

Hebrews 11:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By faith Moses, 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.

Analysis

By faith Moses, 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. Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, exercised civil disobedience through faith, refusing Pharaoh's decree to kill Hebrew male infants (Exodus 1:22). They 'were not afraid' (ouk ephobēthēsan, οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν) of the king's command, demonstrating that fear of God supersedes fear of earthly authorities. When human law contradicts divine law, believers must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

The phrase 'they saw he was a proper child' (asteion, ἀστεῖον, 'beautiful' or 'approved by God') may indicate divine revelation that this child was destined for special purposes. Acts 7:20 says Moses was 'exceeding fair' (asteios tō theō, 'beautiful to God'). Their faith perceived God's hand on this child and acted accordingly, risking their lives to preserve God's chosen deliverer.

This account teaches that genuine faith may require resisting ungodly authority and accepting personal risk for God's purposes. The parents' faith set the stage for Moses' later leadership and Israel's deliverance. Their courageous action demonstrates that God often works through faithful individuals who refuse to compromise, trusting Him with the consequences. The preservation of Moses foreshadows the preservation of infant Jesus from Herod's massacre (Matthew 2:13-18).

Historical Context

Moses was born approximately 1526 BC during Israel's oppression in Egypt. Pharaoh had decreed that all Hebrew male infants be killed to prevent population growth that might threaten Egyptian security (Exodus 1:15-22). This genocide policy forced Hebrew parents to choose between obeying Pharaoh or preserving their children. Amram and Jochebed's defiance of this decree, hidden in Exodus but highlighted in Hebrews, demonstrates that faith sometimes requires civil disobedience when earthly authority commands what God forbids. Egyptian records confirm foreign workers (including Semitic peoples) were present in Egypt during this period, though no extant Egyptian source mentions Hebrew oppression specifically.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. When has obedience to God required you to resist ungodly human authority or cultural pressure?
2. What does this passage teach about balancing submission to government with ultimate allegiance to God?
3. How does Moses' parents' faith in protecting their child challenge you to protect and preserve what God has entrusted to you?

Interlinear Text

Πίστει Μωσῆς γεννηθεὶς ἐκρύβη τρίμηνον ὑπὸ τῶν
By faith Moses when he was born was hid three months of G3588
G4102 G3475 G1080 G2928 G5150 G5259 G3588

πατέρων αὐτοῦ διότι εἶδον ἀστεῖον τὸ παιδίον καὶ
parents because they saw he was a proper child and G2532
G3962 G846 G1360 G1492 G791 G3813 G2532

οὐκ ἔφοβήθησαν τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως
not afraid commandment of the king's G935
G3756 G5399 G3588 G1297 G3588 G935

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 1:22 (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Exodus 1:16 (Parallel theme): And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.

Hebrews 13:6 (Parallel theme): So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Acts 7:20 (References Moses): In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

Isaiah 41:14 (Parallel theme): Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 118:6 (Parallel theme): The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Isaiah 51:7 (Word): Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Isaiah 51:12 (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

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