

## "DARE" EXODUS 2:1-10

### This Week's Core Competency

**Faithfulness** – I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships. Proverbs 3:3-4,

*Let love and faithfulness never leave you;  
bind them around your neck,  
write them on the tablet of your heart.  
Then you will win favor and a good name  
in the sight of God and man.*

The book of Exodus begins (1:15-2:10) highlighting the faithfulness of numerous Israelite women. When the king of Egypt calls upon the Hebrew midwives to kill each male infant born amongst their clan, they "did not do what the king of Egypt told them to do; they let the boys live" (1:17b). This clearly demonstrated their faithfulness to the Hebrew families seeking to "be fruitful and multiply" (Ge 1:28, 9:1). But more explicitly, the text tells us that their refusal to comply with the Pharaoh's demands springs from the fact that "the midwives feared God" (v. 17a). "In the New Testament a 'God-fearer' typically referred to a Gentile convert to Judaism. In the Pentateuch 'fear God' tends to mean to be honest, faithful, trustworthy, upright, and above all, religious" (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, 79).

But, prior to receiving any of the Hebrew Scriptures, in what sense can we say these women feared God? "The midwives may not have had great knowledge of the traditions of the Patriarchs and like all their contemporary Israelites certainly did not yet have what we would call 'scriptural' knowledge, but they did understand that right and wrong are not human inventions but part of a divinely created order. This is the perspective of many proverbs from all over the ancient world, not merely those of the Old Testament, which reflect the idea that the fear of God is the most important

orienting truth available in the world. To fear God does not mean being afraid of him in general but being afraid of the consequences of disobeying him" (Stuart, 79).

Likewise, the shrewd actions of both Moses' mother and sister demonstrated their fear of God and, therefore, faithfulness to him. Moses' mother hid him for three months (2:2). When that tactic would no longer suffice, she carefully prepared a basket for his protection and strategically placed it amongst thick reeds along the bank of the Nile River (v. 3). Moses' sister proved no less significant. She meanders around the bank so as to keep a watchful eye on her baby brother's safety. Without hesitation, she steps into Pharaoh's daughter's fold to facilitate a solution—and *that* to the benefit of all the story's central characters. And if Stuart's assertion above is correct, we can even infer that, at least in this moment, Pharaoh's daughter was demonstrating a sufficient fear of God according to his "divinely created order" in her desire to save this infant's life (v. 6).

"The motives of all these women appear to have been pure and appropriate. God used them to do what they were good at and what their culture especially honored in women: preserving and raising a child. Their faithfulness to that noble role parallels in no small degree the faithfulness of the Israelite midwives to theirs as described in the prior chapter" (Stuart, 85). Both the immediate context (Ex 2ff) and future experiences of these women attest to their reception of God's favor—as well as favor received from others along the way. My hope for the 'Moms' amongst us today is that this passage and today's lesson will encourage you to remain faithful to your irreplaceable calling—knowing that God's favor will be with you each step of the way.

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# day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

## Exodus 2:1-10

1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

8 "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will repay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

### Cf., Corollary Passage, Exodus 1:8-22

8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will

become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 16 "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." 17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Circle "now" indicating *transition* in v. 1.
- \* Circle each occurrence of "then" indicating *transition*.
- \* Box each character represented in this story.
- \* Circle "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 3.
- \* Bracket "basket" and "tar and pitch" in v. 3
- \* Number each verb for the "sister" indicating *action*.
- \* Alphabetize each statement of the Pharaoh's daughter.
- \* Highlight the phrase "I drew him out of the water" in v. 10.

## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Verse one begins with "Now." Read Ex 1:8-22 and summarize the *historical* setting.
2. Identify the characters of Ex 2:1-10. Why do you think none of their names are given—save for the Levite woman's son, Moses (v. 10)?
3. Summarize the actions of the Levite woman in this passage. In what way(s) do you empathize with her plight?
4. Read "v. 3 *basket*" on page 6. What historic event does Moses' infancy narrative parallel? List any similar details that stand out to you.
5. Summarize the actions of the baby's sister in this passage. Based on these, what character traits would you ascribe to her?
6. Summarize the actions of Pharaoh's daughter. How do you suppose she was able to adopt this Hebrew baby over/against her father Pharaoh's orders?
7. Read Ex 2:23-25 and 3:7-8. What parallels do you see between the responses of Pharaoh's daughter toward the baby with God's subsequent responses upon the Israelites as a whole?
8. Jochebed likely nursed Moses for 3 to 4 years before 'returning' him to Pharaoh's daughter. How might this period prove instrumental in shaping Moses to later be Israel's leader? (Consider principles from: Dt 4:6, 6:4-7, Ps 119:98, 2Ti 3:15, etc.)
9. **Discussion:** God is not mentioned in this passage, yet his providence is evident. How so?

## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

This week's story, the birth of Moses, has a storied backdrop of its own. In fact, Exodus 1 summarizes almost 350 years of biblical history! Jacob and his family of 70 move to Egypt under his son Joseph's oversight around 1876 B.C. (Ex 1:1-5; See also Ge 46ff). Jacob, Joseph, his brothers and all from "that generation" pass away (v. 6). Nonetheless, "the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly" (v. 7). Around 1730 B.C., long after Joseph's passing, yet another in a series of Pharaohs rises to power. This Pharaoh, in fear of Israel's ever-increasing size, commandeers them into slavish subjection (vv. 8-14) just as God foretold Abraham centuries prior (Ge 15:13). There is a 200-year 'gap' between verse 14 and 15. This "king of Egypt," likely Thutmose I, ordered the chief Hebrew midwives—Shiphrah and Puah—to kill any and all sons born of the Hebrew women (v. 15-16). However, the midwives "feared God" (v. 17). Thus, through cunning subterfuge, the midwives skirts Pharaoh's fateful decree (vv. 18-19). Through their faithfulness, God blesses not only them, but continues to multiply the children of Israel all the more (v. 20). In response, Thutmose I advances his male infanticide directive by employing every Egyptian to seize any newborn Hebrew sons they find and "cast [them] into" the Nile (v. 22). These events lead us to today's passage: Ex 2:1-10. And as one commentator remarked, "These ten verses must be seen against the backdrop of chapter 1" (Peter Enns, *Exodus*, NIVAC, 57).

A few years later two Hebrews from the tribe of Levi give birth to a son of their own (2:1). Knowing the Pharaoh's evil edict was still in force yet sensing that this was no ordinary child (cf. Acts 7:20), the boy's mother, Jochebed (cf. Ex 6:20), "hid him for three months" (v. 2). When hiding the boy became no longer feasible, she hatches a plan in faith-filled hopes of preserving his life (cf. Heb 11:23). Jochebed takes a common papyrus basket (See "basket" on pg 6) and makes it 'watertight' by coating it with tar and pitch (comp. w/Ge 6:14). She then places her uncommon baby boy inside the basket and conceals the basket securely "among the reeds along the bank of the Nile" (v. 3). Lastly, the boy's prepubescent sister, Miriam (cf. Ex 15:20), "stood at a distance to see what would happen to him" (v. 4). At this point, the child's fate rests squarely on God's providence

(i.e. "God's maintenance, guidance and continuing involvement with creation and humans as means of carrying out divine purposes"—Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 226). Thankfully, "he who promised is faithful" (cf. Heb 10:23; contextually see—Ge 15:14).

A short time later, as God would have it, Pharaoh's only (known) daughter and favorite child walks onto the scene motivated solely by a desire to bathe in the 'sacred' Nile River. Suddenly she sees the basket among the reeds. Without hesitation, she orders it be brought to her (v. 5). To her great surprise she opens it to find a helpless Hebrew baby crying in distress (v. 6). Immediately she feels not just compassion but maternal 'love at first sight.' In her heart of hearts, she knows he is to be her son, forevermore.

With quick thinking and much poise, Miriam smartly offers to 'find' and retrieve "one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you" (v. 7). Without hesitation, Pharaoh's daughter replies, "Yes, go!" Moments later the boy's sister returns with who else but his very own mother (v. 8). Pharaoh's daughter arranges to compensate the boy's mother for her role as a surrogate nurse (v. 9). Interestingly, no mention is made of Pharaoh's apparent willingness to accommodate his daughter's adoptive intentions. Apparently her strong-willed insistence (not to mention a sure-fire dose of 'daughter-to-daddy' charm) leads to his weak-kneed acquiescence. The desires of a daughter: for us dads there's simply no panacea.

In the ancient Near East, mothers would nurse their babies for 3 to 4 years (S. R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus*, 11). This time would undoubtedly impact mother and son in numerable, irreversible ways. Despite becoming Egyptian via adoption, Moses' sentiments would always remain favorable toward "his own people" (2:11). And lest we forget, "the child once abandoned in the reeds (*suph*) along the shore of the Nile (v. 3) will later lead his people in triumph through the Reed Sea (*yam suph*, cf. Ex 13:18)" (Enns, 62) just as God promised (cf. Ge 15:14).

One author summarizes this episode well. "Once again Pharaoh's plan has been thwarted and in a doubly miraculous way. The child has been rescued from exposure, even by the very daughter of the one who made the decree. God's plan for his people

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rested on the helpless child, floating down a river.  
But the child is not lost, and the story points  
expectantly toward the future. What will become of  
this child on whom such special care has been

lavished" (Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*,  
OTL, 19)? Stephen attests that Moses becomes  
"mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22; NKJV). A  
reading of Exodus 2:11 and following awaits us all.

### *The Message of the Passage*

*No matter how dire our circumstances, we can maintain faithfulness to  
God knowing his providence will always accord with his promises.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22.  
Reflect on 3 living questions to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answer to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

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## notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **Levi/Levite** "Since no other names apart from that of Moses himself are mentioned in Ex 2, this double authentication of Moses' [future] priestly descent is important. It is an anticipatory clue to both the [coming] stature of Moses and the sacerdotal nature of his leadership as Israel's first great sacral hero" (John Durham, *Exodus*, WBC, 15-16).

v. 2 **pregnant/birth** A standard phrase in Hebrew. However, "special significance should be noted in the pattern of its usage: this is the sixteenth and final time that Moses used the expression in the Pentateuch. He had used it fifteen other times throughout Genesis to describe important births. The sixteenth usage describes his own. Thereafter the expression ceases in his writings, suggesting that he understood himself to be the final figure in a long line of persons through whom God had been preserving and preparing the formation of the nation—not merely the family—of Israel. In other words, once the reader reaches the story of the birth of Moses here, he or she has come to the last required special mention of a birth story in the Pentateuch" (Stuart, 86-87).

v. 3 **basket** Heb-*tebah* (translated "ark" in Genesis). "In all the Old Testament, this Hebrew word is found only here and in the Flood story (Ge 6:14-9:18). The theological connection between these two events is self-evident. (1) Both Noah and Moses are specifically selected to forego a tragic, watery fate; (2) both are placed on an "ark" treated with bitumen and are carried to safety on the very body of water that brings destruction to others; and (3) both are the vehicles through whom God "creates" a new people for his own purposes. Furthermore, Moses' safe passage through the waters of the Nile not only looks backward to the Flood story, but forward to the passage through the sea in Exodus 14 for all of God's people (Enns, 62). Says another, "Moses apparently was consciously drawing the reader's attention to the fact that God, through Moses' mother's actions, was graciously protecting him from death by a small ark, just as God had protected Noah and the animals by a great ark in the days of the great flood. They both were deliverers/rescuers who were called by God to lead people and animals through and out of danger into a new location where those people and animals would become dominant in establishing a new stage of God's unfolding plan of redemption of the world" (Stuart, 88). "As Noah's ark was God's instrument for preserving one savior of the human race, Moses' ark proved to be His means of preserving a savior of the Israelites" (Thomas L. Constable, *Constable's Notes on the Bible: Volume 1 Genesis–Deuteronomy*, 182).

v. 5 **daughter** Historic context strongly suggests this to be Hatshepsut (hat-shep-set) - seemingly Thutmose I's only daughter—and purportedly favorite child. "Hatshepsut was a very significant person in Egyptian, and in fact human, history. She later assumed co-regency with Thutmose III as the fifth Pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty (1503-1482 B.C.). The ruling class in Egypt was male dominated, and it took a very forceful woman to rise to rule" (Constable, 183). "She ruled in peace, built temples, and sponsored expeditions" (W.H. Gispen, *Exodus*, BSC, 40). Yet here, as a young maiden she possessed the boldness, determination and fortitude to challenge the order issued by her father, the Pharaoh.

v. 5 **bathe** "It was not uncommon for Pharaohs and other Egyptians to bathe ceremonially in the sacred Nile River. They believed that the waters of the Nile possessed the ability to impart fruitfulness and to prolong life" (Constable, 183).

v. 9 **nurse him** This was undoubtedly a blessed gift from God to Jochebed for her faithfulness. "But," one scholar notes, "there was also a deeper purpose in it. No doubt it was in these early years that Moses learnt of the 'God of the fathers' (Ex 3:15) and realized that the Hebrews were his fellow countrymen (Ex 2:11)." He continues, "Psychologists rightly stress the importance of impressions received during the earliest years. Without this ancestral background, God's later revelation to Moses would have been rootless, and the [Mosaic] Covenant could not have been seen as a sequel to, and consequence of, the Abrahamic Covenant (Ex 3:6)" (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TOTC, 58).

v. 10 **Moses** The name Moses (*Moseh*) is intended to infer his origins—"born of/out of water" (or "child of the Nile"—see Gispen 41-42). It is of no coincidence that Moseh sounds very similar (i.e. assonance) with the Hebraic verb "to draw" (*masah*). "Through this name, the princess both consciously honors the Hebrew origins of her son and also makes him legitimately Egyptian with a name in her own language that emphasizes [his adoption]" (Stuart, 93; see also: Cole, 58-59; Enns, 63-65).

## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Somehow I thought it would get easier. When they were babies, I checked on my kids while they were sleeping. Were they on their backs? Were the blankets non-constricting? During the toddler years, we put locks on every drawer and cabinet and made sure the pool gate was securely fastened. Through elementary school and junior high we provided all the necessary safety equipment for athletics and walked our kids through life's disappointments. In high school, we taught them how to drive and one day actually turned over a set of keys and a car. Now, as we face the graduation of our middle child from high school and the marriage of our oldest this month, I am learning that parenting still takes a lot of courage. I love the courage of the midwives in Exodus 1:15-21 and Moses' mom in Exodus 2:1-10. These were women who knew that children are gift from God. They are precious lives on loan to us for a season. As moms, they knew they needed to obey God rather than conform to the standards and expectations of the world. They boldly took risks to make sure that babies were protected, cared for and able to fulfill the call God placed on their lives. I am thankful that while my kids belong to the Lord, He has given me the courage to partner with Him in their physical and spiritual growth. I'm praying for you as you do the same.

### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Exodus 2:1-10

1. Look in Exodus 1. Why did Moses' mom have to hide him?
2. What did she do to protect him?
3. Who found the baby?

### What Do You Think

The king of Egypt was afraid and thought he had a plan to get rid of all the Hebrew boys. Read Proverbs 16:9. Who is ultimately in control of people's actions? How does that make you feel?

### What R U Going To Do

Interview your mom (or a mom) this week. Ask her these questions: What is the best thing about being a mom? What is the hardest thing about being a mom? Was there a time when you needed courage?

### Core Comp

Faithfulness – I am loyal to God and others, so they know they can count on me.

### Memory Verse

No memory verse this week.

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse \_\_\_\_\_, completed *Scrolls* \_\_\_\_\_, brought Bible \_\_\_\_\_, brought a friend \_\_\_\_\_.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money** 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).