hour of his death when he as a patriarch prophetically blessed those who became heads of tribes of his descendants. Moses wrote, "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father" (Gen. 49:1-2). Of special interest to the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ are the comments Jacob made to Judah, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (v. 10). His reference to the scepter meant that from his son Judah the kings would descend including King Jesus (Matt. 2:2; 16:18-19; 27:37; Acts 2:30-36; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:3, 8; 12:2; I Pet. 3:21-22). His reference to a lawgiver again points to Jesus Christ (Matt. 26:28; Acts 3:21-25; Heb. 8:8-11). The inspired writer of Hebrews called attention nearer to the immediate concerns of the family of Jacob when he said, "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" (Heb. 11:21). The sparing of his family from the ravages of the seven-year famine directly was attributable to the efforts of Joseph who had brought them to Egypt. When they feared following Jacob's death that perhaps now Joseph would unleash vengeance upon them for their mistreatment of him in earlier years, Moses wrote, "And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them" (Gen. 50:19-21). Respect for their parents held this extended family together and without doubt granted them many wonderful years together in the best of the land that Egypt had to offer. The Patriarchal Age taught "respect for parents."

The Mosaic Age

The Law of Moses demanded "respect for parents." In the Ten Commandments God said, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exod. 20:12). The law also spoke negatively about those children who refused to show proper respect for their parents: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the

men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deut. 21:18-21). If the Law of Moses was still in place today, there would be a lot of stoning going on.