

A Superior Principle Faith – Part 2

Hebrews 11:17-29

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Basically, the writer of Hebrews is writing to Jews who are going back to Judaism. They were discouraged, and he's writing to them telling them, "No, you must go forward by faith. You must not go back. You must not turn around, you must go forward. You have to go forward living in the principle by faith." As I quoted in my prayer, that he'd quoted the book of Habakkuk where he said, "...the just shall live by his faith." All of Hebrews 11 is a picture of the just or the righteous and how they lived by faith. We, too, must live by our faith.

I don't want to get bogged down in the outline, but we're in the section of Hebrews 11:8-22, the patriarchs. We saw before the patriarchs, then we saw the patriarchs, and it actually goes until verse 22, but tonight we see several patriarchs. We see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. It's a great, great journey. We're also going to look at Moses after the patriarchs, the Moses that we know so much about in the Bible.

First of all we look at Abraham. Look at it with me, verses 17-19, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried,"—that word "tried" means he was tested—"offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,"—or only unique son, or literally, one of a kind in the Greek—"Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able,"—note that—"to raise him,"—that is, Isaac—"up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." The word "figure" there means in parable. Abraham is actually the paramount, classic example of faith in the Bible. He's called the "father of faith." He's the man of faith.

Abraham is mentioned twice in the book of Hebrews 11, and there's a lot of information about him. As we go through these individuals tonight, I'm going to give you where in the Old Testament you'll find the stories, it's mostly in the book of Genesis and some in the book of Exodus. This episode—Abraham offering Isaac—is taken from Genesis 22. Now, we all know the story that God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son. Abraham got a little impatient and took Hagar his handmaid and produced Ishmael, but the promise was not Ishmael, the promise was going to be Isaac. Abraham had to wait for God to fulfill and keep His promise.

It's interesting that Abraham is given to us in the Bible as an example of faith, but he had lapses of faith. Nobody's perfect. There were times when he lapsed in his faith—taking Hagar and producing the son. You know, God doesn't need our help, by the way. God says, "You're going to have a son." "Okay, God. I don't know how You're going to do this with Sarah and me, so maybe Hagar will work. We'll try that." God says, "No, you're messing things up." Actually all the Arab nations came from Ishmael. Abraham is trying to help God out but really created a disaster. God blessed Abraham, but today the Arab nations and Israel are two different nations battling it out, which goes all the way back to Abraham, Isaac, and his son Ishmael. The son of promise was Isaac, so finally God did unto Sarah as He had spoken, and Sarah conceived in

her old age, being dead really physically and Abraham as well, and she had a child whose name was Isaac.

Sarah didn't really believe it either. When God told her that you're going to have a son, she laughed, right? She said, "Ah hahaha, that's a funny joke, God." God said, "No, you're going to have a son, and because you laughed, you're going to name him Isaac," which means laughter. Every time they called his name, it was a reminder to her that she laughed about this boy, this child that she thought was impossible. It's so wonderful that we learn in the Bible that God specializes in things thought impossible, right? God does what no one else can do. The Bible tells us that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. God is omnipotent, so don't laugh about what God has promised. He will keep His promise as He has spoken.

Isaac finally came. Hagar had to be sent out with Ishmael, but years later when Isaac was older, probably a teenager or young adult male, God came, Genesis 22, to Abraham and it says, "...that God did tempt,"—test—"Abraham." In the King James Bible, don't let it confuse you, it says "tempt," but the word actually is not what we call temptation to sin. It would be better translated "test." It's the same word that's used for either temptation or test, but God does not tempt anyone with evil. He isn't a tempter—He cannot be tempted nor does He tempt anyone. The idea here in our text, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried,"—the word there means "tested," again a test. The point I want to make, and I'll come back to it in a minute, is that God tests our faith to prove its worth.

If you're a Christian, God will put you through a test. We sometimes call it a trial. Have you ever heard of a trial? If you're a believer, your faith must be tried and tested to prove its worth; but it also will strengthen your faith and cause it to grow, and out of that will come blessings. We want to avoid trials and testings. We want everything to be smooth sailing, but our faith won't grow unless it's tested; and it cannot be trusted if it cannot be tested as well. So, like Abraham, our faith will be tested.

What God did was ask Abraham, and this is one of the amazing stories of the Bible, to offer up his son, Isaac, on a mountain that He would show him. Can you imagine? God finally gave him the promised son, and He promised that through this son all the nations of the earth will be blessed, nations would come out of his son, and then how confusing that would be to Abraham because God said, "Now I want you to take him and offer him on a mountain." Now, He would show him where to go. It would end up being Mount Moriah, which, believe it or not, is modern day Mount Calvary, the spot where Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem. This story becomes a marvelous picture or type of, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," so God the Father asked Abraham to offer his only son.

Notice, it's Isaac, verse 17, "...and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." That phrase is actually a reference to the one of a kind or unique. It wasn't his only son, he had Ishmael and other sons at this time, but it was the unique son. It was the special son, the chosen one, the son of promise. How confusing that could be. So many times

God tests and tries us, and we do not understand what He's trying to accomplish. It's one of the reasons why when you're being tested, pray (James 1) for wisdom so that you can apply the lessons God wants you to learn in the trials and testings of life. Don't run from your trials, embrace them, but use them to grow in wisdom and trusting the Lord.

God tested or tried Abraham, "...Take now thy son." Early in the morning, with no delay, the story goes, Genesis 22, he saddled the donkey, got the wood and the knife, and took Isaac. Do you wonder, I do, what he might've told Sarah when they left? "Uh, sweetheart, I hate to break this to you, but I'm going to go offer our son on the mountain." My guess is he didn't tell her what they were going to do. It would've been very difficult to do that, but obedience was not delayed. Delayed obedience is disobedience. In the text, it would take all night, we could turn back to Genesis, read all the stories from the text here in Hebrews, and that would be fun to do when we do an in-depth series in it; but they got up early the next morning, saddled the donkey, and journeyed until God showed him the actual mountain that he should be offered upon.

Notice, verse 18, "Of whom,"—referring to Isaac—"it was said,"—God's promise—"That in Isaac shall thy seed be called," what seemed to be an issue or a problem, "I don't know how God's going to work this out. You gave me this son, You promised that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed, and now You're telling me to offer him on a mountain that You will show me." Then, notice it says, "Accounting,"—this is what's going through Abraham's mind and heart in verse 19. This is a commentary on Genesis 22 that we get nowhere else in the Bible. Abraham was thinking, "that God was able,"—and I've underlined that phrase in my Bible—"to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure,"—or a type. The fact that he and Sarah were dead, if God could give them this son, and God promised through this son that all the nations of the world would be blessed, this was the chosen seed, and now You're asking me to sacrifice him on a mountain, then God, You've got a problem. You're going to have to raise him from the dead. Abraham's faith was so great that he actually believed that God could raise his son from the dead.

Just a little bit more about that story before we move on. In the book of Genesis in the Bible, there are three words that appear in the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac that appear for the first time in all of Scripture. Those three words are: love, worship, and obey. In the context of a father offering his son as a sacrifice, you find the first reference to love, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest,"—it's the first time you find the word "love." Then, when Abraham was journeying with his son Isaac, they came to the mountain and took the wood and the knife and started up the mountain. Isaac turned to his father, he wasn't quite aware of what was going on either it seems, and said, "Father, here's the wood, here's the fire, here's the knife, but where's the sacrifice?" Can you imagine how painful that must've been for Abraham to be looking into the face of his promised son? He's asking, "Where's the sacrifice?" What did Abraham say? "God will provide himself a sacrifice."

There are two ways to interpret that statement, and I think they're both biblical, 1) God will provide the sacrifice, which was God providing the ram instead of Isaac, which is a picture of substitution; 2) God Himself will be the substitute. God will provide Himself a substitute. The

grammar of that verse could be interpreted either way—God will provide the substitute or God Himself will be the substitute. Both of those are biblical for God was in Christ, right?, reconciling the world unto Himself.

You know the story is they got up on top of the mountain and Isaac was placed on the altar. As much as it pained him, Abraham believed God was able to raise him from the dead, lifted the knife, actually. Now, there's a lot of speculation as to how old Isaac was. Many good Bible scholars feel that he was old enough to probably overpower his father, so he willingly, voluntarily gave himself on that altar. Can you imagine lying there, your dad is raising a knife over you about ready to sacrifice you? God then spoke from heaven and stopped him, "Abraham, Abraham, look into the bushes behind you," he turned, and in the bush behind him there was a ram, "take Isaac off the altar, take the ram, and put him in Isaac's place. For now I know and I see that you love Me and that you're not willing to withhold even your own son." God was testing Abraham to see if he would be obedient and if he loved Him enough to even offer his own son; and out of that episode, blessings came.

Some people are bothered by that story, but God knew what He was going to do all the time that that ram, and it wasn't a flock of sheep it was only one ram, just what was needed. God provided. When Abraham told Isaac, "God will provide himself a sacrifice," when he used the word "provide," he used the word jirah. It's the idea of Jehovah Jirah, God will provide. Maybe you've heard that compound name for God—Jehovah Jirah—which literally means, by the way, God sees. It's come to mean God provides, but the phrase jirah literally means God sees, but where there's God vision, there's always God provision. That's why sometimes, when you're going through a trial, all you need to say is, "Lord, I know You see. I know You understand, and I rest in Your wisdom," because God sees, God provides—Jehovah Jirah. "God will provide himself a sacrifice," and God did that indeed.

Then, God said to Abraham, "...in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed...because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son," I'm going to bless you abundantly. God brings blessing even from the trials and the testings of our own lives. God was able to raise him up even from the dead, that was what Abraham was thinking, but God had another plan.

When we're going through a trial, let me give you some things to remember. First, expect that God will allow them. If you're a true child of God, you will be tried and tested. There's no way to avoid that, and it will cause you to grow. Secondly, when your faith is being tried and tested, focus on God's promises and power not explanations. Abraham didn't say, "Well, I'll go, but You've gotta tell me how You're going to do this. I'm not going to saddle the donkey and take off to this place You want me to offer Isaac until You tell me what You're going to do." You know, God very rarely explains to us why He's doing what He's doing in our lives, so don't look for explanations, just rest in His promises that, "I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you," and that God will provide.

Thirdly, depend on God's provision, as we saw Jehovah Jirah, God will provide. God provides

exactly what we need. Every one of these examples of faith in Hebrews 11, whatever God called them to do, God gave them the strength and the power and the ability to do it, but they had to yield themselves in obedience, God's provision. Fourthly, when your faith is being tried and tested, look forward to what God has in store for you by way of blessing. Look forward to the fruit and the blessings that come out of that. By the way, check out James. The first section of chapter 1 talks about that we should rejoice when we're tried and tested because out of it brings blessings to our lives. The worship, the love, and the obey are all found in that blessed story, and it's a picture of how we should respond to God—we should love God, worship God, and obey God. God said, "Because you obeyed My voice, I will bless you abundantly."

Now, we move to the second picture of the person of faith, that is, the patriarch Isaac, verse 21. Let's read to the end of the chapter. We have Isaac in verse 20. It says, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." There's not a lot said in the text of Hebrews, but go back with me to the example of Isaac.

Abraham has Isaac, now Isaac had Jacob and Esau. You know the story about Jacob and Esau, when they were born, how Jacob came out holding Esau's heel; and they were two different kind of characters altogether—Esau was red, hairy, a man of the outdoors, a rough man's man; Jacob was more refined, some claim he was a momma's boy, I don't know about that, but he liked to stay home and cook muffins with his mom and help clean the tent and things like that. They're an interesting pair. They came out of the womb at the same time, but Esau came out first and Jacob came out holding his heel and is known as the "heel-catcher" or "supplanter." "By faith, Isaac,"—the focus is Isaac—"blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." Most likely, this is a reference to the story in Genesis 27.

Jacob had already stolen the birthright from his brother Esau. Remember he was out hunting, which was what he was into, and came home very hungry, very famished. Jacob (probably had a little apron on) was cooking in the kitchen making some soup and purposely had the fan on blowing toward Esau's way. Esau was hungry SNIFF! and smelled the soup and said, "Oh wow! Gimme some of that soup!" Jacob said, "No, not unless you give me your birthright." Esau said, "What good is my birthright if I'm dead. I'm starving to death!" A typical guy, you know, he hadn't eaten for a couple of hours. Jacob said, "Give me your birthright." "Okay, you can have my birthright," because Esau was the older, but in God's economy, God's plan, even though Jacob had to connive and scheme to get it, God's plan was for Jacob to be the one who got the blessing, so he stole his birthright.

This story is when he told his son Esau, he said, "I'm not going to live much longer," and his eyesight was really bad at this time, verse 20, I'm just relating the story, he couldn't see very well and was ready to die, and said to Esau, "Would you go get that real savory venison meat for me? Go out hunting and get one of those and do that special little barbecue. Put that favorite barbecue sauce on it that I like so much; and when you do that, I'll eat it and bless you."

His wife, Rebekah, heard about this and called Jacob and said, "Listen, your father is about ready to give the blessing to Esau, so do what I tell you and this is what we're going to do. I want you to go get one of the goats in the field, and I'm going to fix it just like your dad likes. Then, you're going to go in before your brother, fool your dad that you're Esau, and he's going to bless you." Jacob said, "Well, how's that gonna work? I know his eyesight is getting bad, but he's going to touch me and know that I'm not hairy like my brother Esau." He must've been one hairy dude because his mom said, "Well, we'll take the skin and the fur of the goat that you kill and put it on your arms and the back of your neck so that when your dad touches you, he'll think it's Esau." Then, he put on Esau's clothes so that he would smell like his brother.

You know the story, it's kind of fascinating how he went in and said, "Father, here am I." He said, "Who is it?" "I'm Esau, your son." It was really Jacob tricking his father, and his father said, "Well, you have the voice of Jacob, but you smell like Esau," which is the smell of the field. That's a biblical cologne that would be the smell of the field. I don't know if that's good or bad. He gave him the meat. His dad ate the meat, thought it was wonderful, and said, "Come here, my son," and kissed him. He felt him and said, "This is my son," and pronounced the blessing on Jacob. Jacob came out of the tent just in time to avoid running into his brother Esau.

His brother Esau came in after him and said, "Father, here I am. I've got the venison you wanted." His father started to shake and tremble, "Who are you?" He said, "I'm Esau, your firstborn." He said, "Well, then, who was that that just ripped me off? Who is that who just deceived me?" They realized it was Jacob, his brother, and Esau got so angry and actually vowed that he would kill his brother. His mother heard that and said, "Listen, you've gotta get outta here. You have to run down to the land of my family and stay with my brother Laban." She actually feigned another story to Isaac and said, "If my son Jacob marries one of the girls from this area, it's going to break my heart, so I want him to go back to the land of my ancestors and find himself a wife," so he sent him back. What was intended to be just a few months, ended up being twenty years. It's really sad because of the hostility that existed between Jacob and Esau.

Again, I just commend you, Genesis 27, read the story and on even into Genesis 28, it was, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come," those two things he did it by faith, and it was about the future. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," that God would bless you. When Esau found out that his brother had stolen not only his birthright but the blessing, he cried and wailed and said, "Father, bless me. Bless even me. Is there no blessing for me?" He said, "I just gave the blessing to your brother, and you're going to have to serve him." He did finally bless Esau as well, so both the boys, but Jacob got the primary blessing that he would be the leader and Esau would be the one who would serve his younger brother.

The next episode is in verse 21, "By faith Jacob." We read about Jacob and his conniving and scheming in verse 20, but he got the blessing, now Jacob is also known as Israel. He's the individual whose name was changed from Jacob to Israel. He's the one that when he came back to meet his brother Esau was afraid his brother was going to kill him. The night before, he

was praying by the brook Jabbok, and an angel of the Lord, which I believe is a Christophany, Christ appearing, started wrestling with him. It says they wrestled from the time the sun went down to the time the sun came up, all night long.

Jacob was asking this angel of the Lord, which I think is Christ, "Bless me." The angel said, "Let me go, the sun's going to come up." "I won't let you go unless you bless me." Do you know what the blessing was? I love this story. It's one of my favorites. It was that the angel of the Lord, which was the Lord, touched his leg, his thigh, and crippled him. He prays to the Lord, "Bless me," and He said, "Okay, here it goes. You're crippled." From that day on, Jacob limped. He had a limp. F.B. Meyer called it the crippling that crowns. When Esau saw his brother Jacob, all the cunning and the craft and the self-efforts had gone from his countenance, he was humbled and broken; and his name was changed from Jacob, which is heel catcher or supplanter, to Israel, which means governed or controlled by God. It's a beautiful story of wrestling with this angel. I did it as one of my sermons when I did the "Night Scenes of the Bible," Jacob wrestling with the angel who was the Lord.

Again, verse 21, "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." His son, Joseph, who had gone through so many trials, so many hardships—prison, Mrs. Potiphar, his brothers hated and rejected him—it says that he, "...blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped,"—all of the hardships, the difficulties, all the trials that he went through didn't embitter or harden him toward God. He still was blessing his sons and his grandsons, "...and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

This story is recorded in Genesis 48. The story goes that Joseph had these two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob wanted them as his boys, they would become two of the twelve tribes of Israel, so he wanted to bless them. Manasseh was the oldest, Ephraim was the youngest. When Joseph brought his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to his father Jacob to bless them, his eyes were dim and he couldn't see very well, he put Ephraim on his right hand and Manasseh on his left hand and brought them up to his dad so when his dad reached out his right hand, that is, Jacob, he would place it on Manasseh and his left hand would be on Ephraim, and he would bless the oldest and then the youngest.

If you know the story, Jacob crossed his arms and switched the order around and put his right hand on Ephraim, which was the younger, and put his left hand on the older. Joseph saw what he was doing and said, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Dad, you've got it wrong," and I love it, he says, "I know, my son. I know, my son. Leave me alone," a classic father-son kind of relationship. "Dad, you're messing up. You're not doing it right." "No, no, I know what I'm doing," which is interesting because Joseph himself was the younger son of the other brothers, who became the twelve tribes of Israel, yet God chose and used him. As you read Genesis 48, Jacob blessed them and pronounced the future blessings upon these two boys, Ephraim and Manasseh. It's marvelous that God's ways are not our ways; God's ways are beyond our ways, "...and his ways past finding out." Jacob blessed the younger over the elder, but he did it by faith.

Verse 22, “By faith Joseph.” Notice in verse 17, “By faith Abraham,” verse 20, “By faith Isaac,” verse 21, “By faith Jacob,” and now, the fourth person in the patriarchs, “By faith Joseph, when he died,”—Joseph died at 110 years of age. Remember Joseph was sold by his brothers in Egypt, right? He was hired by Potiphar and was put in prison. Then, God took him out of prison and exalted him second to Pharaoh and was a man of great position and power. The story goes later that Jacob and his other sons had to come to Egypt to get grain. Finally, the land was going to be famished for so long that Joseph said, “Come here. Bring my father here, and I will provide for them and take care of them.” They were all there in the land of Egypt. So, Joseph, “...when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

What Joseph wanted them to do was he knew that in faith God promised the land of Canaan so he said, “When you guys leave Egypt,” he knew that they, as slaves, would be released two hundred years before it took place. “I’m gonna die. God’s going to visit you, and God is going to take you out. You’re going to be free. God is going to keep His promise; God is going to fulfill His promise to take you back into the land, so don’t leave me here. Take my bones with you.” For two hundred years, they had him in a coffin waiting, generation after generation, that when we leave Egypt, Joseph’s bones go with us. He said, “I know that’s going to happen,” he prophesied that, and it was done, “by faith,”—he—“...gave the commandment concerning his bones.”

Someone said, “God spoke to them through the coffin for those two hundred years of past provision in Joseph and their future promise of a land that God had given them.” Joshua buried his bones when they came into the land of promise, Joshua 24:32, in the land of Shechem. I think it’s pretty cool that in the conquest of the land of promise, they had to carry Joseph’s bones with them. It reminded them of God’s promise and God’s provision as they went into the land.

Now, we have the story of Moses, verses 23-29. “By faith Moses,—this is one of the longest sections of anyone in Hebrews 11—“when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son Pharaoh’s daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying,”—tried—“to do were drowned.”

I won’t spend too much time on this because we’ve got to wrap it up, and we’ll go back over some next week. I want to point some things out. Notice verse 23, “By faith Moses,” then verse 24, “By faith Moses,” and verse 27, “By faith he forsook,” and verse 28, “Through faith he kept,” verse 29, “By faith they passed through.” Notice those references. There’s five statements

about Moses' faith and the evidence of that faith manifested in his story. This is kind of a flyover, a synopsis, of the life of Moses. The life of Moses comes in three forty-year periods: the first forty years in Egypt, the second forty years in the wilderness, and the third forty years in the wilderness of Canaan leading the people of God into the Promised Land to the borders of the Promised Land, so three sets of forty.

Go back with me real quickly, and let's look at Moses. "By faith Moses,"—make a note that verse 23 is actually not Moses' faith because he was just born, he's a baby, but it's the faith of his parents—"when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." I've always loved this verse because faith starts with the parents, and if you want to have children that love, serve, and follow the Lord, then you as a father and a mother need to be examples to your children as husband and wife, fathers and mothers, of faith. Someone said that faith is first taught in the home, so faith for school was Moses.

You know the story of when Moses, "...when he was born, was hid three months of his parents." At that time in Egypt, Pharaoh had given a command that all the boy babies born of the Israelites were to be—what?—thrown in the Nile River. You think we live in a dark time, they lived in a very dark time. Can you imagine our Governor passing a law that every male baby born had to be put to death and thrown into the river? Moses was born, and they did not fear the wrath of the king or the king's edict. They trusted the Lord, and they hid Moses for three months. They probably had Egyptian spies roaming around the towns of the Israelites looking and listening for babies to cry.

It's kind of hard to keep a baby from crying for three months, and Moses was getting older, maybe louder and more vocal, so they made a little basket—you know the story of Moses—he wasn't really Moses yet, but they made this little basket and lined it with pitch, a little boat for Moses, and they put baby Moses in the basket and put it on the Nile River. The Princess of Egypt, Pharaoh's daughter, came down with her maidens to bathe. When the baby cried, she sent the maids to get the basket to bring the baby. She opened up the basket and there was baby Moses. She's the one that gave him the name Moses. She said, "Because I've drawn him out of the river." It means to be drawn out.

Some stories have it, it's not biblical, that when the Princess was right there ready to take her bath in the Nile, an angel came and pinched baby Moses making him cry at just the right time so that she would hear it and pierce her heart. She realized it was one of the Hebrew babies and told his sister Miriam, who ran up and said, "Would you like me to find a woman to nurse the baby for you?" She was watching her brother in the basket. She said, "Yes!" So Miriam ran back and got her mother, Jochebed, and said, "The Princess found baby Moses and needs a Hebrew woman to nurse it for her, so she's calling for someone, and I went to get you." She brought her back, and his mother was hired by the Princess to nurse the baby Moses. Most likely, for two years (some say three years old, Hebrew women would nurse their children) she got paid to nurse her own baby. That's a pretty good setup, right?, "Can you take care of Moses?"

Those first two or three years Jochebed instilled in Moses the fear of the Lord and told him Jehovah is God, you're a Hebrew, and just fed him with all that information so that when he went to the court of Pharaoh and was trained in all the schools of Egypt, he realized that, "I'm a Hebrew," and would one day identify with God's people, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." There's just a lot of information that's not here in the book of Hebrews. You'd have to go back and read the story in Exodus 1-2 to get the background.

So, the child was hidden, "...he was a proper child," verse 23, which actually means that he had a beautiful countenance. He was beautiful to look upon, and that's what Exodus says. I know that every parent thinks their baby is beautiful, but this was a real case that he was so beautiful that it was an evident sign to them that there was something special about this baby, and I have no doubt but what they knew that he was to be the promised deliverer from the slavery in Egypt.

Notice it says, "...and they were not afraid of the king's commandment," so their faith led them to disobey and defy Egypt and its king's laws. I love that. Faith in God should lead us to fear God more than man, to fear God more than what man may do to you, to fear God more than what government may do to you. When God's laws contradict the government's laws, we must obey God rather than man. Amen? So, they took action. He was saved by the parents' faith. How marvelous that is!

The second, "By faith,"—verse 24—"when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,"—he refused position. He could have been the Prince of Egypt. Some feel he could've actually taken the throne of Pharaoh, so he gave up that worldly position. Then, he chose, verse 25, and also gave up pleasures, "...to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin,"—which are only—"for a season." This is where the Bible says that sin is pleasurable, but only for a season. So, he refused, he chose, he refused position, he refused pleasures. He could've enjoyed the wining and dining and all the benefits of being the Prince of Egypt, and, verse 26, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect,"—he looked away from—"unto the recompense of the reward." He looked away from the earthly to the eternal and heavenly. Note these three things: he refused position, verse 24; he refused pleasures, verse 25; and he refused the promise of riches, verse 26. He chose to identify, "...with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Verse 27 says, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." When he was forty years old in Egypt, he went down to the Hebrews to check out what was going on with them. He witnessed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave—that's when he identified with the people of God—and defended the Hebrew slave and killed the Egyptian and buried him. It says, "...not fearing the wrath of the king," but he knew that it was time for him to get out of town. The next day after that, there were two Hebrews fighting and arguing. He said, "You guys shouldn't do that, you're brothers." They despised Moses and said, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Are you going to kill us like you did that Egyptian yesterday?" Moses realized that he was in danger, so he fled to the

land of Midian, where he would be there for forty years. When Moses was eighty years old, God would then speak to him from the burning bush and send him back to Egypt to command Pharaoh to let God's people go. There's kind of an overview of his life into three compartments.

Notice it says, verse 24, "...he...refused,"—I underlined the word "refused." He chose, verse 25, "...to suffer affliction...than enjoy pleasures of sin for a season," and then verse 26, "Esteeming,"—he valued—"the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward,"—which was eternal. Verse 27, "By faith he forsook Egypt,"—so he refused, he chose, he esteemed, he forsook Egypt—"not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured,"—notice at the end of verse 27—"as seeing him who is invisible." How do you see, "...him who is invisible"? The answer is by faith, through the eyes of faith.

Verse 28, "Through faith he kept the passover," he's 80-years-old, back in Egypt, and God brought His wrath upon the Egyptians, and the final plague was, "...the passover," verse 28. By faith God instructed him to slay the lamb, put the blood on the houses, the death angel would passover, and he had to do that all by faith. The Egyptians were probably mocking him, "What're you doing putting blood on your doorpost and on your house?" But he believed God's warning and, "...he kept the passover,"—verse 28—"and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." That was the last leg that caused Pharaoh to let God's people go, Exodus 12.

The last one, verse 29, "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians,"—tried to do it and what happened to them?—"were drowned." Again, when they came out of Egypt in the Passover, they came to the Red Sea and were bound there by the sea and the mountains. There was nowhere to go, and the Egyptian army was fast approaching them, right? The people of God were freaking out, "Moses, do something! What're we gonna do?" Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord said, "Just stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Lift your rod." He lifted up his rod, and God actually brought this strong wind and parted the Red Sea.

Just a quick footnote, too, the writer of Hebrews believed—as we should—that this was an actual historical event. There's no indication that this was myth or fairy tale or make believe. It was an actual historic event. He believed in the historicity of these stories in the Old Testament. God miraculously parted the waters, and then the people walked across by faith.

You've seen the movie The Ten Commandments, Hollywood's production of it and so forth. I've always wondered what it must've looked like to see the wall of water on either side, walking across that Red Sea, and to see the mighty powerful hand of God deliver them. When they got through, Miriam grabbed her tambourine, and they were rejoicing, dancing, and celebrating. The Egyptians started to follow after them. They looked up and saw the Egyptians and the chariots coming, "Oh no! What's going to happen?" But again, Moses lifted up his rod and the water came down and wiped out all the Egyptians, destroying them. Again, a lot of people try to explain away this miracle, but I think it's best to just believe that all things are possible with

God. Amen? God made a way.

Someone said, "God brought them out of Egypt, God took them through the Red Sea, and God will bring them into the Promised Land." You know, the same things are true of us—God brings us out of Egypt, God takes us through the trials and testings of life, and one day God will bring us into heaven's shores. Amen?