

Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 12:31 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on the Faith of Moses

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict! By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward! By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen! By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them! By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned!"

The writer of Hebrews here gives a variety of examples of faith involving the life of Moses and those associated with him. Together they illustrate just what faith in God is really all about and how it is applicable for each of our lives as well!

Hagner notes that it would be difficult to overstate the significance of Moses to Judaism! How about to us and to the world at large!

Moses' life can be roughly divided into three periods of 40 years--in each of which we can see faith at work: (1) his memorable birth and living in Pharaoh's palace as a prince of Egypt, with all of its trappings (probably including his participation in the first game of tennis, since the text suggests that Moses "served in Pharaoh's court"); (2) 40 more years of life on the run as a lowly shepherd on the Sinai Peninsula; and (3) finally, his legendary life as the "deliverer" and leader of the children of Israel, beginning at the ripe old age of 80!

Faith is first demonstrated by Moses' parents in finding a creative way of preserving the life of their special son, at a time when Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew sons must be thrown into the Nile! The writer of Hebrews notes that they were "not afraid of the king's edict"--showing that even though faith and fear may co-exist, faith can overcome fear! God's plan for "deliverance" of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, in essence, required that the "deliverer"--the baby Moses--would not be killed! Just as the baby Jesus would one day be delivered from the hand of Herod, in order to go on to secure "deliverance" and redemption for all mankind!

Not a whole lot of faith appeared required for Moses growing up in Pharaoh's household, where he was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians! But, at some point, probably not until he was close to 40 years old--after figuring out who he was, and seeing the plight of the children of Israel--he chose to identify himself with the people of God, and demonstrated that clearly by striking an Egyptian slave master he found abusing one of his "brothers"! And that certainly exhibited a measure of faith, although, in fear, he ran away to a secure place in the Sinai Peninsula!

And so, the next 40 years were spent in relative silence, or so it would seem, tending "stubborn" sheep and raising a family away from all the hustle and bustle of Egypt! But perhaps a great experience for him as well in preparing to live in the wilderness area, near the promised land (of all places), and in leading a "stubborn people"! All of which would certainly require lots of faith!

Well, it was not until Moses reached the age of 80 that his real calling became apparent! Exodus 2:24 says God "heard the groaning of the sons of Israel and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And then appeared to Moses through the "burning bush" and announced that He "had come to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians" and bring them into "a land filled with milk and honey"--the promised land! Through Moses!

You know the rest of the story! Moses didn't show a lot of faith at first! In fact, he tried desperately to convince God that he was not the man for the job! And yet God's calling was sure and Moses soon was headed back to Egypt where he stood before Pharaoh and delivered God's message to "let My people go"! It took 10 plagues inflicted on the land of Egypt, the last one of which took place on the night of the Passover, to finally convince Pharaoh that the God of Israel was really in control, as described in Exodus 11-12!

Faith--"saving faith"--is clearly portrayed through the story of the "Passover Lamb." God required all the people to sprinkle the blood of an "unblemished male" lamb on the doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they lived! God said: "The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt!" (Exod. 12:13) And that night "...the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt!" (Exod. 12:29) And that, of course, led to the great exodus by the children of Israel!

The "Passover incident" is a powerful picture of salvation by faith in Christ alone as God's way of deliverance for all of mankind! The great Gospel story! As in the time of Moses, (1) all people faced the threat of God's impending judgement; (2) God appointed a "way of deliverance" from judgment through the blood of a "substitute"! and (3) God way of deliverance had to be applied by faith to be effective! So with our salvation!

Well, the children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt! But it wasn't over yet because God again "hardened" Pharaoh's heart and he sent out his army in chariots to strike the fleeing and unarmed children of Israel, who soon found themselves trapped between the soldiers and the Red Sea! And they again cried out against Moses and questioned why he had brought them out "only to die in the wilderness"!

This is where we see Moses finally rising to become the strong man of faith God destined him to be! His response to the people was: "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today!" Then he "stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided; and the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land...but the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea...and Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians"! (Exod. 14:13-30)

Through these incidents, we also see the faith of the stubborn children of Israel in, finally, following the instructions of Moses and thus experiencing deliverance! And thus, we see the variety of faith by Moses and by those associated with him, as recorded by the writer of Hebrews!

But the real hero of faith in this passage is Moses himself! He didn't begin his life as a man of great faith! But he grew in faith--a faith that pleased God! His story is especially encouraging to old guys, like myself--showing that it's never too late to see God working in and through us, even in our later years!

Vance Havner summed it up this way: "Moses, the servant of God was a man of faith who used his eyes of faith (II Cor. 5:7), to see the invisible, to choose the imperishable (I Pet. 1:4), and to do the impossible! (Phil. 4:13; Luke 1:37) (Check out these references!)

But this story is first and foremost, one of a sovereign God who keeps His promises and orchestrates His plan for restoring sinful, fallen people to Himself!

May each of us be challenged to exhibit a "variety" of faith in our lives as well (e.g., in faithfully raising our children, in faithfully doing our job, and in faithfully pursuing the unseen future)!

And so, live by faith this week, men, and be a blessing!

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