



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N3 January 16, 2022

## WAY OUT “Moment of Impact” Exodus 1:1-22

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Personal God

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

*“I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”*

**Psalm 121:1-2**



How has God demonstrated he cares in the past?

The 30 Core Competencies, which comprise our spiritual formation theology, are used to organize what the Bible teaches about 10 Central Beliefs, 10 Central Practices, and 10 Central Virtues. With respect to biblical theology in general, texts have one interpretation – e.g., the meaning intended by the Bible’s divine author, shared by the human author, and conveyed through the human author’s words to the readers – but texts having one sense convey truth about more than one subject. In other words, texts convey truth about more than one Core Competency. This is especially true with regard to biblical narratives because biblical narratives are actually two stories in one – an *upper* story and a *lower* story.

The *upper* story is about what God is up to with regard to the story of redemption, the metanarrative that unifies the whole Bible. God is the protagonist, the major character, in the *upper* story, the plot of which unfolds around his preparation of the world for and his provision of a Savior, Jesus Christ, as well as his redemption not only of humanity but also of the entire creation that comes through Jesus. That story begins on the *earth as we know it* with the protoevangelium, the first mention of the good news of salvation, found in Genesis 3:15. To Eve God said, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” And it ends on the *new earth* populated by a redeemed humanity (Rev 21-22).

The *lower* story is about the roles innumerable people play in the unfolding story of redemption – some higher profile characters like Adam and Eve, Noah, the Patriarchs and their wives, Moses, Ruth, Samuel, King David, the prophets Elijah and Elisha, Nehemiah, Mary and Joseph, the Twelve, and Paul, as well as some lower profile characters like Cain and Abel, Noah’s sons, Ishmael and Esau, Leah and Rachael, Naomi, Hannah, Jonathan, King Josiah, the prophets Nathan and Ahijah, Zerubbabel, Simeon and Anna, John the Baptist, and Barnabas and Silas. Whether higher or lower profile, all of these characters are protagonists in their own individual stories, the subplots of which are woven together to form the story of redemption.

The book of Exodus opens with the story of the

Israelites’ oppression in Egypt. The *upper* story is about the fulfillment of God’s promise to make Abraham “into a great nation” (Ge 12:2) and to deliver his descendants from slavery in a foreign land. God told him: “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions” (Ge 15:13-14). The descendants of Jacob, who went to Egypt (Ge 46) to escape famine and to be reunited with Joseph, flourished there for generations after Joseph’s death. The Bible says, “the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them” (Ex 1:7). The LORD blessed them in spite of all that the Egyptians did to make their lives miserable and to control their growth. And later when the Egyptian midwives ignored a certain Pharaoh’s order to kill baby boys born to the Hebrew women, they refused, and again God blessed them. The Bible says, “So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own” (vv. 20-21). A *family* went down into Egypt, but a *nation* came up out of Egypt. Clearly, the *upper* story is about the Core Belief Personal God, “I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.”

The *lower* story is about the Hebrew midwives who refused to engage in infanticide. Rather than kill the baby boys born to Hebrew women as Pharaoh had ordered, they let them live. And when asked “Why have you let the boys live?” Shiphrah and Puah, two of a likely larger number of midwives, answered, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive” (vv. 18, 19). But in reality, they feared God more than they feared Pharaoh (v. 17). Clearly, the *lower* story is about the Core Virtue Faithfulness, “I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.” So this one narrative, like others, conveys truth about two different Core Competencies – Personal God and Faithfulness.



## 1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Exodus 1:1-22

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. 5 The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.

6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7 but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

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."

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "These" in v. 1.
- Circle "seventy" in v. 5.
- Circle "multiplied greatly" in v. 7.
- Underline "new king" in v. 8.
- Circle "oppress" in v. 11.
- Box "but" in v. 12.
- Circle "bitter" in v. 14.
- Underline "the king of Egypt" in v. 15.
- Circle "Hebrew" in vv. 15, 16, 19, 22.
- Circle "midwives" vv. 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.
- Underline "Pharaoh" in v. 22.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What do you infer from comparing the number of Israelites in Egypt when the book of Exodus opens with the number of Jacob's sons who went with him to Egypt (Ge 46:1-27; cf. Ex 1:1-5)?
2. What makes you think the Israelites lived in Egypt a long time before the Egyptians enslaved them (see vv. 8-9; cf. note on v. 8)?
3. Describe the three failed policies that various kings of Egypt pursued to reduce the perceived risk posed by the Israelites (see vv. 11, 16, and 22).
4. Explain the *contrast* in verse 12.
5. What one word would you use to describe what life was like in Egypt for the Israelites?
6. Ironically the Israelites are being blessed and oppressed at the same time. Explain.
7. God uses their oppression to prepare the Israelites for the exodus. How so?
8. The midwives "feared God" (v. 17). Describe what that means and its consequences for them.
9. The Hebrew women are said to give birth before the midwives arrive. What's the real reason why?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the *upper* story and the *lower* story in this narrative and what we can learn from each.

### Commentary On The Text

God told Abraham that his descendants would be strangers in a country not their own and would be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years before he would bring them back to their land (Ge 15:13). Two centuries later his grandson, Jacob, and Jacob's entire family, seventy people in all, moved to Egypt. A *family* went down into Egypt, but a people destined to become a *nation* would come up out of Egypt 430 years later. Before Jacob moved, God told him, "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again" (46:3, 4). Seventeen years later when Jacob was about to die, he assured his son Joseph that God would be with him and bring him back to the land of his fathers (47:22). And so it's not surprising that Jacob instructed his sons to bury him with his fathers in the land of Canaan (49:29-32), something Joseph did with all the pomp and ceremony befitting royalty (50:7-14). Fifty-four years later before Joseph died, he echoed the hope of his father, telling his brothers that God would come to their aid and take them up out of Egypt to the land he had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (50:24). So sure was he of their return that he made the sons of Israel swear to carry his bones back to the land with them (v. 25).

The first verse of the book of Exodus can be translated, "And these are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob" (cf. DARBY). While the conjunction "and" is either omitted in most English translations (cf. NIV, NET), or is translated "now" in a few others (cf. NKJV, NASB), this small lexical detail indicates that the second book in the Old Testament continues the story begun in the first book. Genesis 46 reports that Jacob took his sons and their families with him to Egypt where he later died. Exodus 1 reports that after Joseph, his brothers, and all that generation died, the number of Israelites in Egypt increased greatly just like God had said (cf. Ge 46:3).

One commentator writes: "The Book of Exodus opens with a phrase that serves also as its Hebrew name: 'And these are the names.' This phrase is a carefully chosen and precisely placed connecting link, a bridge from the promise of descendants to Jacob and his sons to a reality of descendants that makes an exodus from Egypt a necessity. Indeed, the first six words of Exod 1:1 are in the Hebrew text an exact quotation of the first six words of Gen 46:8, a clear rhetorical indication of the continuity intended

not only in the narrative, but in the underlying theological assertion" (John H. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 3).

When the book of Exodus opens, Joseph and his generation have passed away, and the number of Israelites has increased greatly. Matter of fact the land is "swarming" with them. One translation renders verse 7, "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and swarmed and multiplied, and became exceeding strong; and the land was full of them" (DARBY) (cf. Ge 1:28; 9:1). God has blessed them there, but as time passed, things changed. Rulers appeared on the scene who felt threatened by them, the identity of whom is difficult to determine because these rulers are unnamed, and their reigns span an extended period of time (see notes on vv. 8, 11, 15, 22). So one king, then another, takes measures to deter the Israelites from rebelling, curtail the further growth of their population, and provide forced labor for his building projects. They employ three measures. God's blessing turns out to be a curse of sorts, in that the more their numbers multiply the more they are oppressed. The Egyptians dread them more and more, so after enslaving them, they work them more and more ruthlessly and make their lives bitter with hard labor. When that doesn't produce the desired result, one king directs the Hebrew midwives to kill at birth the boys of the Israelite women—an ancient version of partial-birth abortion—and when they defy him, the Pharaoh orders that the boys born to Israelite women be thrown into the Nile.

The *upper* story is about God keeping his promise to the Patriarchs when his people must have wondered, "How could God allow this terrible turn of events to take place? Why has the God of our fathers, the God who promised to be with our ancestors and with us, allowed this evil to come upon us? Where is he? Doesn't he care?" God's silence was deafening for generations. In fact, God did care and was actually at work behind the scenes to prepare his people to leave Egypt, for had life not been "bitter" for them, would they have ever been willing to leave Egypt?

The *lower* story is largely about the midwives, who feared God more than Pharaoh, and so remained faithful to him by refusing to obey Pharaoh's evil command. "Their reverence for life sprang from reverence for God, the life-giver (Ex. 20:12, 13), and for this they were rewarded with families. The relevance of this to modern controversy about abortion should be carefully pondered" (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TOTC, 55).

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *These are the . . .* "This section [vv. 1-22] accounts for the numerical growth of the Israelites, during the 360 years that elapsed between Genesis and Exodus, following Joseph's death and preceding Moses' birth" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus," 2021 ed., 14, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus.pdf)). "Leah's six **sons** are listed in the order of their birth; from **Reuben** through **Zebulun** (cf. Gen. 35:23). **Benjamin**, the son of Jacob's second wife Rachel, is mentioned next but **Joseph**, Rachel's firstborn is not listed because he **was already in Egypt**. **Dan** and **Naphtali** were the sons of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah (Gen. 35:25), and **Gad** and **Asher** were the sons of Leah's maidservant Zilpah (Gen. 35:26) The males who **entered Egypt** with **Jacob numbered 70** (cf. Gen. 46:27; Deut. 10:22; cf. comments on Acts 7:14 where the number is said to be 75)" (John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 108).

v. 5 *seventy* "Moses used the rounded number '70' for the total number of Jacob's descendants when the patriarch entered Egypt (v. 5; cf. Gen. 46:27). The writer's purpose was to contrast the small number of Israelites that entered Egypt, with the large number that existed at the time Exodus begins (vv. 8ff.)" (Constable, 14).

v. 8 *new king* While the identity of "the new king who did not know about Joseph" is unclear, he definitely was not the next one to rule after Joseph died (ca. 1805 B.C.). Some argue that he was a foreign ruler, one of the early Hyksos who subjugated Egypt and displaced its native rulers from ca. 1674-1567 B.C. (see John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 45); others argue that he was one of the early Egyptian rulers of the 18th dynasty – perhaps Amenhotep I (ca. 1546-1526) or Thutmose I (ca. 1525-1512) (see Hannah, 106, 108). Note: for debated dates of Egyptian Pharaohs, see Hannah, 17-18; cf. John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 62).

v. 11 *oppress* The king decided to deal with the Israelites by enslaving them in the hope that by oppressing them he might deter their rebellion, curtail the growth of their population, and provide laborers for his building projects. But the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied.

v. 14 *bitter* "A fact commemorated in the Passover meal, which was eaten 'with

bitter herbs' (12:8)" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1:14).

v. 15 *the king* Possibly Ahmose I (ca. 1570-1546), who expelled the Hyksos, but more likely Amenhotep I (ca. 1546-1526) or Thutmose I (ca. 1526-1512). When enslaving them didn't work, this king ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all the boys born to Israelite women. It was a vicious order that would have been effective had it been obeyed, but two midwives let the boys live.

v. 15 *Hebrew* The Israelites were considered "Hebrews" but so were other nomadic people in that day. "Hebrew" had a wider meaning than "Israelite slave." "The word probably has a connotation something like modern 'gipsy,' in a derogatory sense, combining the ideas of wandering and animal-trading" (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TOTC, 55).

v. 15 *midwives* There were only two, which is unlikely; either Shiphrah and Puah had other midwives under them, or they were the only two who disobeyed because they feared God. Once the baby boys were born, they were spared. Apparently, the midwives were cunning enough to "slow-walk" house calls made on Hebrew mothers (see Hannah, 109).

v. 22 *Pharaoh* Moses was born ca. 1526 B.C. during the reign of Thutmose I (ca. 1526-1512), who gave the order to his people, "Every boy that is born (to the Hebrews) you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Rather than let dire circumstances get you down, trust in God, who cares about you, and always remain faithful to him regardless.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Silence is golden, except when it comes from God. When the world seems to be crumbling beneath our feet, it would be especially helpful if God would use a megaphone to remind us he’s still in control. I wouldn’t even mind a bright, flashing, neon light with an arrow that says “I’m right here! Take this path.” The circumstances of life, unexpected job loss, life-threatening diagnosis, death of a close friend or family member, wayward child, or even a global pandemic, can send us spiraling down and crying out to God, wondering, “Where are you?” Exodus opens with a ruthless leader, forced slavery and genocide causing misery, hopelessness and despair for God’s people. I imagine the Israelites felt utterly abandoned. If they only had the big picture. If only they could fast-forward and see Canaan, redemption, deliverance. If only they remembered the story of how their ancestor Joseph was sold into slavery only to be elevated to the Egyptian king’s second in command, saving a holy nation. Our circumstances put a heavy fog in our view that threatens our peace and causes panic instead. Though we can’t see the outcome, we can draw from experience God’s faithfulness in our lives. Right now, think back to a time when God saw you through a particular difficult situation. Do your kids know about this? One of the best ways to prepare your children for a future of faithfulness is to share your past personal experiences with them. As we embark on a year-long study of Exodus, invite your children on your faith journey and encourage them in God’s faithfulness. We’re praying for you!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 1:1-22.

1. Skim Genesis 37-50. How did the Israelites get to Egypt?
2. How did the new king feel about the Israelites? Why?
3. What did the king tell the midwives to do and how did they respond?

### What Do You Think?

Why was Pharaoh so afraid of the Israelites? What’s another way he could have treated them?

### What Do You Do?

Create a family tree and interview your parents and grandparents about their faith story. Ask them to tell you about when they trusted Christ and how God’s been faithful in their life.

### CORE COMPETENCY: Personal God

I believe God cares about everything in my life.

### MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 31:3

*“Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.”*

## KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week’s verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**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.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

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

**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.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

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

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

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

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

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

**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.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**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.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

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

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

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

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

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

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

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

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

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

**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.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**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.*

**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.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

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

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