

# The Faith of the Parents of Moses

Heb 11:23; Ex 2:1-10

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Heb 11:23-By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. (Ex 2:1-10)

A clearer translating is "It was faith which gave Moses' parents courage to disobey the king's order and hide him for three months after he was born, because he was a beautiful child." It is important to show that this verse is about the faith of Moses' parents, not of Moses himself.

## Background:

**The heroes of faith in Heb 11 are futurists**, each of these looked into the future with eyes of faith; they had some glimpse of the promise God for them and for their children. They were unwilling to satisfy themselves with short-term satisfaction which would deny long-term fulfillment. Many of them made the sacrifice of temporal gratification in order to possess the greater satisfaction of the ultimate promise. They did not jeopardize future generation's resources or promises by craving immediate satisfaction of their desires. They left the promise intact for those who came after.

**Moses** was born into a family of Hebrew slaves. His parents were common, ordinary unknown people within their community.

Some twenty years earlier, about 1540 B.C., West Semitic peoples known as the Hyksos had finally been driven from Egypt by Ahmose I. Before that, the Hyksos had supplanted the Egyptian rulers and had governed as pharaohs some one hundred years.

Perhaps partly because the Hebrews were also a Semitic people, Pharaoh intended to take no chances that the Israelites would support his enemy (Ex 1:10). Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites and set them to forced labor.

He also determined to limit severely the Hebrew population and ordered the midwives of Egypt to kill any male children born to the Israelites. When this attempt at population control failed, Pharaoh commanded "all his people" to see that every male Hebrew infant should be thrown in the River Nile.

## Faith was stirred in their hearts as "they saw that Moses was a beautiful child".

The parents of Moses had faith to hide him, since God had told them (in some way) that he was a special child.

Ex 2:2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months.

Ac 7:20 "It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God ..." (Steven speaking before his martyrdom)

Kenneth Wuest points out that the word lovely means "comely to God". Wuest says, " he was beautiful with respect to God." That is, God had His hand upon Moses, and apparently his parents realized it. (The Preachers Outline and Sermon Bible; page 152)

If quotation marks are used for indicating a passage from the Old Testament, they should be put around the words **saw** that he was a beautiful child (the subject of the verb "saw" in Exo 2:2 is Moses' mother).

The text probably means more than "he was such a beautiful baby that it was a shame for him to be killed." Physical beauty or height was sometimes thought of as a sign of God's special favor; (1Sam 9:2; 16:12; Lk 1:80; 2:40; Ac 7:20).

## **The parents of Moses had a faith that obeyed their hearts.**

It was love for both their son and God that made them do what they did. Their love stirred them to believe that God would preserve their son and use him to fulfill God's promise of an eternal seed and an eternal land for His people.

As they looked on their baby, they saw he was a beautiful child - but it was more than physical beauty. They saw that he was a child of destiny, one whom God had marked out for a special work. Their faith that God's purposes would be worked out gave them courage to defy the king's command and to hide the child for three months.

For his mother there might have been an immediate advantage of keeping her son. Her mother's instincts could well have overcome her faith in the future.

For a mother to give up her child shortly after his birth, to take him from her nurturing breast, the child of love she had carried in her body for nine months, then to place him in a frail basket on a mighty river, must have caused great pain.

Yet she trusted his future into the hands of God, whose love she trusted at least as much as her own love for her son. Moses' parents refused to be cowed by the threats of Pharaoh; they defied the law of the land and set a pattern for their people for generations to come.

## **Faith led them to hide the child not fearing the wrath of the king's edict.**

### **Faith overcomes all fear**

Ps 56:4 I will not be afraid, the Lord is with me, what can man do to me?  
(Ps 118:6)

Isa 8:12-13 we are to fear only the Lord.

Isa 41:10 do not fear, I am with you; I will strengthen and help you. (Isa 41:14)

1Jn 5:4-5 faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

## **Faith to nurse and teach Moses (Moses' childhood Ex 2:1-10)**

When Moses was born about 1520 B.C. his parents obeyed Pharaoh's command, only they first placed him in a basket-boat, woven of papyrus reeds!

Ex 1:22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive."

Moses was found floating in his basket boat by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses was adopted by the princess, who hired Moses' own mother as his wet nurse.

Children in biblical times were frequently not weaned until age four, Moses would have heard the stories of his people from his mother during his most impressionable years. She probably told her son about God's love for His covenant people and of the wonderful things God had promised to do for them.

Moses' parents were named Amram and Jochebed (Ex 6:20). He was fortunate to have believing, godly parents. Although godly parents cannot pass on their faith as they do other family traits, they can certainly create an atmosphere of faith at home and be examples to their children. A home should be the first school of faith for a child.

Later when Moses was an adult, he identified himself with the Israelites rather than the Egyptians and dreamed of freeing them from slavery.

## **The power of influence**

John Maxwell states in his book, [The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership; page 17]" leadership is influence - nothing more, nothing less."

## The power of parental influence

### **Samuel and Moses are linked in Jer 15:1;**

Jer 15:1 Then the LORD said to me, "Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people; send them away from My presence and let them go!"

Each boy was taught by his mother; each boy was separated from her after being weaned. And each boy grew up to become a spiritual leader of God's people.

We can never underestimate the influence of mothers on their children when they are very young. Our first years of life are significant; What happens in the first three years of life sets the course for the rest of life, to which Moses and Samuel are prime examples.

### **Samuel's relationship with his mother (1Sam 1; 2)**

During his first four years, until he was weaned, Samuel lived with his mother and father. We are told nothing of those early years, but undoubtedly Hannah told her son glowing stories of God's love for His covenant people and of the wonderful things God had done for them.

### **Rechab – Jeremiah refers to the descendants of Rechab as Rechabites (Jer 35:1–19).**

These were nomadic people who lived by Jonadab's command that his descendants not drink wine, live in houses, sow seed, or plant vineyards. Jeremiah applauded the Rechabites' loyalty to their forebear, contrasting them with Judah and Jerusalem's unfaithfulness to God. Jeremiah predicted doom for Judah and Jerusalem, but promised that the Rechabites would be preserved.

## Scripture records father/son relationships that were strained with conflict.

### **David and Absalom**

that lingered in estrangement (2Sam 14:24),  
exploded into open rebellion (2Sam 15:1-12),  
and ended in a tragic death (2Sam 18:9-15, 33).

### **Noah and Ham**

When Noah's drunkenness was seen and exposed by his son Ham, Noah cursed Ham's son Canaan and his descendants, even as he blessed Shem and Japheth (Gen 9:20-27).

### **Isaac and Jacob**

Jacob manipulated his father into giving him what rightly belonged to his brother Esau.  
(Gen 25:28; 27:1-40)

### **Eli with Hophni and Phinehas**

When Eli reprimanded his sons for abusing the priesthood, they paid him no attention; later God's judgment fell on the family (1Sam 2:22-36).

### **Samuel with Joel and Abijah**

Samuel placed his unworthy sons at Beersheba (perhaps where they could do the least amount of harm); nevertheless, their wickedness caused the Israelites to demand a king, which led to the anointing of Saul (1Sam 8:1–6).

### **An unnamed father and his two sons, one loyal and one prodigal**

Having squandered his inheritance, the repentant prodigal of this parable returned home, where his overjoyed father threw a big party; but the celebration estranged the loyal son (Lk 15:11-32).

#### **References used in this study:**

Every Man in the Bible  
Baker encyclopedia of the Bible