

## CLOUD OF WITNESSES | 08:: Moses + His Parents

**PRAYER:** By now, I'm sure you've got the rhythm down pat. You may have even prayed already and taken time to slow down and focus. Good for you! If you haven't, that's ok. Go ahead and take time for that now.

If you're just joining us, well, 1.) I'd say stop here and go back to the first post of this series, "Faith in Action" and start there. But 2.) wherever you decide to start, take a second to pause, thank Jesus for this time with Him, and ask Him to meet you where you are and reveal something personal to your life from your time together today.

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As we continue down the line of great cheerleaders in the faith, today we start to look at the life of one of the most famous patriarchs in the Old Testament: Moses. The Lord did so much through Moses' faith that we will be camping out for *three* posts looking at several seasons in his life. It's no surprise, then, that the Hebrew's writer also had a lot to say about Moses.

READ HEBREWS 11: 23-27. MAKE A BULLET LIST IN YOUR JOURNAL OF THE DIFFERENT POINTS THE AUTHOR MAKES ABOUT MOSES AND HIS PARENTS.

That's a lot to unpack, but we will go through it one at a time. Open your Bible to the 2nd book, Exodus. Let's see how the story of God and the Israelites continues after Joseph's story.

READ EXODUS 1. WHAT HAPPENED IN EGYPT IN THE TIME AFTER JOSEPH PASSED AWAY?

Things definitely took a turn for the worst, that is for sure! We see in this passage that Israel continued to stay in Egypt and blossomed from an extended family of 70 to a full-on Hebrew people group. This is the first time we hear Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's family referred to as "the Israelites." The Lord had been faithful to His promise and they were flourishing.



Several years had passed from the end of Genesis to the start of Exodus (several *hundred* years if you ask some scholars), enough time that the current pharaoh didn't know anything about Joseph or his contributions to the Egyptian people. What is worse is that Pharaoh felt threatened by the Israelites' growing population and not only forced them into slavery, but also devised a plan that he thought would eventually end the Hebrew race. On a spiritual level, Satan was bound and determined to thwart God's plans of salvation. He is always ready to "steal, kill, and destroy" (John 10:10). But we've seen already that God *always* gets what He wants and *always* has a plan, so let's see how that plays out.

## READ EXODUS 2. USING YOUR BACK-KNOWLEDGE OF MOSES, HOW IS GOD'S PLAN STARTING TO UNFOLD?

The author mentions in Hebrews 11:23 that Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because *by faith*, they saw he was "no ordinary child." This isn't like they were thinking "Awww! Look at 'im! He's so precious! We have to save him." They saved him *out of faith*. Since faith is trusting God's leadership, this would imply that God shared with them that He had a plan for Moses or at the very least impressed upon them to save the baby.<sup>1</sup> Verse 23 also notes that they were not afraid of the King's decree. This shows that their faith in God outweighed any fear that they had, because this was certainly a scary time but, they "did the thing" anyway.

Have you ever been afraid of doing the right thing? Maybe you've been in a situation where you feel pressure from friends or peers to go against your convictions. When you face those moments, stand strong in the Lord!

## TURN JUST PAST THE MIDDLE OF YOUR BIBLE AND READ PROVERBS 1:10-16. THEN TURN TO THE NEW TESTAMENT AND READ ROMANS 12:1-2. WHAT DO THESE VERSES SAY ABOUT PEER PRESSURE?

Proverbs 1:10-16 gives a great picture of peer pressure. We're not the only ones to have felt its effects or to have been tempted to give into peoples' demands. But the Bible stands firm – do not go their way. They are quick to sin and we are called to a higher standard.

I love how the Message paraphrase puts Romans 12:1-2:

*"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-[school], and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering... Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that*



*you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, [and] develops well-formed maturity in you."*

The commentary in my Study Bible says, "Paul goes into detail [in this chapter] to show that Jesus Christ is to be Lord of every area of life... God demands our action as well as our believing and thinking. Faith expresses itself in obedience."<sup>2</sup> The idea of obedience to God is woven throughout the Bible. And we've gotten no shortage of life lessons in this series about obeying God. Let that sink in. And let these truths encourage you on a Monday, or in the middle of the week, at sports practice or in the dance studio, at home or at a friend's house. Jesus gave His life for us. Those of us who have accepted His gift owe it to God to obey Him. And with the Holy Spirit in our hearts, our spirits long to obey Him, so walk in the Spirit!

Now that we've established that God has commanded that we do not follow in the world's sinful path, what happens when we don't give in? What if people make fun of us? What if they try to harm us? What if they push harder?

## FIND AND READ PROVERBS 29:25, 1 PETER 3:13-17, AND ROMANS 8:31. FILL IN THE CHART BELOW (OR MAKE ONE IN YOUR JOURNAL) WITH THE ASSURANCES WE HAVE FROM THE LORD:

VERSES	THE LORD'S ASSURANCES
Proverbs 29:25	
1 Peter 3:13-17	
Romans 8:31	

Through these verses, we can be assured that if we decide to be resolute in our convictions and follow what God says is right vs. what the world would tell us is ok to do, God will keep us safe. If God, who is over everything and more powerful than anyone is for us, than who can actually be against us that matters in a fight? Because He could defeat them! And looking at 1 Peter (and thinking back to one of the lessons in the last post) we see that if we follow God and suffer because of it, we will be blessed even then. So, be encouraged to stand strong! Like everything else we've discussed in this series, take your concerns to the Lord. Tell Him how you feel and ask for His help as you navigate through the situation. He will be your guide.

Before we move on, let's look at the life of one person who, when faced with an enemy,



did everything we just talked about.

## READ PSALM 56. WHAT DID DAVID DO WHEN HE FELT ATTACKED?

David didn't just *feel* attacked, he was *being attacked* by some pretty ruthless people. The Psalm says his enemies were "twisting his words" and they were scheming to ruin him. But he trusted in the Lord, as all of our heroes in the faith have done. And after he resolved to trust in God and remembered that God would fight for him, what did he conclude? "What can man do to me!?" If you know Jesus, you serve a God who is so much bigger than any person you'll come in contact with – no matter how mean or conniving.

Looking back to Exodus 2, we read a very famous story of how Moses landed in Pharaoh's palace. It's easy to read this now and think everything just fell into place so easily, but put yourself in these ladies' shoes. We don't have a lot of details, but it's possible that the family strategically planned to place Moses in the water at just the right time, as Pharaoh's daughter was about to bathe, hoping she would find him. It's also possible they didn't plan anything and just hoped that he would float as far as he needed to reach safety.

And think about Miriam, Moses' sister, as she hid in the reeds. She must have been filled with the strength of the Lord to speak with someone "famous" and powerful like Pharaoh's daughter, whom most likely she didn't know, and offer to find a nurse maid. God's provision in these moments was immense! Just another story to put on the list that when God says to do something, He provides everything you need for His plan to succeed. You can trust He is *in control*, girlfriend! And how kind of the Lord was it to give Moses back to his mom for a little while longer and have Pharaoh's daughter *pay her* to take care of her own child?!

Studies of ancient "wet nurses" (women, like Moses' mom who were hired to nurse a baby until they were older) show that they usually had the baby until they were two or three years old.<sup>3</sup> So, Moses moved to Pharaoh's palace as a toddler and became the "Prince of Egypt" ... like the animated movie we all know and love. Is that still a thing? It was in the 90's... anyway...

If you read Acts 7 in the New Testament, Stephen is preaching to a group of people, recounting the story of Moses and their other ancestors. Verse 22 says, "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action." This gives us a good picture that Moses was treated like a true son of Pharaoh. He had all the education, he had all the wealth and possessions, he had prestige in the community, he fit in with the royal family, he was powerful... he had it all. But what does Hebrews 11 say about him?



## READ HEBREWS 11:24-27 AGAIN. WHAT DID MOSES DO WITH HIS STATUS AS "PRINCE OF EGYPT"? WHY?

This passage gives (4) good points about Moses and we'll walk through each one step-by-step, but first, let's see how this plays out.

## READ EXODUS 2:11-15 AND ACTS 7:23-29. WHAT HAPPENED? AND WHY, ACCORDING TO ACTS 7, DID MOSES DO WHAT HE DID?

We see here that Moses stepped into a fight and saved a Hebrew slave from an Egyptian. Hebrews 11:24-25 shows us that Moses evidently knew he was a Hebrew, adopted into Pharaoh's family, and was discontent with that. Maybe he walked around town and saw the injustice toward the Hebrew people and his heart ached for them, knowing that he was truly one of them, and he grew to be fed-up. We don't have a lot of information on Moses' mindset, but Acts 7:25 makes it clear that he felt a calling on his life from God to save the Hebrews.

## LET'S LOOK AT HEBREWS 11 AGAIN. LIST IN YOUR JOURNAL WHAT VERSE 25 SAYS ABOUT MOSES.

You should have two parts in your answer. The first part is: *He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God.* This goes back to what we've been saying all along: he had it all, but chose to leave his life as a "royal" and join his own people - the people who were being mistreated by Pharaoh: the people of God.

Here's the thing: God's people are *always* going to be mistreated by the world. It's a thing. It could be as simple as being made fun of at school because you share your faith or as serious as someone being killed for their faith in a country where Christianity is literally *illegal*. But we don't walk around in victimhood. We serve *the King!* And He is victorious! And He has made *us* victorious. Nothing we ever do in *His* name will be put to shame. Trust me. It will not fail.

We started to look at this in the Dig a Little Deeper section of the Abraham post, but Jesus warned that the world would not accept us.



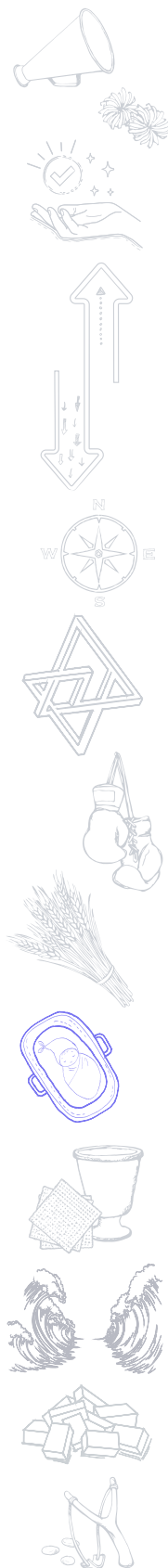
## HOLD YOUR PLACE IN HEBREWS, BUT FLIP BACKWARD TO JOHN AND READ JOHN 15:18-22. LIST THE REASONS JESUS GIVES FOR WHY THE WORLD DOES NOT ACCEPT CHRISTIANS.

Basically, the world didn't even accept *Jesus* – the Creator of the universe and the Savior of the world! The One who loves each and every person more than anything! And we have been called by Jesus to His same mission – to draw people to Himself. They mistreated Him because they did not understand who He was or what He was trying to do. But bigger than that, He exposed that we all have sin and they did not want to accept that they had sin. That's a stumbling block we come across as well, when sharing with others. When we present the Gospel, we expose that everyone has sin and the world wants to walk around thinking they're "good people" who haven't done anything "wrong." With Christ in us, we shine a light in the darkness and the darkness would rather stay dark.

There's a verse in 2 Corinthians that originally, I thought would be the leading verse for Flourishing Faith. It's 2 Corinthians 2:14 and the ESV puts it like this: *"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere."* Truth is, in a spiritual sense, we *smell* like God and we spread the aroma of the knowledge of Him everywhere. The NIV puts the next set of verses like this: *"For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life..."* (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). What that is saying is: some people smell God in us and it stinks to them because it reveals the death that is in their own hearts – their sin. To *others*, "those who are saved," we smell *amazing* when they smell God in us because they smell Jesus and they love Him, just as we love Him! Or, if we meet someone who is curious about the Lord, because He has already been working in their heart, we smell good to them, too, and they are drawn to hear the Gospel from us, because when they hear the good news that they can be saved, they want in!

The second half of verse 25 is hand-in-hand with the first: Moses chose to be mistreated with the Hebrew people, and in tandem, he gave up his luxurious lifestyle as a son of Pharaoh. Some translations say, *"...rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin."* As Christians, we also run away from sin to God.

Have you ever done anything wrong and felt a tug in your heart like, "You shouldn't have done that. Go apologize." If you have Jesus in your heart, that was the Holy Spirit convicting you. We'll dive deeper into this concept during a future post, but when Jesus came to live in your heart, He made a "new person" in you that didn't exist before – He breathed life into your spirit. And that new spiritual person longs to please God. She longs to obey God. And she is tender to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. In the "new person" we



have a distaste for sin, so we run from sin to God, just like Moses did.

## NOW, LET'S LOOK AT HEBREWS 11:26. WHAT DOES THIS VERSE SAY ABOUT MOSES?

The New Living Translation puts verse 26 in this way:

*"He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward."*

During Moses' time, Egypt was the most powerful empire in that region.<sup>3</sup> Explorations of King Tut's tomb show us just how wealthy the royal family was, as he was surrounded by several thousand pounds of pure gold, among other priceless treasures.<sup>2</sup> And while we're talking about King Tut's tomb, let me share a bombshell with you! Get prepared to have your mind blown!

Archeological studies of King Tut's sarcophagus show that the cartouche (or the part of the sarcophagus lid where the king's name is inscribed) had *another* name on it originally. In other words, this sarcophagus was not originally intended for King Tut.<sup>4</sup>

If you've studied Egyptian history yet in school, you'll know that King Tut died suddenly, early on in life. Well, this created a challenge for the tomb makers, because they would work for years in preparation for a king's burial. Well... the name underneath King Tut's name is Ankhkheprure (Ank-hey-pru-ruh).<sup>4</sup>

Stay with me! This is so cool!

Ancient Egyptian rulers had two names: their birth name and their throne name. Ankhkheprure's birth name was Thutmose (Tut-mose (pronounced like hose but with an M)). Thutmose is a mysterious member of the royal family who "disappeared." He was the heir apparent (basically, next-in-line to the throne) of his brother Akhenaten (Ak-en-a-ten), but because he disappeared, never got to rule.<sup>4</sup>

Well... King Akhenaten is King Tut's dad. And scholars of ancient Egyptian History, archeologists, and Bible Scholars have theorized that Moses is probably Thutmose (or Ankhkheprure)!!! So, King Tut is likely buried in *his uncle Moses' sarcophagus!* Is that crazy?!<sup>4</sup>

This makes sense because Moses was "the Prince of Egypt" for 40 years before he left, so if tomb makers were working ahead, they would have been working on *his tomb* and then he left Egypt. So, his tomb and sarcophagus would have been set aside as an "extra," which they used in their scramble for King Tut!



According to several scholars, “the story of Moses in the Bible is set exactly the same time that Thutmose disappears from history.”<sup>4</sup> That and “the events depicted in the Bible surrounding Moses’ birth [and] exile... perfectly coincide with the historical account of Thutmose.”<sup>4</sup> Anyway... I’m no archeologist or historian, so take it or leave it, but my mind was blown at the prospect of Moses being King Tut’s uncle and it’s possibly the tomb meant for Moses’ that is the most famous Egyptian tomb in the world! WOW!

Looking back at Hebrews 11:26 with all this in mind, we see that Moses left not only a pile of wealth but also the opportunity to be in one of the most powerful positions of authority in the world. And he left all that behind because he valued “Christ” (or the idea of following God) far more than he valued those other things, even if it meant being persecuted along with the Hebrews.

## CAN YOU THINK OF SOMEONE ELSE WHO WAS “PROUD” TO LOSE EVERYTHING FOR THE SAKE OF FOLLOWING JESUS? (HINT: SEE PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9.)

Paul was such a force for the Kingdom of God and he was persecuted for his whole career as an apostle. He was put in jail several times, ultimately died for his faith, and he, too, gave up a prestigious position in order to serve the Lord. He also gave up his home and his money and relied on the generosity of the churches he planted to give him funding and a place to stay as he travelled. What he’s saying in Philippians 3 is that it’s *worth it* to give up everything to follow Jesus. Because knowing and serving Jesus is *far greater* than anything you could gain on earth – even the best things in life are like *trash* compared to knowing Jesus.

So, if you’re popular, and Jesus asks you to give up your popularity in order to follow Him, it’s worth it to only have a few friends. Or if you have a high position on your cheerleading squad, but the girls on the team are dragging you down and causing you to step away from your faith, it’s worth it to leave the cheerleading team. Or if you have a close group of friends, but the constant drama is toxic for you, tempting you to be toxic yourself, it’s worth it to follow Jesus away from that friend group and make some new friends. Wherever Jesus is leading you – it’s worth it!

Finally – and I know this has *also* been a long post, so thanks for sticking with me! – Hebrews 11:27 says that Moses left Egypt out of faith and did not fear the king’s anger. This is a call-back to Hebrews 11:25, where it says Moses’ parents weren’t afraid of the King’s edict - so their faith gave them each courage. Verse 27 also says Moses persevered because he saw God, who is invisible. This is ironic, because as we will see in the post after next, Moses asked to see God, but He denied his request because “no one can see God and live.” So, He only allowed Moses to see His back, as He hid him in the crack of





a rock and covered Moses with His hand. But before that, Moses trusted God, even though He is invisible. It goes back to what we discussed in the first post of this series: when we have faith in God, we are putting trust in who He is, that even though we can't see Him, He will come through.

The commentary in my Study Bible says this: "...in his fleeing from the pharaoh, Moses was sustained [kept going, persevered] by his trust in God that the liberation of Israel would come and that he [Moses] would have some part in it." <sup>2</sup> And as we will learn in the next two posts, he certainly did play a part in it – a big part!

Let's close by looking at one more set of verses related to perseverance:

## READ JAMES 1:2-4 (NIV). WHAT DO THESE VERSES SAY PRODUCE PERSEVERANCE? AND WHAT DOES PERSEVERANCE LEAD TO?

Here we go again! Another Biblical author encouraging us to take pride in or celebrate our suffering! Why? Because as you grow in your faith, trials will send you running to Jesus! And when you get to His arms, He will embrace you, encourage you, lift you up, and will keep you going. And as you keep going, you will develop perseverance. And as you develop perseverance you will mature in your faith. And *that*, my sweet friend, is worth everything!



### DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

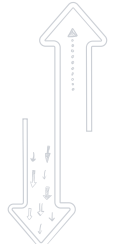
- \* Are you currently dealing with peer pressure? Taking what you've learned from this study, how would you say God would have you deal with your current situation?



\* Write about a time recently where you've felt rejected by "the world" for your faith. It could be direct (someone literally rejecting you or making fun of you) or indirect (like, you notice something in our current culture that is the opposite of our faith.)

\* Have you noticed that as you "spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ everywhere" that some people think you "stink"? Have you noticed that others are drawn to you and think you "smell good"? Write about these experiences in your journal.

\* Is there something in your life that God may have asked you to give up, as you follow Him? Write about this in your journal, expressing your thoughts on having to let go. Has it been easy for you? Or difficult?



\* Explain in your own words why knowing and following Jesus (and serving Him) is of far greater value than anything we can get in earth. What “things we can get on earth” matter to you right now, as a middle schooler?

\* In what ways have you had to “persevere” lately? How could that experience be developing your maturity?



### Reference Notes

<sup>1</sup> William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary 2nd Edition

<sup>2</sup> Zondervan, NIV Study Bible, 2002

<sup>3</sup> Zondervan, NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, 2016

<sup>4</sup> The History Channel, Ancient Aliens: Is Moses King Tut’s Uncle? (Season 12, Episode 5), 2018