

The Book of

Hebrews

מֵאֲנִי מִנֵּמ דַּא מִנֵּ ת אֶקְלֵא
צִמְאֵל לְנִתְאַתְצֵרְחָ דְרִתְסֵנִ סְק
אֵת פִּקְלֵא תִסְנִ סְרְבֵאל
רֵךְ תֵּא סְךְ תֵּאקְסֵנִצְ דִּמְמִצְ
תֵּאֲתַפְלֵשׁ נִתְרִדְנֵהֲרִפֵּר נִרְלֵד
תֵּאֲגִשׁ רֵלֵד מִלְלֵצ סֵס תֵּלֵשׁ



Outline of Hebrews

“Jesus is Better”

- I. Jesus Is Better Than the OT Prophets (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Is Better Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Is Better Than Moses (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus’ Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)
- V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)**
- VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)

Outline of Hebrews

V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)

- A. Exhortation to Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Encourage One Another (10:19-25)
- B. Warning: No Hope of Forgiveness for Those Who Turn from Christ (10:26-31)
- C. Call to Persevere in Faith (10:32-12:3)
 - 1. Don't Abandon Confidence but Persevere in Faith (10:32-39)
 - 2. The "Hall of Faith" – Description and Examples of Persevering Faith (11:1-12:3)
- D. Exhortations to Readers to Endure (12:4-29)

Outline of Hebrews

2. The “Hall of Faith” – Description and Examples of Persevering Faith (11:1-12:3)
 - a. Prologue: The Nature of Faith (11:1-3)
 - b. The Faith of Those Prior to the Flood (11:4-7)
 - c. The Faith of Abraham and His Heirs (11:8-22)
 - d. The Faith of Moses and Those Entering the Land (11:23-31)
 - e. A Closing Catalog of Faith (11:32-40)
 - f. Run the Race Looking to Jesus as the Supreme Example of Faith (12:1-3)

The Faith of Moses and Those Entering the Land – Part 2 (11:27-31)

²⁷ By faith [Moses] left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. 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. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

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

- Verse 27 begins by telling us that it was “*by faith*” that “*[Moses] left Egypt*”.
- Moses left Egypt on **two** different occasions:
 - At the age of forty, Moses **fled** Egypt **to Midian** after he had slain an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite (Acts 7:23-29).
 - Forty years later Moses **returned** and led the **Israelites** out of Egypt **at the Exodus** (Acts 7:30-36).
- So **which** occasion does the author have in mind here?
- There would be little doubt that what the author has in mind here is the **first** incident (Moses’ flight to **Midian**), were it not for the fact that in Exodus 2:14 it tells us that “*Moses was afraid*” **prior** to his flight to Midian when he realized that word had gotten out about what he did to the Egyptian.
- And yet, in **this** verse, the writer of Hebrews tells us that Moses “*left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king.*”

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

- Nevertheless, I believe there are several good reasons for thinking that it is Moses flight to **Midian** that the author has in mind here:
 - The order of events:
 - The Passover is mentioned in the **next** verse (vs. 28).
 - If the author was referring here to Moses leaving at the time of the **Exodus**, it seems **unlikely** he would have mentioned it **prior** to talking about the Passover since the Exodus occurred **after** the Passover.
 - “[Moses] left Egypt” would be a **strange** way of referring to the Exodus of the **whole nation**.
 - The author mentions the “**anger of the king.**” At the time of the Exodus, the king was **not** angry but actually **requested** that Moses and the Israelites leave (Exod 12:31-32) – though later he **did** change his mind.
- In light of the reasons listed above, it seems **most likely** that the author is referring here to Moses' flight to Midian.

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

- If that's the case, what do we do with the apparent conflict between what **Exodus says** about Moses being "*afraid*", and what **our author says** about him "*not being afraid*"?
- Our author, who follows the biblical record so closely, certainly does not intend to **contradict** it, but rather to **interpret** it.
- If you look **carefully** at the Exodus account, it does not say that Moses left to go to Midian **because** he was afraid.
- Moses was admittedly afraid, but according to the author of Hebrews that was **not why** he left Egypt.
- His leaving Egypt was, according to our author, an act of **faith**:
 - "*By faith he left Egypt, and not because he feared the king's anger*" (NEB).

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

- By his impulsive act of violence Moses had burned his bridges as far as the court of Egypt was concerned.
- But, had he chosen to do so, Moses **could** have raised a slaves' revolt right then and there.
- So **perhaps** the author's point is that "*by faith*", Moses had the insight to see that God's hour had not yet come, and therefore he left Egypt at that point and waited until it was God's time for him to return.

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

- And so, the author tells us, over against any ***fear*** that Moses might have had, it was “***by faith***”, that he “***endured as seeing him who is invisible.***”
- The “***invisible***” one here is, of course, God the creator (Rom 1:20; Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:15-16).
- Forty years ***after*** Moses fled Egypt, he ***did see*** the angel of the Lord in the burning bush (Exodus 3-4) and the “***form of the LORD***” on Mount Sinai (Num 12:8).
- But ***long before*** those ***visible*** displays of divine glory, Moses had ***already*** glimpsed God’s glory, “***by faith***” (not physical sight) perceiving “***things not seen.***”
- And so our author assures us that Moses’ faith overshadowed his (very obvious) fear.

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

- No doubt, Moses' lifelong vision of God was the secret of his faith and perseverance.
- Here again there is a suggestion to the readers of the letter that the invisible order is the real and permanent one, and **not** the visible but transient Judaism that they were tempted to return to.

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

- Like Noah, Moses and Israel believed God's announcement about a traumatic judgment that was to come: a final plague would inflict death on the firstborn throughout Egypt (Exod 11:4-7).
- Like Noah, in their faith they obeyed God's instruction for their protection, smearing the blood of a lamb "*without blemish*" on their doorframes and eating the Passover meal in their homes (Exod 12:3-13).
- Acting in faith preserved their lives (Heb 10:39), as God had promised: "*The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you*" (Exod 12:13).
- The Passover lamb's blood symbolized Jesus' death as the means of rescue from the enslaving fear of death (Heb 2:14-15; 9:13-4; cf. John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).

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.*

- Another rescue immediately followed that first Passover.
- The final plague ***forced*** Egypt's Pharaoh to ***release*** his Hebrew slaves.
- But ***immediately*** he regretted that decision and sent forces to recapture the Israelites, who had reached the Red Sea and were trapped between impassable waters and the Egyptian army (Exodus 14).
- And it was ***fear***, not faith, that fueled the ***Israelites*** words of ***complaint*** against Moses (Exod 14:11-12), ominously foreshadowing the next forty years.

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.*

- Nevertheless, “*by faith*” the Israelites crossed the sea as on dry ground (Exod 14:21-22, 29), and, when the waters returned, their oppressors were drowned (Exod 14:26-28).
- This visible display of power evoked from the Israelites a confession of faith, short-lived though it would be:
 - *Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses* (Exod 14:31).

³⁰ *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*

- By moving now to the “*Jericho*” event, our author **bypasses** a couple of major events that he discusses elsewhere:
 - The inauguration of the Mosaic covenant (Heb 9:15-22; 12:18-21)
 - The Israelites’ four decades of doubt in the desert (Heb 3-4).
- He **concludes** this section with two simultaneous displays of God’s power and mercy at the time that a **new** generation of Israelites finally entered the Promised Land.
- The sudden fall of Jericho’s walls illustrates the author’s earlier point that the faith that pleases God takes action in response to God’s word, even when visible circumstances make his commands seem foolish and his promises seem impossible.

³⁰ *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*

- The Lord directed Israel's priests, sounding trumpets and bearing the ark of the covenant, and its armed forces to march around Jericho once a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day, before shouting and again blasting trumpets (Josh 6:1-21).
- But Jericho was a formidable fortress, securely sealed against siege (Josh 6:1).
- Such a bizarre military strategy— no battering ram to shatter gates, no ladders to scale walls— must have seemed unlikely to breach Jericho's stout battlements.
- But Joshua had just led Israel through the Jordan River on dry land in flood season (Joshua 3-4), so Israel again proceeded in obedience, trusting God's word about things not yet seen, and they watched their divine champion throw down Jericho's walls.

³¹ *By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.*

- Although the **city** of Jericho was overthrown, Rahab the prostitute, a **resident** of that city, along with her family were **spared** “*by faith*” (Josh. 6:22-25).
- Despite her background in Canaan’s pagan religions, this Gentile woman’s faith in the living God of Israel was robust in content, informed by reports of the Lord’s prior victories (Josh 2:8-13).
- Her trust was both active and risky.
- Jeopardizing her own and her family’s safety, she secured their deliverance from destruction by the Lord, expecting that he would fulfill his promise to give his land to his people.

³¹ *By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.*

- If Rehab had been caught giving “*a friendly welcome*” to the Israelite spies, no doubt Jericho’s authorities would have executed her (Josh 2:2-7).
- Her hope lay not in her own virtue but in the trustworthy word of God.
- And so the Bible identifies Rahab as “*the prostitute*” while nevertheless commending her exemplary faith (Josh 2:1; 6:17, 22, 25; James 2:25).
- Rahab is one of **four** women with Gentile associations who, in the sovereignty of God, became a part of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, along with Tamar, Ruth, and Uriah’s wife (Matt 1:1-16).

³¹ *By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.*

- Rehab here serves as another example of a person who trusted the Lord in a time of danger.
- How ***improbable*** it must have seemed that a ragtag army could defeat the walled city of Jericho, and yet Rehab exposed herself to danger in concealing the spies.
- Rehab represents someone who was willing to leave her own society and culture and to align herself with the people of God.
- In other words she functions a ***model*** for the readers since she was willing to go “*outside the camp*” (cf. Heb 13:13) and suffer the reproach of being identified with the people of God.

Conclusion to the Faith of Moses and Those Entering the Land (11:23-31)

- Whether it was Moses' parents, Moses himself, the battle of Jericho, or Rahab, we see that a person with genuine faith considers God trustworthy in a time of danger.
- Faith recognizes that God will deliver and rescue his own, just as he rescued:
 - Moses from Pharaoh
 - Israel at the Red Sea and the battle of Jericho
 - Rahab from the leaders in Jericho.
- Faith takes risks and dares to do what is dangerous for God.
- It doesn't look to society and culture for approval.
- It trusts in the word of the Lord instead of finding its delight in a life of sin.

Conclusion to the Faith of Moses and Those Entering the Land (11:23-31)

- We again see here the forward looking character of faith.
- When Moses and Israel and Rahab put their trust in the Lord, they had not yet seen what God would do.
- Faith came *first* and deliverance *later*.
- That was the situation of the original readers as well.
- They were not part of the inner circle of society.
- They were verbally abused and discriminated against.
- Perhaps worse sufferings would follow.
- They wanted to enjoy the security and comfort of belonging.
- The author summons them to trust in God, believing he will deliver them and bring them to the heavenly city.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- There is a well known quote (often attributed to Mark Twain) that reads, “Courage is not the lack of fear. It is acting in spite of it.” Is this true?
- If so, it would appear that Moses is a good illustration of this principle. Though he feared what the king might do to him as a result of his killing an Egyptian who was abusing a Hebrew slave, according to the author of Hebrews, Moses chose instead to respond in faith.
- Can you think of a time when you have had a great fear of something, but you did not allow that to be the determining factor in how you responded? Would you be willing to share your example with the class?

*Class Discussion Time

- As we have seen, the author of Hebrews commended Rahab for the way she welcomed the Hebrew spies.
- The author of Hebrews does not specifically mention it, but a part of how Rahab “welcomed” them was to hide them from the authorities and lie to the authorities when they asked her where the spies had gone (Josh 2:3-6).
- While lying is generally condemned in scripture (Ex 23:1a, Prov 12:17, Col 3:9), can we conclude from this example that it is commendable under certain circumstances to lie to others? In this case the lie was to governing authorities! If lying is required (or at least allowed) under certain circumstances, what are the principles that govern when it is better to lie than to tell the truth?
- Keep in mind, we have to be careful about drawing doctrinal conclusions from narrative accounts, but Rahab is commended for what she did by two NT writers (James 2:25; Heb 11:31).

***Class Discussion Time**

- Two principles that we drew from our text today were:
 - Faith takes risks and dares to do what is dangerous for God.
 - Faith doesn't look to society and culture for approval.
- Given the direction our society is moving, do you anticipate that there may come a day when you might have to apply these principles. Or perhaps you have already had to do so!
- Please share your thoughts with the class.