

XXIX. The Faith of Moses

February 26/27/28, 2019

Hebrews 11:23-29

Aim: To have the faith of Moses, a faith that is fearless in the face of opposition and that clearly sees the riches of God's salvation and rejects the temporary pleasures of this world.

Bruce: The next example of faith is Moses, whose whole life is marked by awareness of the presence and power of the unseen God, and believing obedience to His word. Stephen mentions that 'Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds' (Acts 7:22); but he lays chief emphasis on the fact that Moses was God's appointed messenger and redeemer to the people of Israel, the man who 'led them out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years' (Acts 7:36). Our author's assessment of Moses is closely akin to Stephen's. He has already spoken of his faithfulness as a servant in God's house (3:2, 5); here he singles out those features from the history of Moses that best illustrate his present theme of faith in God.

Phillips: Undoubtedly the two most prominent figures of the Old Testament are Abraham and Moses. It is no surprise, then, that when the writer of Hebrews turns to the Old Testament for models of faith, he dwells longest on these two great men. Hebrews 11 tells us five things that Abraham did by faith, and when it turns to the life of Moses, there are also five statements that begin 'by faith.' The account of Moses starts by telling us of his parents' faith, and ends with the faith of the generation that followed Moses. Like all of us, his faith was the product of others' influence on him, and his mark was made in the faith of those he influenced for the Lord. The faith of Moses was particularly useful for the author's purpose, since the grand design of the Letter to the Hebrews is to persuade Jewish Christians not to abandon Christ for Moses. Moses, the author shows us, aligned himself with Christ, even in disgrace, and if people really wanted to follow Moses' example, they would have to do so as Christians and not as Jews.

Hughes: Moses' faith is conveniently explained under five brief sections, each successively introduced with 'By faith.'

A. Faith in Egypt (Hebrew 11:23-26)

1. Preservation (11:23)

²³*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*

a) *An Endangered Child*

Hughes: The initial faith we are shown is not Moses' faith, but the heroic faith of his parents. Both parents were from the tribe of Levi (Ex. 2:1) and Exodus 6:20 tells us that their names were Amram and Jochebed and that they also had another son—Aaron, who would be high priest. They also had a daughter—Miriam, the prophetess. The couple's marriage came at a dark time for Israel—when the oppression of the Egyptians had become utterly diabolical. First, Pharaoh had commanded the Hebrew midwives to murder all males immediately upon birth. When that plan failed, his command became more crude and effective—all newborn baby boys were to be tossed into the Nile as food for the crocodiles (cp. Ex. 1:15-22). Nevertheless, Jochebed

Hebrews – Lesson 29

conceived. Interestingly, Josephus says the pregnancy was accomplished by Amram's obedience to a vision in which God told him he would have a son who would deliver his people. Josephus' account is not inspired revelation, though some respected commentators believe something like this may have led to their faith.

Bruce: The faith that was shown at Moses' birth was, of course, not his own but his parents'. He was born in Egypt, soon after the reigning Pharaoh, to restrict the rapidly increasing numbers of Israelites in his realm, had issued a decreed ordering that all male children born to them should be put to death at birth. But, according to the Exodus narrative, when Moses mother 'saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months' (Ex. 2:2), and after that she placed him in a basket of bulrushes on the brink of the Nile, where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter. While the Hebrew text makes his mother the active part in thus circumventing the royal decree, the Septuagint says that both his parents hid him for three months. Nature itself might suggest that his mother took the initiative, with the acquiescence of his father. Had their defiance of the law been discovered, the penalty would have been severe; but 'they were not deterred by the king's decree.'

Schreiner: We are not surprised to discover that Moses is considered for several verses. The story summarized here follows closely Exodus 2:2-3. At the time Moses was born, Pharaoh demanded that Hebrew boys be slain at birth by casting them into the Nile (Ex. 1:22). Moses' parents, however, saw the beauty of the child and hid him for three months. What is perhaps most interesting is the author's comment on the story, for he concludes that Moses' parents 'didn't fear the king's edict.' Presumably the author recounts this story because his readers were fearful of trusting in the Lord and of doing anything that might set them at cross purposes with authorities who could injure them, and thus he sets forth Moses' parents as an example of doing what was right when they would be prone to act in fear.

MacArthur: Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, 'were not afraid of the king's edict.' They ignored the pressures and threats of the world when these conflicted with God's way. Moses' parents were willing to risk their own lives to follow God's way. Their decision was clear: save the child, whatever the consequences. Saving Moses was more than their own will, it was also God's will. We have no way of knowing how much they knew about God's plan for the destiny of their son, but it was enough for them to know that He had a special reason for Moses' protection.

b) *A Beautiful Child*

Hughes: However that may be, when baby Moses came, his parents' faith was in full force: 'By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that their child was beautiful.' This seems an odd reason, especially in light of universal parental experience. All my children were 'beautiful' and extraordinary—and so were all yours! Right? Amram and Jochebed had nothing on us! Obviously, there was something about him that was more than beautiful. Possibly there was something unique about his presence that confirmed God's word. The point is, the parents were so encouraged in their faith by the extraordinary nature of their child that they hid him for three months. And then, when it became impossible to conceal his presence, they came up with a creative plan that floated him right into Pharaoh's palace! Jochebed took a papyrus basket, coated it with pitch, put her beautiful baby in it, placed it in the reeds where Pharaoh's daughter bathed, and set big sister Miriam there to watch. Baby Moses, of course, melted the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. And as she cooed over him, up

Hebrews – Lesson 29

popped big sister with the brilliant suggestion of a surrogate nurse. Result: Jochebed go paid to nurse her own baby and to raise him during his early years!

Bruce: Wherein precisely did their ‘faith’ lie? Probably the statement that Moses was a ‘goodly’ child means more than he was a beautiful baby. We are perhaps intended to infer that there was something about the appearance of the child that indicated that he was no ordinary child, but one destined under God to accomplish great things for his people. Our author does not repeat the story of the divine revelation to this effect which, according to Josephus, was given in a night vision to Moses’ father Amram; but some appreciation of the divine purpose to be fulfilled through Moses is implied in his ascription of faith to Amram and Jochebed.

Phillips: Where, we might ask, did the faith of Moses come from? The first answer is provided in our text: it came from his parents. Verse 23 summarizes their trust in the Lord. Pharaoh had ordered the murder of Hebrew baby boys, so Moses’ parents, Amram and Jochebed, hid him for three months after his birth, not fearing Pharaoh’s decree. Verse 23 says they did this because they saw he was ‘no ordinary child.’ The Greek text says they saw that he was ‘beautiful.’ In some way, they looked at Moses and saw that he was special, and thus determined to risk themselves to save his life. Amram and Jochebed were motivated by something more than normal parental love; they had faith that the Lord had given them a special child.

MacArthur: That their concern was for more than just a ‘beautiful child,’ is indicated in Stephen’s sermon before the Sanhedrin. ‘Moses ... was lovely in the sight of God’ (Acts 7:20). Not only Moses’ parents, but also God Himself, had a special affection for this child. I believe that Moses’ parents were somehow aware of God’s special concern, for by faith in God they hid him and opposed Pharaoh’s order. It was for God’s sake, as well as for Moses’ and their own sakes, that the baby was protected.

c) *A Nurtured Child*

MacArthur: It took considerable faith to put Moses in the basket and to trust that Pharaoh’s daughter, of all people, would take pity on this baby, which she immediately recognized as Hebrew. It also took faith to believe that, if he were adopted by the princess, he would be raised in the way of the Lord rather than in the occultic paganism of Egypt. From a human perspective, his parents had no way of knowing even that his life would be spared, much less that, for all purposes, he would be given back to them. Yet they willingly let him go, entrusting him to God. Jochebed nursed Moses and trained him and taught him Israel’s promises from God—that they were to inherit the land of Canaan and be a great nation and bless the world. She instilled in him God’s promise of a great deliverer, the messianic hope in which Abraham had rejoiced (Jn. 8:56). His mother helped build in him the faith that was to become characteristic of his life.

Hughes: So Moses was preserved by his parent’s heroic faith. But there is more, for he was also nurtured by their faith. There in the slave hut of his parents Moses was surrounded by the pure atmosphere of faith. There he became aware of his own origins. There he was taught to fear God. And there he was made conscious of his call to deliver his people. What encouragement there is here for any who are attempting to try to raise a godly family in today’s secular desert. Moses was preserved by his parents’ faith. Their faith, their prayers, their bravery, and their creativity saved him. And more, he became a great man of faith through their faith. Moses preached and practiced the faith he saw at home as a child. Those of us who are parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles and teachers not only have great power, but also immense

Hebrews – Lesson 29

responsibility to the children in our lives. Israel's deliverance began with an obscure couple believing God in the midst of darkness. Think what a faith like that could accomplish today!

Phillips: Moses got his faith the old-fashioned way: from his parents. He got it from what they taught him about the Lord and His covenant with Israel and His promises of a land and a multitude of seed. He got it, most especially, from their example of faith. The very thing that Moses is commended for in verse 27, that he did not fear the king's anger, is first ascribed to his parents. Because of his parent's faith, Moses grew up conscious of his own identity and believing the promises of the Lord to the afflicted people of Israel. They gave Moses that which is most needful to any child: faith in the Lord. It was 'by faith' that Moses chose to be identified with the people of God (vv. 24-26).

Phillips: This is how we pass on the faith to our children: by our words, but more pointedly by our actions. Children are either hardened by the hypocrisy of their parents, or like Moses they are inspired by the consistency between word and deed. If we are unforgiving with our children and show an unwillingness to admit our sins, then we are communicating a lack of grace to them. If we spend all our money on ourselves, begrudging the church and those in need, or if we speak harshly of people, seeming to rejoice in their failures and follies, then we communicate a religion other than that of Christianity. But when we are quick to repent and ready to forgive, when we trust the Lord for our own provision and give freely to others, and when we speak graciously of other sinners—to list just a few practical applications—we show our children our belief in a God who is merciful and kind and might to save.

2. Identification (11:24-26)

a) *Moses' Refusal (11:24)*

²⁴*By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter...*

Bruce: When Pharaoh's daughter found the infant Moses by the Nile, she adopted him and brought him up as her own son. But 'when Moses had grown up, ... he went out to his people, and looked on their burdens' (Ex. 2:11). Stephen makes him 'about forty years old' at the time, thus dividing his life of 120 years into three clearly demarcated periods of forty years each. According to Stephen, Moses presented himself to his fellow-Israelites as their champion, supposing that they 'understood that God was giving them deliverance by his hand, but they did not understand' (Acts 7:25). Our author reads the Exodus narrative as Stephen did, and concludes that, by thus identifying himself with downtrodden Israelites, Moses renounced the status which he enjoyed in Egypt as a member of the royal household.

Schreiner: Verse 24 considers the status of Moses. He was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:4-10). Growing up as a son of privilege, he enjoyed all the luxuries of life and the status of belonging to the first family in Egypt. Moses, however, didn't rely on his nobility or his stature. He trusted in God instead and renounced his claim as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

MacArthur: When Moses reached the age of forty, he faced a crucial decision. He had to decide between becoming a full-fledged Egyptian, with absolute loyalty and no reservations, and joining his own people, Israel. The deciding factor was his faith in God. In all those years he had never wavered in his devotion to the Lord. Somehow God also indicated to him that he had been chosen for special service and that, from then on he would be an Israelite first and only.

Hebrews – Lesson 29

Hughes: There is a time lapse of some forty years between verse 23 and the second ‘by faith,’ which covers verses 24-26. Here we see how Moses identified with his people by faith. His identification began with a *negative choice*: ‘By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.’ Moses was known by the royal designation ‘son of Pharaoh’s daughter.’ A modern equivalent might be Duke of York. But Moses publicly refused the title—thus committing a grievous and dangerous insult to Pharaoh. Faith is courageous! True faith will announce its discord whenever God and conscience call for it. Believers can love their culture, and there is much to love in most cultures, but they will refuse to be identified with the godless zeitgeist or spirit of the age.

Phillips: The author of Hebrews refers to an incident that took place when Moses was forty years old (see Acts 7:23). Exodus 2:11-12 tells us that he took the side of the Israelites against the Egyptians, thus forfeiting his status as son of Pharaoh’s daughter. As he came to maturity, it seemed that Moses realized he had a choice before him, one that would determine his destiny. The choice was straightforward: would he identify himself with the Hebrew slaves or their Egyptian masters? This is the kind of choice faith demands, and it involves both a yes and a no. He said yes to his identity as an Israelite, as a son of Abraham and a follower of Yahweh, and very deliberately said no to his status as a prince of Egypt, a son of Pharaoh’s daughter, and a servant to the gods of the Nile.

Phillips: Consider all that Moses left by siding with the people of God. First, he left worldly honor and power behind. He ‘refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.’ According to some traditions, Pharaoh had no sons of his own, and so Moses stood in line to ascend the throne. This is possible but not certain. What *is* certain is that he was aligned with the royal house in an age when royalty stood next to divinity. Phenomenal power and exaltation were his if he would retain his position in Pharaoh’s house.

Bruce: He could not identify himself both with the Israelites and with the Egyptians; he had to choose one or the other. To choose the side of a slave-nation, with all the contempt and privation which that entailed, in preference of the substantial advantages and prospects which were his as ‘the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,’ must have seemed an act of folly by all worldly standards. It is, however, an act which has been repeatedly reproduced in our day by outstanding members of subject nations who have stood well with the imperial power, but have preferred to cast in their lot with their own people even if this involved them in loss, discomfort, and imprisonment.

b) *Moses’ Choice (11:25)*

...²⁵ *choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*

Hughes: Moses’ negation was, of course, also motivated by a *positive act of his will*: ‘[He chose] rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.’ Moses’ sin, had he remained part of the Egyptian system, would have been apostasy—for he would have had to abandon the truth. There is no doubt that the pleasures of sin in Egypt were substantial. But like all physical pleasures, they were only pleasurable for a moment. So rather than embracing Egypt’s evanescent pleasures, Moses consciously chose ‘to be mistreated with the people of God.’ Moses believed that Israel stood in unique relationship with the living God and had a unique role to play in world history. Moses chose the most exciting path he could possibly take. To him, like in the brilliance of the Egyptian court was a dull, ignoble thing when compared with the society of mistreated Israel.

Hebrews – Lesson 29

Schreiner: Moses' faith was not passive. He sided with Israel, with his people, over against the Egyptians. The author probably refers to Moses' slaying of the Egyptian taskmaster who was beating Hebrew (Ex. 11-12). Such an action, even if it was mistaken in some respects, wasn't merely a temporary fit or temper. It signaled where Moses' loyalties were, demonstrating that he associated himself with the people of God rather than with the Egyptians. By siding with the Israelites, Moses renounced the pleasures and joys of Egypt with all its luxuries and comforts. The author acknowledges that sin may bring intense delight and pleasure. Still, such pleasures are temporary and evanescent, and Moses recognized that the enjoyment of sin is fleeting.

Bruce: It was 'by faith' that Moses made his great refusal, with all that it cost him in material terms. His people were being ill-treated, but he chose to share their ill-treatment 'rather than enjoy the transient pleasures of sin.' The privileges and advantages that are attached to high rank and political power are not sinful in themselves; they can indeed be used very effectively to promote the well-being of others and to help the underprivileged. Moses might have argued to himself that he could do much more for the Israelites by remaining in Pharaoh's court and using his influence there on their behalf rather than by renouncing his Egyptian citizenship and becoming a member of a depressed group with no political rights. But for *Moses* to do this, when once he had seen the path of duty clear before him, would have been *sin*—the crowning sin of apostasy, against which the recipients of this letter needed so insistently to be warned. But when Moses made that refusal he did not foresee the reputation which he was going to establish for himself; he had nothing to look forward to but privation, danger, scorn, and suffering. To have remained at Pharaoh's court would have been lasting dishonor, and that dishonor would be a price too high to pay for material advantages which at best would be but short-lived.

MacArthur: No one needs to be convinced that sin is often fun. It can feed our pride, satisfy physical desires and appetites, and offer many other pleasures. But it has two characteristics that the world does not notice: it is always evil and it is always passing. And, no matter how temporarily satisfying it may be, its satisfaction is destined to fade. It has no good in it and it can bring no good to us, to anyone else, or to God. Any seeming good is both deceptive and fleeting.

MacArthur: Moses knew God was calling him to give his life for his people. He had a choice. He could have obeyed or disobeyed. Disobeying had many attractions. Among other things, it would have been a lot easier and a lot more enjoyable in the short run. We have no reason to believe that he was ever involved in any immoral practices, but he enjoyed the pleasures of an extremely comfortable life. He had the best food, the best living quarters, the best recreation, the best of everything that his age could provide. These were not sins in themselves. Joseph had enjoyed the same pleasures in the same place, while being perfectly obedient to God. But they would have been sin for Moses, had he decided to stay in the Egyptian court, and he forsook them for the sake of God's call.

Phillips: Second, Moses turned his back on the pleasures of sin, which are always available to such a high person, and which it seems were part and parcel of life in Pharaoh's court. Third, he turned his back on 'the treasures of Egypt' (v. 26), which we know were vast beyond human reckoning. This is an enormous amount to give up, so it must have been something very attractive that took Moses' eye off those things! Moses gave it all up for two things: first, for the privilege of mistreatment with the people of God, and second, to share in the disgrace of Christ. This is the choice Moses made. What an advertisement for Christianity! People will often try to evangelize others with promises of how wonderful it is to be a Christian. But Moses presents a truer picture. To be a Christian you must give up the world to embrace the cross. Moses' choice

Hebrews – Lesson 29

is the choice all must make who would follow Jesus: the treasures of Egypt or affliction with the people of God and fellowship in the cross of Christ. But our present loss does not go uncompensated: it gains spiritual peace now and untold riches later. Moses' choice cost him honor with men but brought him honor with God and, as our passage shows, a name that will be praised forever.

Phillips: What is it that causes a man to make a choice like this? Our passage tells us it was 'by faith' that Moses chose reproach over power and Israel over Egypt. When people encounter a choice like Moses' they often ascribe it to other motives, yet there are no other motives that credibly explain what he did. What was it Moses believed? Mainly, he believed that the Israelites, though enslaved, were the people of God. He understood that the Egyptians, though wielding power and enjoying wealth, were in opposition to the true God. Their pleasures were sinful ones and Israel's afflictions were holy ones. Surely this means that he knew Israel's God, Yahweh, to be the true God, and the many gods of the Nile to be empty idols. If this was true, he knew it was better to be one of God's people, even in a state of affliction.

Phillips: Moses did not choose affliction as such, but rather affliction 'with the people of God.' And what a difference those few words make: the difference between sorrow and joy, between loss and the greatest gain. 'With the people of God' is where you always want to be, because that is where God is working with a purpose for good. That is where true wonders are seen, where saving grace is found, where flowers bloom in the desert, where a river flows that makes glad the city of God, either in blessing or affliction. To the mind of faith, with the people of God' is always the place to be, where we belong, and where we will be so far as we are able to choose. If need be, we will be with the people of God as slaves in Egypt, so that we might also be with them as God's royal children in glory forever.

c) *Moses' Reward (11:26)*

²⁶*He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.*

(1) Consideration of Moses

MacArthur: 'Considering' (*hēgeomai*) involves careful thought, not quick decision. Moses thought through his decision, weighing the pros and cons. He weighed what Egypt had to offer against what God offered. When he reached a conclusion it was well-founded and certain. God's offer was infinitely superior in every way. In the eyes of the world no 'reproach' (being ridiculed and persecuted) would be worth sacrificing riches for. Yet Moses believed that the worst he could endure for Christ would be more valuable than the best of the world.

Phillips: We have seen a number of examples in Hebrews 11 of the relationship between faith and works. Faith always works. Moses' action was the result of faith's calculation. Verse 25 says, 'he chose,' and verse 26 tells us why: 'he considered.' According to faith's calculation, Moses 'considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.' Moses is yet another example of the principle of Hebrews 11:6, that faith believes God rewards those who earnestly seek after him. Moses wanted what was best, as we all do, and according to the calculation of faith he chose present affliction over pleasure, the disgrace of Christ over the treasures of Egypt. He put these side by side, and by faith he reckoned contrary to sight, considering the one as greater than the other.

Hebrews – Lesson 29

Phillips: Moses looked upon the honor of being the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and by faith he saw that this distinction meant apostasy from God. To be Pharaoh's daughter, even if it meant gain the throne and crown of Egypt, meant losing his status as an Israelite, and therefore losing the covenant with God. So by faith Moses reckoned that he was choosing between Pharaoh, a king, and Yahweh, the one true God. On the basis of that calculation he made his choice. Likewise he looked on the carnal pleasures of Pharaoh's court. They were mingled with sin, they led on to sin, they were ruinous to the soul, and displeasing to God. It would be small comfort to have pleasure while God was against him. Better to suffer and obey God, than be at ease and sin. Reckoning that way, he was willing to give up a life of pleasure.

Phillips: This is how Moses' faith made its calculation, and once we accept his principle we do not marvel at his choice. What did faith tell him but that there was a reward in heaven that far outweighed any treasure of Egypt? As Paul said, 'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us' (Rom. 8:18). Faith showed Moses a crown that does not fade, a glory that shines with heaven's light. And faith showed Moses how to reckon the afflictions of God's people. This is what faith showed Moses as he looked upon the kingdoms of this world, upon the pleasures and treasures of the Nile. I wonder what your faith sees as you look around you. Do you see things here that you must have? Do you see things now that you must enjoy? Do you see the affliction of God's people and turn away, the reproach of Christ of which you want no part? Then you see with different eyes, a different faith than Moses did, and you shall have a different reward.

(2) Reproach of Christ

Phillips: Consider the remarkable statement that Moses shared 'the reproach of Christ.' In what sense can we say that Moses believed on Jesus, who came so many centuries later? This is an important point for the writer of Hebrews, since it was his design to motivate his Jewish-Christian readers to follow Moses' example of suffering for the name of Christ. There are a couple of ways we might think of Moses looking to Christ, the first of which recognizes the parallel in this passage between the people of God and Christ Himself. In Hebrews 11:26 mistreatment with God's people is seen as essentially the same as disgrace for Christ's sake (cp. Ps. 89:50-51).

Phillips: This is one way of looking at Moses' sharing in disgrace, but for the writer of Hebrews the 'Christ' unquestionably means the Lord Jesus Christ. His point is that Moses' faith was faith in Jesus. This is something plainly stated in the Gospels. When Nathanael brought his brother Philip to meet Jesus, he did so with these words: 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph' (Jn. 1:45). Later, Jesus said to the Jews, 'If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of Me' (Jn. 5:46; cp. Lk. 9:30). Much, or even most, of what Moses came to know about Jesus came after his decision to leave the house of Pharaoh. But this much he surely knew: that God would send a Savior to bring a kingdom. By faith, he also knew that before the crown there lay a cross.

Hughes: How could Moses turn his back on Egyptian delights and embrace the affections of his stigmatized people? The answer revealed his faith: 'He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.' When Moses identified with Israel, he was aligning himself with the people with whom Jesus Christ had been identified from their inception. He had always been one with His people. Thus, Moses' identification with

Hebrews – Lesson 29

the disgrace of the messianic people was an identification with Christ—he could endure disgrace for the sake of Christ.

Bruce: Moses weighed the issue in his mind, and decided that the temporal wealth of Egypt was far less valuable than ‘the stigma that rests on God’s Anointed.’ What others would have considered as something to be shunned at all cost he esteemed as a prize to be eagerly sought. The ‘stigma’ and disrepute which the people of God bore were borne in concentrated form by the Lord’s Anointed. The national history of Israel, which began under Moses’ leadership, led on to Christ; by his obedience to the heavenly vision Moses, like Abraham at an earlier date, looked forward to the day of Christ.

MacArthur: It is interesting that the writer of Hebrews speaks of Moses’ ‘considering the reproach of Christ,’ since he lived nearly fifteen hundred years before Christ. Moses suffered reproach for the sake of Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, because he identified with Messiah’s people and purpose long before Christ came to earth. Every believer since Adam’s fall has been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, no matter in what age he has lived. It is also true, therefore, that any believer at any time who has suffered for God’s sake has suffered for Christ’s sake.

MacArthur: We do not know how much Moses knew about God’s future Deliverer. But he had considerably more light than Abraham, and Jesus tells us plainly that Abraham looked forward to Jesus’ day and rejoiced (Jn. 8:56). In the same way, Moses looked forward to Jesus. God’s ‘reward’ is always greater than the world’s. ‘God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus’ (Phi. 4:19). He supplies *according to* His riches, not just *out of* them. Moses surely saw the reward of a blessed life, but the emphasis is best seen as being on the eternal reward.

Schreiner: It is fascinating that the author says Moses suffered the reproach of the Christ since nothing is said about the Messiah in the story. We have already seen that the author can take the words of Psalm 102 that refer to the Lord and apply them to Jesus Christ (1:10-12). It seems that he does something similar here. The reproach Moses suffered for God’s sake is attributed to Jesus Christ. Referring to the reproach of Christ makes the story relevant for the readers as well. The author wants them to suffer for Christ’s sake. He also wants them to be like Moses. He can understand and sympathize with their desire for the comforts of the present world. Persecution wasn’t a pleasant prospect. The author observes that Moses didn’t relish suffering either. The pleasures of sin are real, and following that pathway can bring remarkable delights. But such delights are temporary and fleeting. Far better to join Moses and to look to the future reward, a permanent reward that will bring happiness that will never be revoked.

(3) The Reward of God

Schreiner: Moses considered the ‘reproach’ (*ονειδισμον, oneidismos*) he suffered for the sake of the Christ to be ‘greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt.’ The ‘wealth’ was the ‘reward’ (*μισθαποδοσιαν, misthapodosian*) he would certainly receive in the future. Moses rejected temporary pleasures and looked to future and eternal riches instead.

Bruce: To readers whose perseverance was in danger of faltering because of the stigma attached to the name of Christ the example of Moses was calculated to be a challenge and encouragement. It would help them to fix their eyes on the reward held out to faith if they remembered how Moses weighed the issues of time in the balances of eternity: ‘his eyes were fixed upon the coming days of recompense.’ To have such a secure place in the history of redemption might

Hebrews – Lesson 29

have been reckoned reward enough; but to our author's mind Moses, as truly as the patriarchs, looked for his perfect recompense in the well-founded city of God.

Hughes: The great truth for us is that Moses could do this because 'he was looking to the reward.' Here the author again takes us back to the foundational truth of verse 1: 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for.' Moses was, quite simply, sure of his reward. He was so certain that it was what we have called *future certitude*. This is what will enable us to refuse to be called the sons and daughters of Pharaoh and to forego the fleeting pleasures of sin and to identify with God's people and their struggles. If we truly believe in the reward, as did Moses and the saints, we will do just fine. Paul said, 'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us' (Rom. 8:18).

B. Faith in the Exodus (Hebrews 11:27-29)

Phillips: The exodus is the great event of the Old Testament and the dominant New Testament paradigm for Christian salvation. Now, in Hebrews 11, the author's record of faith brings us to the time of Moses and the generation he led out of Egypt. Despite their many failures and rebellions, that generation did perform one great act of faith: the exodus itself and the passage through the Red Sea. The focus of these verses, however, is on Moses himself, the leader of God's people in the exodus. His example shows that godly leadership is made courageous by faith, and that such leadership is able to reproduce its faith in the lives of others.

1. Separation (11:27)

²⁷*By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.*

a) *The Departure of Moses*

Phillips: Hebrews 11:27 presents an exegetical problem having to do with Moses leaving Egypt. The question is: to which of Moses' departures does this refer? Is it his first departure, after he had killed the Egyptian overseer (Ex. 2:15), or the much later departure in the actual exodus (Ex. 12:33-51)? An initial reading suggests the earlier departure, since this keeps the verses in historical sequence. The chief problem is that this seems to contradict the Old Testament record. Exodus 2:14 explicitly says that Moses was afraid, and verse 15 shows him 'fleeing' from Pharaoh. Hebrews, however, says he did not fear the king's anger when he fled, and for this reason many commentators insist that this must relate to the later occasion. Among these are John Calvin, John Owen, and B. F. Westcott. According to their view, this must refer to the time of the exodus, when Moses so courageously stood before Pharaoh and sent the plagues from God. This assessment also has problems. First, if verse 27 refers to the exodus, it is out of order with verse 28, which mentions the keeping of the Passover. The writer of Hebrews has been following a straightforward historical progression, which now would be broken.

Schreiner: Moses renounced the joys of Egyptian power and put to death the Egyptian abusing the Hebrew slave (Ex. 2:11-12). He became fearful when it was clear what he did was spreading round the country (Ex. 2:14). Pharaoh, upon learning about the slaying, tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled to Midian (Ex. 2:15).

Bruce: With this forward-looking faith Moses abandoned Egypt. His heart-renunciation of Egypt, with all that Egypt had to offer him, was the essential act of faith; but our author probably

Hebrews – Lesson 29

thinks of the occasion when he left Egypt to live in the wilderness of Midian, a stranger in a strange land.

MacArthur: The first time he left Egypt, Moses was fleeing from the pharaoh, who wanted to kill him for slaying the Egyptian slavemaster (Ex. 2:15). The second time he left Egypt, another pharaoh wanted to keep Moses from taking the children of Israel with him. In both cases he was in trouble. The greatest pressure Moses faced was fear, because of ‘the wrath of the king.’ It is the same fear, though perhaps of a different sort and source, that believers may face on occasion. Fear is one of Satan’s most effective, and therefore most used, weapons. Moses was doubtlessly tempted to fear, but he did not. He left Egypt with full determination to follow a better way. In this context, the KJV translation seems more appropriate—‘By faith he forsook Egypt.’ He did more than simply leave; he turned his back on Egypt and all that it represented. He renounced it permanently.

b) *The ‘Fear’ of Moses*

Phillips: A second problem is far more serious. Why did the writer of Hebrews go out of his way to make the point about Moses not fearing Pharaoh? There is no reason to mention Moses’ lack of fear in reference to the exodus, since by then Pharaoh and the Egyptians were pleading for the Israelites to leave. But if this refers to the earlier departure, we see very well why the writer of Hebrews mentions it. Given the importance of Moses’ faith to the overall argument of this letter, the writer would seek to explain the statement of Moses’ fear in Ex. 2:14. Yes, the Exodus account says Moses was afraid, but, he clarifies, we should not think it was fear of Pharaoh; his leaving then was by faith, since he knew that God had called him to deliver the people. True, Moses’ abortive attempt to free the people had failed; and, yes, Moses became afraid, but his faith in God overcame his fear and he left to await the Lord. Following this reasoning, verse 27 likely refers to the earlier departure, when Moses was forty years old, and therefore serves as a fitting conclusion to what was said in verses 25 and 26.

Bruce: A difficulty may be felt here, since the Exodus narrative tells how Moses was afraid when he realized that his killing of the Egyptian whom he saw ill-treating a Hebrew was public knowledge. ‘Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh, and stayed in the land of Midian’ (Ex. 2:14ff.). Our author, who follows the biblical record so closely, certainly does not intend to contradict it, but rather to interpret it. The fear of Moses is not immediately connected with his flight in the Hebrew story, so that the author may have felt warranted by this in denying that the flight was due to fear. He was afraid, admittedly, but that was not why he left Egypt; his leaving Egypt was an act of faith. ‘By faith he left Egypt, and not because he feared the king’s anger.’ By his impulsive act of violence he had burned his boats as far as the court of Egypt was concerned; but he might have raised a slaves’ revolt there and then. By faith, however, he did nothing of the kind; he had the insight to see that God’s hour had not yet struck, and therefore he resolutely turned his back on the course he had begun to tread, and retraced his steps till he entered on the harder way. For it was harder to live for his people than it was to die for them.

Schreiner: After reading Exodus, the author’s comments on the incident are puzzling, for he says that Moses was not ‘afraid of the king’s anger,’ when it seems plain from Exodus that he was fearful. One way to solve the conundrum is if the leaving here refers to the later account of the exodus with all of Israel. On that occasion Moses left without fearing Pharaoh. Such a reading is possible. It is also possible the author refers to Moses’ departure after slaying the Egyptian (Ex. 2:15). The chronological order in which the writer recounts the events supports this

Hebrews – Lesson 29

interpretation. If one adopts this reading, it is difficult to believe the author was unaware of Moses' fear noted in Exodus 2:14, for he is well acquainted with the OT and often cites it verbatim. Indeed, there is some recognition of fear in Hebrews, for otherwise a reason for Moses' departure would be absent. If this interpretation is correct, perhaps the author suggests that Moses' fear was not the ultimate reality in his life. Yes, he feared dying, but at a deeper level he trusted that God would protect him and that his life would be preserved.

c) *The Invisible God*

Phillips: This interpretation of verse 27 cannot be certain, but we can be sure of the writer's point in this verse. Remember that this letter was written to Jewish Christians undergoing the presence or at least the threat of persecution. If the setting was Rome, and persecution from Caesar could be avoided by renouncing Christ and returning to Judaism, then there was a striking parallel between Moses' experience and their own. The writer of Hebrews is therefore using this example to make the point that fear must be met with faith. This is a strong theme in the Moses account. We are told his parents hid him because 'they were not afraid of the king's edict' (v. 23). Now Moses left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger but 'seeing him who is invisible.' Likewise, these Christians must not shrink back in the hour of their trial. In the face of Caesar's persecution, a king not at all unlike Pharaoh, they must stand firm in their faith in God. How was it that Moses stood firm, and that the Jewish Christians could expect to do the same? The answer is given at the end of verse 27: 'he endured as seeing him who is invisible.' This statement may be pointing to the burning bush, the awesome and pivotal event when Moses first saw God. The emphasis, however, seems to be on a continuing spiritual perception. This is fully in keeping with the point of this chapter, that faith is 'the conviction of things not seen' (v. 1). Moses was sure of God's promise, and therefore certain of the future. He left Egypt awaiting God's timing for that future to be made real. This is always how God's people triumph over threatening circumstances. The New Testament statement of this principle is given by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:7: 'We walk by faith, not by sight.'

Bruce: Some commentators, however, have preferred to see here a reference to Moses' departure from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. One argument in favor of this view is the statement that 'he persevered because he saw the Invisible One,' which might be understood as an allusion to his experience at the burning bush. Against it, however, is the consideration that a reference to the Exodus here, before the institution of the Passover in v. 28, would be out of its natural order, as well as the consideration that fear of the king's wrath would be irrelevant to this later departure from Egypt, since the king and his people alike then urged Moses and the Israelites to get out as quickly as they could. As for Moses' endurance, 'seeing the Invisible One,' this need not be taken as a specific allusion to the burning bush, but to the fact that Moses paid more attention to the invisible King of kings than to the king of Egypt. If faith is 'a conviction regarding things not seen,' it is first and foremost a conviction regarding the unseen God, as has been emphasized already in the affirmation that he who comes to God must believe that He is (v. 6). Our author probably means that Moses' lifelong vision of God was the secret of his faith and perseverance.

Hughes: Next, the author explains that Moses' forty-year separation from Egypt in the land of Midian was also a result of faith. Here again the author references the second half of his essential definition of faith in verse 1: 'Now faith is ... the conviction of things not seen'—*visual certitude*. The paradoxical phrase 'seeing Him who is invisible' does not mean he saw God with the naked eye. Faith's eye saw what the physical eye is incapable of seeing. But there did also

Hebrews – Lesson 29

come a time when God was so pleased with Moses' spiritual vision that He graced him with physical vision of a part of God's glory (cp. Ex. 33:18-23) and spoke to him face-to-face (cp. Ex. 33:9-11; Num. 12:7-8). I personally believe that 'seeing Him who is invisible' is *not* extraordinary. Rather, it is ordinary, normal Christianity. In fact, if you do not see the unseen, you are abnormal and below the divinely ordained norm.

Schreiner: He persevered through his trial as if he saw the one who can't be seen. The author desired the same for his readers. They should see that the unseen one was protecting them, that just as he preserved Moses from danger, so he will preserve them. The author doesn't promise that they will escape death as Moses did. He pledged instead that they will receive the final and better reward even if they surrender their lives.

MacArthur: Fear did not work on Moses, at least not when God called him out of Egypt. He knew he had an invisible but powerful means of support, 'as seeing Him who is unseen.' He knew that, no matter what happened, whatever he had to face, he would be held up and strengthened and rewarded.

2. Salvation (11:28)

²⁸*By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.*

Phillips: Exodus 4 to 10 shows Moses' bold confrontation with Egypt's king, in which he delivered one plague after another against unbelieving Pharaoh. Hebrews 11:28 points to the end of this drama, the tenth and final plague on the firstborn (Ex. 11:1, 4-5). Thus was celebrated the first Passover, which verse 28 refers to as an incident of great faith by Moses. God told Moses the Israelites were to sacrifice a lamb without defect and to spread its blood on the doorframe of their houses. The angel of death, seeing the blood, would pass over and the terrible plague would not visit them (Ex. 12:1-13). This was done under Moses' direction, and Israel was thus spared, while loud laments filled the homes of Egypt.

Hughes: The last of the ten plagues that secured Israel's exodus from Egypt was the destruction of all the male firstborn of both man and beast (cp. Ex. 12:12). But God provided a way of salvation of His people. They were directed through Moses to slaughter a lamb, take some hyssop and dip it in the lamb's blood, and daub the blood on the top and sides of the doorways of their homes. Homes so anointed would be under God's protection, and the destroyer would not be permitted to enter (cp. Ex. 12:21-23). So our text reads, 'By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.' The point is that Moses and Israel so believed God that they obeyed God to the letter. But what is even more remarkable is that the phrase 'by faith he kept the Passover' actually means that he *instituted* the Passover (perfect tense). Moses actually instituted the Passover 'as a statute forever' to be done year after year (Ex. 12:14)—which means that Moses never doubted in the least that the people would be delivered from Egypt! He had nothing to go on but God's word, but he believed it implicitly. Moses' massive faith saved Israel!

Schreiner: The Passover, of course, is one of the signature events in Israelite history (Ex. 12). The Lord put to death all the firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 11:5-6; 12:12, 29-30), but He 'passed over' and spared those who applied the blood of the lab to their house (Ex. 12:13, 22-23). The Passover celebration commemorates Israel's liberation from Egypt, signifying their day of freedom. Observing the Passover was an act of faith on Moses' part. He trusted God regarding

Hebrews – Lesson 29

both judgment and redemption. By trusting God and applying the Passover blood, the firstborn in Israel escaped destruction.

Bruce: It was by faith, too, that Moses instituted the Passover in accordance with the divine command. The Passover became a perpetual memorial for Israel of the last night that their forefathers spent in Egypt, when the angel of death passed through the land destroying the firstborn in every home, apart from those whose doorways were marked by the blood of the paschal lamb, for at the threshold of those dwellings the God of Israel Himself stood guard and prevented the destroyer from entering. Elsewhere in the New Testament Jesus is presented as the antitype of the paschal lamb (1 Cor. 5:7); of our author does not press this correspondence, it may be that he did not wish to detract from the correspondence between the death of Jesus and the annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

MacArthur: The tenth and last plague that God sent on the Egyptians was the death of all firstborn (Ex. 11:5). To protect the Israelites from this plague the Passover was instituted, in which a lamb's blood was sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of their houses (Ex. 12:7). Obviously the blood itself had no power to stave off the death angel, but sprinkling it as God had commanded was an act of faith and obedience and the blood was symbolic of Christ's sacrifice by which He conquered death for all who believe in Him. The people of Israel, including Moses, did not understand the full significance of the ceremony, but they knew it was part of God's plan. God required it and they obeyed. Moses accepted God's provision. Faith always accepts God's provision, no matter how strange and pointless it may seem to human understanding. When a believer accepts Jesus Christ by faith, he accepts God's provision for salvation.

Phillips: There are a number of ways we see Moses' faith at work here. First, the various plagues pitted the visible gods of Egypt against the invisible God who stood behind Moses. One after one, the Egyptian idols were disgraced in the plagues: Hapi, god of the Nile, Hekht, the frog, Amen Ra the sun god. These and the other Egyptian gods were mocked by the various plagues God sent: the plague of blood in the river, the plague of frogs, the plague of darkness, and so on. Moses feared not a god fashioned out of visible materials, but the unseen and true God. Moses believed the Word of the Lord, and he and his people were saved. But Pharaoh hardened his heart, and by his unbelief he and his people were broken. When we put verses 27 and 28 together, we see a clear contrast. Faith does not fear or listen to the world, to its powers and rulers, but faith does fear and listen to God, carefully obeying all his Word. Moses kept God's Word, just as he was told, and in this manner he and countless others were saved from the wrath of God. The same is true for everyone who hears God's Word and believes.

Phillips: Another way verse 29 speaks of great faith has to do with the blood of the lamb. The Israelites must have realized that the blood of a helpless animal was no protection, no real help against what was coming (cp. Heb.10:1-4). It was the eyes of faith that saw another, greater sacrifice, one that is necessary because of our sin and that protects us forever from the holy wrath of God. Regardless of how well Moses' generation understood the full meaning of the Passover lamb, the connection would have been quite clear to the original Christian readers of this letter. To them the point would be made that they must be saved the same way Moses was. God's wrath will come upon the city of man, and it will certainly fall on their godless oppressors. But if they wanted to escape the death that such judgment brings, they like Moses must be found secure under the blood of Jesus Christ. This being the case, faith's most important act is to lay hold of Christ as Lamb of God to remove our sin and preserve us against the coming of God's sure and holy wrath. It was this that Moses laid hold of by faith in the Passover lamb's blood.

Hebrews – Lesson 29

Therefore, if these Jewish Christians were to fall back on to Moses from Christ, from the new covenant back to the old, they would be abandoning that by which Moses himself was saved: his faith in Christ's work for salvation.

3. Deliverance (11:29)

²⁹*By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.*

Hughes: The final 'by faith' in our section is charitable to a fault if it is read without reference to Moses. The reason that verse 29 is overly charitable is that Israel did not show faith but held back in craven fear, decrying Moses (cp. Ex. 14:11-12). Their faithlessness is corroborated by the fact that all of them later died in the desert because of their lack of faith, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. Actually, it was Moses' faith that rallied them and secured their deliverance (cp. Ex. 14:13-14). This eventuated in Moses' preeminent display of faith when he stretched his hand out over the Red Sea, and the Lord drove back the waters with a strong east wind, and Israel passed through as on dry land (cp. Ex. 14:21-22). What a sublime fact we have here! One man's faith can be so authentic and effectual that it can elevate a whole people and secure their deliverance! In lesser ways we have seen this in the lives of such people as Martin Luther and John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards. This truth holds great promise for us. Vibrant authentic faith can elevate our families, churches, and communities. It is not too much to say that it can even be the vehicle for corporate deliverance! Never underestimate the power of real faith!

Phillips: Verse 29 concludes the account of Moses and his generation by speaking of their departure from the land of Egypt. At the Red Sea, the Israelites were horrified, and cried out against Moses that God was allowing their destruction. Then Moses gave his great reply, one that resounds all through the Bible, being echoed by the faithful in generations to come: 'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent' (Ex. 14:13-14). Given the fact that the Egyptians were bearing down from the rear, and that ahead of them lay the impassable Red Sea, this was quite a statement of faith. But Moses had learned that God's promise to deliver was certain of success. It was by faith that he exhorted the people, and God rewarded Moses with a fitting response (vv. 16-18). Here was the point of no return, and though the people needed prodding, they stepped forward into the divided sea. Like so many other believers, they saw no way of escape until God revealed it to the eyes of their faith. This is one of the great pictures of God's salvation, a salvation by grace alone that nonetheless requires us to step forward in saving faith. This is the only way anyone ever is saved: God makes a way of escape from the raging fury of His wrath.

Bruce: The crossing of the Red Sea—the 'Sea of Reeds,' as the Hebrew has it—was the immediate sequel to the keeping of the Passover. It might well have been cited as a further instance of Moses' faith, but here 'all those who came out of Egypt under Moses' leadership' (3:16) are associated with him in this act of faith. Nevertheless, it was Moses' faith that inspired them to move forward into the sea; they were full of fear and complaint as they saw the water before them and the pursuing Egyptian army overtaking them from the rear, until at Moses' command they advanced and saw 'the salvation of Yahweh' (Ex. 14:13). Why did the sea recede before the Israelites so they passed over dry-shod? At one level it was an act of God; at another level it could be ascribed to the east wind; but our author ascribes it to the Israelites' faith. It was

Hebrews – Lesson 29

nonetheless an act of God, who used the east wind to accomplish His saving purpose, but it was by faith that they appropriated the deliverance thus procured for them. And why were the Egyptians drowned when they tried in their turn to cross the sea? At one level this also was an act of God; at another level it could be ascribed to the abating of the east wind, coupled with the sinking of their chariots in the mud; but our author implies that they came to grief because they had no faith. The Israelites' faith on this occasion consisted in their willingness to go forward at God's word, although it seemed impossible to get across the sea. Moses assured them that their God would act on their behalf, and although they could not see how he would do so, they obeyed.

MacArthur: When Moses and his people got to the Red Sea, Pharaoh and his army were not far behind. From all they could see they were trapped; there was no escape. At first the people lost heart and complained sarcastically to Moses (Ex. 14:11). But they took heart again when Moses encouraged them (Ex. 14:13-14). For a while at least they trusted God, and 'by faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land.' They believed Moses' promise from God and started walking across the seabed as soon as the waters were parted. This took considerable faith, since the waters piled up on either side must have seemed terribly threatening. Had the waters returned too soon, Israel would have drowned instead of the Egyptians. The people had no guarantee except God's word that He would not change His mind or forget them. But His word was enough. For the faithful, God's word is always enough. Faith takes God at His word and is victorious. Presumption denies God's word and is destroyed. The Egyptians persistently hardened their hearts to the Lord and presumed to trust themselves, and they drowned. The test of faith is trusting God when all we have are His promises. When the waters are piled high all around us and problems and dangers are about to overwhelm us, this is when faith is tested, and when the Lord takes special pleasure in showing us His faithfulness, His love, and His power.

Schreiner: Israel was frightened when, upon fleeing from Egypt, they came face-to-face with the Red Sea (Ex. 14:3-13). The Egyptians regretted letting them go and now pursued them with vengeance. The Lord then dried up the sea, and Israel walked through on dry ground (Ex. 14:16, 21-22, 29). When the Egyptians followed after them, the waters surged over them, and they perished (Ex. 14:23-28). Israel risked its life going into the Red Sea, but they did so because they believed the Lord would rescue them and He would fight for them against the Egyptians (Ex. 14:14). The readers, like the Israelites and Moses (Ex. 14:15), were fearful, and yet if they would trust in the Lord, they would be delivered.

4. Example

Phillips: The key aspect of Moses' leadership, as with all Christian leadership, was his faith. What, after all, do Christian leaders seek but to inspire and instill faith in others? Moses' success as a godly leader consisted not only in his own salvation but in passing his faith on to others. Moses shows us the value of leadership that inspires faith. He was himself the recipient of that kind of inspiration. We saw this in Joseph, who ordered that his bones be taken up out of Egypt with the exodus, as an intentional reminder to his descendants of God's promise of deliverance. Moses remembered that promise, because when he left he took Joseph's bones; the patriarch's faith must have made a strong impression on him. Moses' parents also set a strong example of faith, and their impact was felt through the faith of their son, who led so many others out to their salvation.

Hebrews – Lesson 29

Phillips: Second, we should reflect on the way faith served as the antidote to fear and danger. This is the main point of these verses in Hebrews 11. We have already noted that this passage corresponds powerfully to the original readers' situation as they were facing persecution. Moses, like his parents, set an example of fearless courage in the face of worldly power. But the greatest encouragement comes in verse 29, where we see God intervening for the sake of His people. The destruction of the Egyptians, with the deliverance of Israel thereby, was a type and pledge of the victory and triumph that the church shall have over its anti-Christian adversaries.

Phillips: Third and finally, Moses' example makes very plain the difference between faith and unbelief. Unbelief fears the king, cringes before worldly powers, shrinks back from trouble and trial, caves in before pressure and opposition and danger. But the eyes of faith look upon the world with very different eyes. First of all, they see a God who is invisible. Others may not see God. Our employers may not see God, and may not consider the realities of God's justice in making decisions. Friends and neighbors and family members may not understand the choices Christians will make, simply because they are blind to the reality and glory of God. But faith sees God and delivers us from the fear of every other power.

Phillips: Faith allows us to look upon this world and see it the way God sees it. Ours is a world under judgment; as the destroyer of the firstborn once visited Egypt, so must God's holy wrath visit all the ungodly in the end. This is what the Red Sea waters symbolized: God's judgment pouring over His enemies, destroying them and casting them forever into a dark pit of death. The same waters that saved Israel destroyed the Egyptians, and this is what the New Testament says about the gospel, which it describes as a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16). To one it is a fragrance of life, but to another, the fragrance of death (2 Cor. 2:16). The Red Sea waters are an especially apt symbol of Christ's second coming, as were the waters of Noah's flood. Like the passing of God's people through the sea, Christ's coming will bring blessing on His people at the same time that it brings judgment on their enemies (cp. 2 Th. 1:7-10).

Phillips: What a difference faith makes! Now it means the difference between fear and courageous perseverance, the very thing the early Christians needed and we so badly need today. But it will mean even more on that great day to come when the heavens part as the Red Sea once did, and Jesus comes back to bring salvation to those who trusted in Him and judgment on the world that turned away.

For next time: Read Hebrews 11:30-40.