

The Faith of Moses (Heb 11:23-28)

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Background

Outline of the life of Moses

Faith brings us out (Heb 11:28), takes us through (Heb 11:29), and brings us in (Heb 11:30).

The refusal of faith, Moses first 40 years (Heb 11:24-25).

They were spent in the house (household) of Pharaoh (Ac 7:23), where he was instructed in “all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Ac 7:22).

The reproach of faith, Moses second 40 years (Heb 11:26).

They were spent as a fugitive in the land of Midian herding sheep.

The reward of faith; Moses third 40 years (Heb 11:26-29).

They were spent wandering in the wilderness to the very edge of the Promised Land (Dt 34:7).

Roles Moses had in his life:

Prince of Egypt (Ex 2:1-10); Prophet (Dt 18:15-18; 34:10; Acts 3:22-23); Priest (Ex 40); Lawgiver (Mt 8:4; Mk 7:10; Jn 1:17; 7:19; Ac 15:1); Judge (Ex 18:13; Mt 23:2); Intercessor (Num 11:2; 14:17-20; 21:7); Shepherd (Ex 2:16-21); Miracle worker (Ex 5 - 15); Founder of the nation of Israel (Heb 3:4-6); Friend of God (Ex 33:11; Dt 34:10); Builder of the tabernacle (Ex 25:8 - 27:21);

Moses in the New Testament:

He is mentioned in the NT more than any other OT figure, a total of 79 times. His role as lawgiver is emphasized more than any other aspect of his life.

References to Moses or to events associated with him include his birth (Acts 7:20; Heb 11:23), the burning bush (Lk 20:37), the magicians of Egypt (2 Tm 3:8), the Passover (Heb 11:28), the exodus (3:16), the crossing of the sea (1Cor 10:2), the covenant sacrifice at Sinai (Mt 26:28), the manna (1Cor 10:3), the glory on Moses' face (2Cor 3:7-18), water from the rock (1Cor 10:4), the brazen serpent (Jn 3:14), and the song of Moses (Rev 15:3).

The apostles considered Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the OT).

Such expressions as: “the Law of Moses” (Lk 2:22), “Moses commanded” (Mt 19:7), “Moses said” (Mk 7:10), “Moses wrote” (Mk 12:19) shows that his name was synonymous with the OT books attributed to him.

Stephen gives reference to Moses in his defense before the Jewish Council (Ac 7:20-44).

The writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke of the faith of Moses (Heb. 11:24-29).

The New Testament shows that the Old Covenant was intended only to prepare humanity for the greater teaching and work of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16 - 3:31).

What Moses promised, Jesus fulfilled:

“the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17).

He appears at the transfiguration of Jesus as the representative of OT Law, and Elijah as the representative of OT prophets (Mt 17:1-3).

The NT draws from the life of Moses to show patterns of life under the new covenant.

Moses is compared to Christ in the Book of Hebrews (Heb 3:5-6; 9:11-22).

The nativity story of Jesus parallels the Mosaic story of the infant deliverer being rescued from the evil designs of an earthly despot (Mt 2:13-18).

Jesus' proclamation of a new law in his Sermon on the Mount parallels the giving of the Law at Sinai (Mt 5 - 7) and presents Jesus as the authoritative interpreter of the will of God.

Contrast between the OT (Law) and the NT (grace) is marked in the Book of Galatians.

John contrasted the Law that was given through Moses with the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17).

John also contrasted the manna in the wilderness to Jesus as “the bread of life” (Jn 6:30-35).

The Faith of Moses

Heb 11:24-28 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. (Ex 2:11-15)

He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

As a boy he had faith, as a man he showed it.

Identification with His Own People.

Just when Moses became aware that he was a Hebrew rather than an Egyptian cannot be known, but it is clear that he knew it by the time he was 40 years old when he killed the Egyptian.

He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. (Moses must have been taught by his family who he was while he was a boy being nursed by his mother.)

This was a conscious decision, Moses knew what he was doing.

He chose to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin

Moses, the adopted son of the Egyptian princess, could have led an easy life in the palace. But his faith moved him to identify with God's people.

Moses was called to devote himself to his people. He knew the source of the call:

to have disobeyed the call by seeking to retain his place in the Egyptian court would have been sin, though such disloyalty would have given him the opportunity to enjoy the resources of being a prince.

"chose" = (considered, accounted), 'choosing rather ... since he accounted ...'

He chose to be evil treated ... than to have enjoyment of sin for a season.

He chose to identify with God's suffering people.

"to endure" = to suffer with God's people may be expressed as "to suffer in a way in which God's people were suffering."

To suffer may be translated "to experience pain" or "to be pained."

"ill-treatment with" = "be badly treated with."

"He preferred to suffer with God's people, rather than to live well for a short time."

"pleasures of sin" does not refer only to lust and other gross sins.

The phrase describes a way of life that we today would call "successful"—position, prestige, power, wealth, and freedom from problems. True faith causes a believer to hold the right values and make the right decisions

Faith led Moses to renounce all that he had gained in Egypt. As a prince he had everything that a person on earth could ever want:

Education and knowledge; Fame and wealth; Possessions and estates; Power and authority; Position and duty; Purpose of responsibility.

He considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt

“considered” = “He thought it was better” or “He decided that it was better.”

“reproach” = express to (someone) one’s disapproval of or disappointment in their actions (Concise Oxford English dictionary); the shame, or scorn.

“Christ” = anointed

The people of Israel were anointed ones

Ps 105:15 saying, “Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm.”

Christians are also anointed ones

1Jn 2:20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge.

He reasoned that if he suffered the scorn for the sake of God’s people (God’s Anointed One), that it was far more valuable than possessing all the treasures of Egypt.

He saw the reproach of Christ as the greater riches.

Gen 3:15 the promised Seed of the woman.

Gen 12:1-3 the Abrahamic Covenant

Dt 18:18-19 the promised prophet

Faith leads us to live in self-denial.

Mt 16:24-25 to follow Jesus we must take up our cross, follow Him and lose our life.

Lk 14: 33 unless we forsake everything we cannot be His disciple.

Rom 8:13 by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body.

Phil 3:8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (Phil 3:7-11)

He was looking to the reward

Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”

Ps 58:11 And men will say, “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!”

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

He left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king

In Exodus it says that Moses was afraid

Ex 2:14 He answered, “Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and thought, “Surely the thing is known.”

Moses was not afraid of the anger of the king. For the sake of his people he could have braved death; but, though he was so far fearless, yet the lack of faith in those whom he would deliver forced him to retire:

Ac 7:27-29 But the man who was wronging his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ 29 When he heard this, Moses fled and became a resident alien in the land of Midian.

It was Moses' faith which not only made him leave Egypt but made it possible for him to be unafraid of the king's anger. This may be expressed as "Because Moses trusted God, he left Egypt; he was not afraid of the king who was angry" or "... he was not afraid even though the king was angry."

Faith led Moses to forsake Egypt and overcome fear.

Ex 2:11-12 Moses kills the Egyptian who was abusing a Hebrew slave.

Ac 7:23-25 Moses thought that his brothers would understand that God was granting deliverance from Egypt through him.

He endured, as seeing Him who is unseen

"Moses refused to turn back, as though he saw the invisible God." or "he refused to change his course," or "he continued straight ahead."

God is invisible, no man can nor has seen Him (Col 1:15; 1Tim 1:17; 1Jn 4:20; Jn 1:18; 1Tim 6:16).

Faith led Moses to endure seeing Him who is invisible.

2Cor 4:16-18 faith sees the eternal and not the temporary.

Mt 10:22 he who endures to the end will be saved.

Heb 12:7-11 we are to endure through discipline.

He kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood

The destroyer of the firstborn was the action of God through a destroying angel (Ex 12:23). Others experienced this angel also:

Israel in the wilderness experienced "the destroyer" for their grumblings (1Cor 10:10).

David as a consequence of sin in numbering Israel (1Chr 21:11-15).

The Assyrian army delivering Hezekiah and Judah from them (2Chr 32:21; Isa 48:21)

Egypt as God delivered Israel from Egypt through the 10 plagues

Ps 78:49 He let loose on them his fierce anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels.

Faith leads to salvation.

Rom 5:9 we are saved from the wrath of God by the blood of Jesus.

Rom 10:13 whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Eph 2:8 by grace through faith we are saved.

1Pt 1:18-19 we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish or without spot.

Notice:

If man had been writing chapter 11 of Hebrews, the next verse(s) would be about the forty years of the wilderness wanderings. But there is no mention of Israel's failure and forty years of wasted time. Why? Because that was an experience of unbelief, not faith! The writer did use this experience in Hebrews 3 and 4 as an illustration of doubting the Word. But nowhere in Hebrews 11 will you find a record of any failure because of unbelief. Faith records only the victories.

References used in this study:

The Preacher's Commentary Series; Hebrews (Vol. 33, pp. 199-200)

A handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews (pp. 270-277)

Believer's Bible Commentary

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The Lexham Bible Dictionary

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Nelson's New illustrated Bible Dictionary