

## The Faith of Moses

23 By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, unafraid of the king's anger; for he persevered as though he saw him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned.

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## Message " By faith"

The letter to the Hebrews was written to a group of Christians who were caught in a three-way struggle between, Greek alternative beliefs and lifestyles, Roman power and the Gospel of Jesus. They were torn, perhaps drifting, not sure which way was the right one, the one they should follow.

Caught between a choice of living "by faith" or "by power".

Hebrews starts with the story of how baby Moses was hidden by his parents for three months. Yet Moses should not even have been born!

The Pharaoh, afraid that the immigrant population, the Jews, upon whose labor his plans depended, might have too many children and when they had increased enough might not be so subservient.

He commanded the midwives kill all male babies born to Jewish women as soon as they were born. We suspect that many of the Hebrew people avoided pregnancy rather than see their babies exterminated. But Moses was born and his parents hid him for as long as they could. They did this "by faith".

Faith in something greater than their present situation.

Then the writer jumps to the part of Moses' story where he discovers his ethnic roots, abandons all his prestige, position and luxury as an adopted member of the royal household and identifies with the slave population. Everyone must have seen this as an act of great stupidity and weakness, but again we are told ,he did it "by faith".

The text then quickly moves to remind us of a few of the key moments in the story of how Moses "set the people free" and led them out on the Exodus to the Promised land.

Events which proved that faith in God, which some might call weakness, was actually strength.

But what does "by faith" mean.

"By faith" means to live and act not based on experience or knowledge, but by belief.

It means to have solid, open vision of what God has promised and will do. In recent history, when Martin Luther King had a "dream" it certainly was not based on physical facts. The pictures he painted in that inspired message of children of every color and background playing together was not anything he had ever seen!

It was instead his vision "by faith" of what God wanted, planned and would achieve.

We tend to forget,

We tend to be seduced by our own ideas and skills.

We tend to settle for life as it is, including all the injustice and cruelty.

We tend to shrug our shoulders and say "nothing I can do about it"

We tend to be comfortably on the receiving end of privilege and resist risking loss.

In contrast Hebrews screams:

Where would Moses have been if his parents had not had faith?

What would have been the outcome if Moses chose life "as is"?

The children of God would still be slaves in Egypt!

Jesus would never have been born because the Jewish family and village he lived in would never have existed!

Hebrews reminds us of a people and individuals who lived "by faith" in things "yet unseen", to quote Paul.

Hebrews is God's Word to us today:

- to act in ways which show we trust the promise of God
- to believe that God is involved, and active in our lives and world
- that God is the most powerful force in all of life.
- that God has plans which will come to fruition.

Moses casting all his power, wealth and privilege aside for the sake of God and God's people. The slaves of Egypt choosing to walk off into the desert with no resources, no arms, to an unknown future.

All of this must have been seen as weakness.

The heavily armed chariots and warriors who went after them, to drag them back to chains, must have been convinced that they were the strong ones.

But it was in the "weakness" of living "by faith" that true strength is revealed and God's will, was, and is done.

Our world today requires us to make a decision. Will we live "by faith?"

Daunted by structural changes? Learn from Moses's life choices.

Feel that your enemies pursuing you? Learn from the Israelites at the Red Sea.

Is the world around you making you feel mocked, abused, unfairly convicted and even crucified? Reach for Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), who endured the cross before experiencing resurrection glory.

Far too often, we allow ourselves to be frustrated by failure, and hamstrung by the status quo. But when the way is tough, and our bodies are aching, and everything seems to be falling apart, faith is still strengthening us, encouraging us, and calling us to persevere.

To live "by faith" is not easy, it is a costly road to travel, it involves risk and it is ridiculed by many as weak.

"By faith", we tap into true strength.

"By faith" we show a willingness to rely on God through every failure, disappointment personal hardship or disaster.

"By faith" we gain access to God's grace, encouragement, and perseverance.

"By faith" we look beyond ourselves,

"By faith" we learn from the stories of faithful people, and 'By faith" we trust God.