

## Hebrews 11:24-26

(24) By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, (25) choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, (26) esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

*New King James Version*

The importance of Pharaoh's daughter comes to the fore because Egyptian royal succession went, not through the male line, but through the female line. This historical oddity derives from Egyptian mythology, in which Isis, the sister of Osiris, marries her brother, and from them descends the royal line. The Pharaohs continued this incestuous practice of the crown prince marrying the Pharaoh's firstborn daughter, and the prince's claim to legitimacy as the future Pharaoh, hinged on his marriage to her. Their son, in turn, would be the new crown prince, also known as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

This makes God's manipulation of events when Pharaoh's daughter found [Moses](#) in the Nile very significant. He guided Moses' ark of bulrushes directly to the Egyptian kingmaker! As Pharaoh's daughter, it was in her power to name Moses as the next Pharaoh, because he was her son by adoption. She could say, "He was born of the Nile. He was a gift from the gods," and seal his legitimacy via his miraculous appearance to her.

Thus, Moses was in the position to rule all of Egypt. This makes his sacrifice of [Hebrews 11:24](#), "refus[ing] to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," all

the more remarkable. As Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth at the time, he gave up the world's premier position of authority to lead God's people—a nation of a few million slaves—to the Promised Land.

What do we know about Pharaoh's daughter? It is evident that she was a woman of great spunk, defying her father's—the Pharaoh's—command to kill all Hebrew male babies. Does Egyptian history have a crown princess like this? Yes, indeed. In fact, she had so much initiative, intelligence, cunning, and political acumen, that she became Pharaoh herself! Her name was Hatshepsut, and she is known as Egypt's greatest queen or female Pharaoh.

She was the firstborn daughter of Thutmose I and married her brother, Thutmose II, who did not live very long. However, he lived long enough to sire a crown prince, Thutmose III, by a concubine. Since Thutmose II died while Thutmose III was a young child, Hatshepsut was proclaimed regent until he should come of age. She, however, had other ideas. She did not surrender the throne for about twenty years, proclaiming herself Pharaoh in the meantime.

Hatshepsut's reign is known for its internal [peace](#) and increase in trade. Egypt made advancements in art, architecture, and the natural sciences while she ruled. She personally conducted wars in Nubia and Syria, even leading her troops into battle on at least one occasion. She also enjoyed the support of the religious powers of her time. Some historians say that her manner of governance is unrivaled in Egyptian history.

If she (or someone very like her, as there are chronological difficulties) was the Pharaoh's daughter who raised Moses, [Acts 7:22](#) now becomes clearer: "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." Now we know how this could happen. Moses, as the son of a formidable Egyptian princess, had all the learning of Egypt at his disposal, and the wisdom of Egypt was unrivaled anciently ([I Kings 4:30](#)).

In his first forty years, Moses accomplished a great deal. The Jewish historian Josephus says that as its general, he led Egypt's army into Ethiopia, where he took an Ethiopian wife to secure peace with the Ethiopians rather than put them to the edge of the sword. As a prince, he received the best

education available in governmental administration, arms, trade, religion, science, music, art, literature, architecture, and many other fields. In this way, [God](#) used the royal house of Egypt to prepare His chosen servant for the massive operation of leading stiff-necked Israel for forty years through the wilderness.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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