



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N4 January 23, 2022

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.

"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."

Proverbs 3:3-4



How is faith demonstrated?

WAY OUT "Scratch-Off Faith" Exodus 2:1-10

Faith and faithfulness are closely related. The first is the foundation on which the second is built, the soil in which the second is rooted. Put differently, the relationship between faith and faithfulness is analogous to the relationship between belief and behavior—one leads to the other. Moses' mother provides us with an example of faith expressed through faithfulness, an inference that assumes her actions were driven by something more than just a mother's love. While she did what one might expect any loving mother to do, there seems to be something more behind it.

The Bible tells us: "Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, 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. 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" (Ex 2:1-3). The story drips with irony as one commentator observes: "When she could no longer hide him, she constructed a reed basket (an 'ark'), sealed it, and placed the baby 'in the Nile River' (Ex 2:3)—ironically, just as Pharaoh had decreed (1:22). Furthermore, the child was saved not only by the carrying out of Pharaoh's decree but in fact by Pharaoh's own daughter" (John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 242).

Scripture suggests that there was something different about Moses. In Exodus 2:2 he is called "a fine child" (cf. "beautiful" NASB, "healthy" NET). In Acts 7:20, Stephen calls him "no ordinary child" (cf. "beautiful to God" NASB, "beautiful in God's sight" ESV), as does the writer to the Hebrews in 11:23 (cf. "beautiful" ESV, NASB, NET). Was Moses simply a pretty baby; is that what motivated his mother to employ an extreme scheme to save him? On this question one commentator writes: "When Moses' mother looked at the child after his birth, she saw that he was 'fine' or 'good' (*tob*, 2:2). Just what is meant by this comment is hardly clear and has exercised commentators since before the time of Christ. The LXX [i.e., the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament] uses *asteios* (handsome) for the Hebrew *tob*, a Greek

word also found in Acts 7:20 and Hebrews 11:23, influenced no doubt by the LXX. This does not solve the problem, however, of what the comment means. Why did the writer feel it necessary to include such an apparently incidental comment in this otherwise terse narrative? Are we really to conclude that Moses' mother simply saw how good-looking he was? It was, after all, that observation that influenced her to hide the child. Are we to presume that the child's mother would not have hid [*sic*] him had he been ugly? What mother would *not* think her newborn son to be handsome? Also why would physical beauty warrant his salvation rather than some other trait?" (Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*, 61-62).

The commentator's point is that the use of this language to describe Moses echoes the refrain in Genesis 1, where God pronounces "good" what he has created, suggesting that God has provided this particular child to deliver his people from their slavery in Egypt. By faith his parents recognized as much and in faithfulness acted to save the child. The same commentator writes: "The birth of Moses is not merely about the birth of one man, but represents the birth of a people. The savior of God's people is born, and through him they will receive a new beginning. Their slavery will end, and their savior will bring them safely into their rest, the Promised Land" (61-62).

Two things are worth noting. "Josephus claimed that God had revealed to Amram in a dream that Moses would humble the Egyptians. There is no scriptural support for this tradition; it may or may not be true" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus," 2021 ed., 24, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus.pdf) and his father and mother are later identified by name as Amram and Jochebed (Ex 6:20; cf. Nu 26:59, but see *The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ex 6:20).

Clearly, the story of Moses' birth told in Exodus 2:1-10, that is, the *lower* story, is a story about his mother's *faith*, grounded in her understanding of God's promise made to the Patriarchs and what she perceived to be extraordinary about him, and her *faithfulness* to preserve his life by devising a cunning scheme to secure his rescue.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Exodus 2:1-10

1 Now a man of the tribe 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 riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave 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. So 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 pay 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."

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

- Underline Levi and Levite in v. 1.
- Circle "fine child" in v. 2.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 3.
- Circle "Pharaoh's daughter" in v. 7.
- Circle "sister" in v. 7.
- Box "so" indicating *result* in vv. 8-9.
- Circle "older" in v. 10.
- Bracket "he became her son" in v. 10.
- Circle "Moses" in v. 10.

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

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

1. Moses' *unnamed* parents are Levites. So what?
2. Jochebed becomes pregnant (v. 2; cf. 6:20). How do you imagine she and Amram reacted to the news?
3. She spends nine months anticipating her child's birth. What is she thinking during that time?
4. After giving birth, she hides Moses just because she is a *mother*, and he is a *pretty baby*. Right? Explain.
5. When Jochebed can hide him no longer, she puts Moses in a basket and puts it among the reeds along the Nile. What is she thinking?
6. Moses' sister, Miriam (15:20), plays a key role in Jochebed's extreme scheme. How so?
7. Moses is *crying* when Pharaoh's daughter comes to bathe. A fortunate coincidence? What do you think?
8. Verses 7-9 drip with irony. Explain.
9. Moses' early years are spent with his mother (v. 10). Comment on the significance of this.
10. **Discussion:** Moses' parents are mentioned in Hebrews 11:23. Talk about what you learn from their example of faith and faithfulness.

Commentary On The Text

The author of the Pentateuch is short on details when it comes to chronological references and personal names in the opening chapters of Exodus. He skips through nearly three centuries of Israel's sojourn in Egypt—from the death of Joseph (ca. 1805 B.C.) to the birth of Moses (ca. 1526 B.C.)—in just twenty-four verses. Chapter two opens with a birth announcement; an unnamed Levite woman has given birth to a son, and since we have no reason to believe that Pharaoh's attitude regarding boys born to Hebrew women has changed, we know this little one's life is threatened. Apparently, Moses is born not long after Thutmose I issued the order, "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile" (1:22).

Jochebed (cf. Ex 6:20) discovers she is pregnant; the good news comes at a bad time. She's no doubt cognizant of Pharaoh's order and likely knows of other mothers whose newborns have been sacrificed to his xenophobia. She has some months to ruminate on what to do. It's easy to believe that during those months she came up with an extreme scheme to save her child's life—should the baby turn out to be a boy. She would hide the infant until she could no longer safely do so. Then she would do what Pharaoh commanded—sort of. She would carefully prepare an ark, that is, a basket waterproofed with tar and pitch, gently place her baby in it, and carefully place it among the reeds along the banks of the Nile. She would not intend abandon the baby to the river's fate. She would station his sister, Miriam, nearby "to see what would happen to him" (v. 4). The details of her scheme suggest that she knows Egyptian women regularly come to that place to bathe, and hopes one of them will be compassionate. When she sees that her child is a boy, and what's more, that he is a "fine child," which most certainly means he is more than a "pretty baby," she sets her plan in motion.

A year after discovering she is pregnant, she doesn't "throw" her baby boy into the Nile (cf. 1:22); instead, she puts him safely along its bank as Miriam stands guard nearby. Her plan works even better than expected, for the woman who finds her baby and feels sorry for him is probably the daughter of Thutmose I, Hatshepsut, who later co-ruled Egypt. The suspense of the discovery is that it is potentially dangerous. "The delight of the discovery is the totally unexpected way it turns out. The climax of the discovery is the quick and bold action of the little boy's sister, who comes forward (with a convenient offer to

find a wet nurse) when she sees the princess's reaction to her brother's tears" (John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 16). And the woman who is chosen to nurse the baby is Moses' mother. What's more, the princess pays her for her services!

A number of years pass, perhaps ten or twelve, during which time Moses grows under the influence of his mother's faith and teaching. His identity forms; he is a Hebrew. He learns of the promise God made to the Hebrew patriarchs; he expects God to emancipate the sons of Israel. When the time comes, his mother returns him to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopts him, and he continues his education as an Egyptian.

In his sermon recorded in Acts 7, Stephen says: "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action" (v. 22). On his Egyptian education, one commentator writes: "As Moses grew older, he would become more and more involved in formal education which in Egypt included reading and writing of the hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts, the copying of text, instruction in writing letters and other formal documents. He would have learned such sports as archery and horseback riding which were favorite pastimes of a number of the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty. He probably had opportunity to learn something of the languages of Canaan, for some Egyptians officials were capable of speaking these languages as well as knowing the geography of the land" (John J. David, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 55-56).

On the influence of women on his life, another commentator offers this astute insight: "Several women were involved in the events surrounding Moses' birth: the midwives, Pharaoh's daughter, her maid, Moses' sister, and Jochebed. How ironic it was that women, whom Egyptian and Israelite men looked down on as less significant than themselves, should have been responsible for saving Israel's savior! Truly the hand of God is evident" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus," 2021 ed., 25, plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus.pdf).

The *upper* story of Moses' birth is about the providence of God in the provision of one who would emancipate the Sons of Israel. The *lower* story is about the faith and faithfulness of Moses' mother, who perceived that her baby boy was no ordinary child and devised an extreme scheme to save his life. Her faith and faithfulness linked the *lower* story to the *upper* story by providing the means God used to fulfill his promise to the patriarchs.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *Levi, Levite*

“Specifying the child’s tribal lineage, which appears of greater importance than giving other details, such as his parents’ names, likely indicates the author’s concern to promote the child’s priestly pedigree, the importance of which will be seen later in the book as well as the rest of the Pentateuch. Suffice it to say now that Moses will later play the ultimate priestly role by being the one through whom God’s law is given to the people” (Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*, 58). “At this point Scripture’s aim is to inform us that from an ordinary man, a member of the house of Levi, and from an ordinary woman, the daughter of Levi (that is, the only daughter of Levi the son of Jacob), whose names there was no need to mention, God raised up a redeemer unto his people” (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 17).

v. 2 *fine child*

Moses was “no ordinary child” (Ac 7:20; 11:23), which likely referred to something more than his physical appearance (see Enns, 61-62).

v. 3 *Pharaoh’s daughter*

Assuming a 1446 B.C. date for the exodus, “The ‘daughter of Pharaoh’ (Thutmose I) was probably ‘Hatshepsut,’ who was a very significant person in Egyptian history (v. 5). Josephus identified her as ‘Thermuthis.’ She later assumed co-regency with Thutmose III, and ruled 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 and rule. Queen Hatshepsut adopted certain male mannerisms to minimize objections to her rule, including the wearing of a false beard that appears on some Egyptian pictures of her” (Constable, 25). “If Thutmose I were the Pharaoh of 1:22 then his daughter, the famous queen Hatshepsut who later assumed kingship, may have been this daughter” (John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, 52).

v. 7 *his sister*

I.e., Miriam (see 15:20). “Moses’ older ‘sister’ was probably ‘Miriam.’ She is the only sister of Moses mentioned in Scripture (v. 4; Num. 26:59; 1 Chron. 6:3)” (Constable, 25).

v. 10 *older*

“After the child grew, which is interpreted by some to mean the weaning period of about two or three years, perhaps as much as twelve years, he was brought back to Pharaoh’s daughter to receive the full training as one who was a member of the royal household. The description of this is found in verse 10: ‘he became her son’ . . . Between verses 10 and 11 there is probably a time gap of about forty years (cf. Acts 7:23). These forty years represented the period of Moses’ training, which, according to Acts 7:22, exposed him to ‘all the wisdom of the Egyptians’” (Davis, 54, 55).

v. 10 *Moses*

“Some say that the name Moses (*mōšeh*) was a Hebrew word and that Hebrew was understood by the Egyptians. Others say ‘Moses’ was an Egyptian name, like ‘Mose’ in Thutmose or Ahmose, Cassuto (*A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, pp.20-1) suggests the term is Egyptian meaning ‘son’ or ‘is born’ though in sound *mōšeh* was a pun on the Hebrew verb *māšāh*, ‘to draw out’ (**I drew him out of the water**)” (John D. Hannah, “Exodus,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 110). “Moses’ name was probably Egyptian, but ‘Moses’ became a popular Hebrew name. It relates obviously to the names of other great Egyptians of that period (e.g., Ahmose, Thutmose, et al.). The ‘mose’ part of the name means ‘is born’ or ‘one born of,’ and ‘mo’ means ‘water.’ ‘The phrase “drew him out” (v. 10) is a Hebrew pun on the name, emphasizing the baby’s rescue from the waters of the Nile” (Constable, 26).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Remain faithful to your faith for God uses his people's faithfulness to accomplish his purposes.

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

When I think of Moses' mother, Jochebed, I am awestruck by her living example of faith. As I read our passage, I imagine her to be a fierce protector, a woman to be reckoned with, a mom with an amazing amount of courage. Babies are cute and precious and all kinds of wonderful squishy things, but let's face it, they're loud! At any moment, this "fine" newborn baby boy could have been hungry or dirty and squealed just a bit too loudly, causing their whole world to crash around them. Take it a step further and imagine if Moses had colic. What in the world would have happened then? I try to wrap my brain around the moment she released baby Moses in the river and it's inconceivable. When my oldest son had a cavity and needed laughing gas so the dentist could perform the filling, I had tears streaming down my cheeks as I prayed, "He's yours, Lord. Help me to trust you." It was a simple filling in a fancy pediatric dentist office with all the modern equipment and resources available in the twenty-first century. Here is Jochebed literally watching her child float away and I can't even stand by to watch my child get a filling. The unbelievable faith and trust in God she demonstrated inspires me. The irony in the whole situation is that technically Jochebed obeyed Pharaoh by putting Moses in the Nile. The double irony is in how God provided for her. Her baby was returned to her loving arms, and she was paid to raise him. Courage, trust, and faith in God, may they grow in each of us.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 2:1-10.

1. Why did the mom put the baby in the Nile River?
2. Who found the baby?
3. What did Pharaoh's daughter ask the mom to do?

What Do You Think?

Imagine trying to hide baby Moses. Do you think he cried? What would his parents do when he was fussy? Hide a toy in or around the house and have your family find it.

What Do You Do?

Play an indoor and outdoor game of hide and seek with your family. Describe the difference in Moses' life at his Hebrew home and in the palace.

CORE COMPETENCY: Faithfulness

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

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 31:3

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

KidPIX COUPON

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

- ☐ 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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