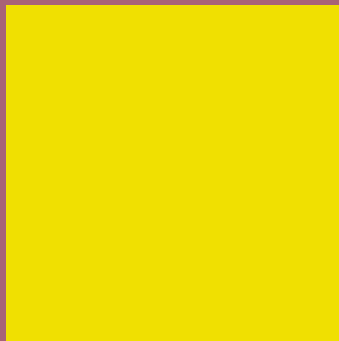


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ENCOUNTER WITH  
SACRED TEXTS: TEXTS  
OF VIOLENCE

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## MODULE TWO

# ENCOUNTER WITH SACRED TEXTS: TEXTS OF VIOLENCE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION



Figure 2.1  
Video Clip

Two boys, while fishing at a seaside of a remote Greek island, are talking about the refugees\* that flood their island. Are the refugees\* dangerous, being of a different faith and of a different nation? Is it God's will for them to get drowned, just like the Egyptians pursuing Israel in the Exodus\* narration? Suddenly the boys see a boat with refugees\* hitting the cliffs of the shore and starting sinking. What will the boys do? Will they help them or not, and what will come out?

## 2.2 VIDEO SCREENING

Based on the video you watched, try to answer the following questions.

1. Why were the youngsters initially reluctant to help the refugees?
  - a. Because they did not want to waste time as they had planned to meet their friends.
  - b. Because they believed that refugees are dangerous to their homeland.
  - c. Because it was getting dark and they had to return to their homes.
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
2. In the biblical narration of the Exodus, which people are involved?
  - a. Greeks and Syrians
  - b. Egyptians and Greeks
  - c. Egyptians and Jews
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
3. In the biblical narration, which sea did the pursued people cross, in order to be saved:
  - a. The Aegean Sea
  - b. The Red Sea
  - c. The Mediterranean Sea
  - d. I do not know / No answer

4. Why, in the biblical narrative, God is depicted to act violently and vengefully?
- a. In this way the faithful wanted to declare their trust in the one and only God, who is also the Savior of humankind.
  - b. Because God is violent and punishes those who do not follow His will.
  - c. Because God is just and His justice is sometimes rendered only by force.
  - d. I do not know / No answer
5. For Christians, God is the One who:
- a. Loves all men/women regardless of national origin, religious faith and social class.
  - b. Loves only those who believe in Him.
  - c. Like any father, He punishes those who want to harm His children, i.e. the faithful, even to the extent of using violence.
  - d. I do not know / No answer





Figure 2.2  
Ivan Aivazovsky: Passage of the Jews through the Red Sea, 1891  
Source: Wikimedia Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aivazovsky\\_Passage\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_through\\_the\\_Red\\_Sea.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aivazovsky_Passage_of_the_Jews_through_the_Red_Sea.jpg)


## 2.3 WHAT I NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO STUDY THE BIBLE STORY

Check the following information, along with the map (see 3.3) and the summary table (3.2) with the protagonists, events and dates.

### 2.3.1 HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

 The story of the crossing of the Red Sea\* can be found in the **book of Exodus\*** in the Old Testament\*. This book includes the events that took place around the 13th century BCE and reveal God's intervention in history with the aim of liberating the Israelites from the Egyptians and leading them to the land of Canaan\*. The Israelites lived in Egypt from 1600 to 1200 BCE, for approximately 400 years. When Ramses II\* became Pharaoh (1290–1224 BCE), he took strict measures against them, fearing they would ally with other peoples of the desert and revolt against him. One such measure was the killing of Jewish male children to limit their number. **Moses\*** was born at that time, and was miraculously saved from death. **He was chosen by God to liberate the Israelites and lead them to the land of Canaan\*.**

 On their way to the land of Canaan\*, the Israelites did not follow the shorter, coastal route. Instead, in order to avoid the Egyptian guards, they headed south to the Red Sea\*. Pharaoh at that time was Merneptah\* (1224–1204 BCE), the successor of Ramses II\*. With his army, Merneptah\* pursued the Israelites as far as the sea, but he could not prevent them from fleeing, because God opened a passage for them through the sea. Marching through the sea, they were able to proceed to the desert and were saved. In commemoration of this important event, Israelites celebrate **“Pesach\*” (=passage) even today, as the crossing of the Red Sea\* marked their passage from slavery in Egypt to freedom.**

 During this period, God makes a Covenant, i.e. a **Testament\*** with His people and at the same time protects them, supports them, cares for them, strengthens and guides them. On the other hand, the people relate to him, trust him and recognize him as unique and omnipotent.

Protagonists	Event	Dates
Ramses II	Egyptian Pharaoh who took strict measures against the Israelites, fearing they could ally with peoples of the desert and revolt against the Egyptians.	<b>1290–1224 BCE</b>
Moses	Leader of the Israelites who led them to liberation from the Egyptians.	<b>1393–1273 BCE</b>
Merneptah	Egyptian Pharaoh. Son and successor of Ramses II. Pursued the Israelites with his army as far as the sea, but was unable to prevent their escape	<b>1224–1204 BCE</b>

## 2.3 MAP



Figure 2.3  
Map with the march  
of the Israelites fleeing  
Egypt  
by Vaso Gogou



## 2.4 THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

### 2.4.1 THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT (EXODUS\* 14: 1-31 ABBR., NRSV)

Then the Lord said to Moses: <sup>2</sup> Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea [...] <sup>3</sup> Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, "They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them." <sup>4</sup> I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, so that I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so. [...] <sup>10</sup> As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. [...] <sup>13</sup> But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup> The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still." <sup>15</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, "[...] Tell the Israelites to go forward. <sup>16</sup> But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup> Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. <sup>18</sup> And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh" [...] <sup>21</sup> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup> The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. <sup>23</sup> The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. [...] <sup>24</sup> At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. <sup>25</sup> He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." <sup>26</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." <sup>27</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. <sup>28</sup> The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. <sup>30</sup> Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup> Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.



Figure 2.4  
 Moses and the Hebrews  
 crossing the Red Sea,  
 pursued by Pharaoh  
 Dura-Europos synagogue,  
 Syria, 303 BCE  
 Source: Wikimedia  
 Commons: [https://  
 commons.wikimedia.org/  
 wiki/File:Dura\\_Europos\\_  
 fresco\\_Jews\\_cross\\_Red\\_  
 Sea.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dura_Europos_fresco_Jews_cross_Red_Sea.jpg)



## 2.4.2 EXERCISES

In the following exercises, you can process the biblical text by identifying words and phrases that show God to act violently and then to investigate why the biblical writer presents God to be violent and vindictive.

### Comprehension

#### Exercise 1

Which of the following adjectives would you use to describe the God you encounter in the text?

Omnipotent		Biased		Vengeful	
Angry		Violent		Forgiving	
Evil		Benign		Harsh	
Protector		Helper		Punishing	
Intervening		Miraculous		Compassionate	
Righteous		Saviour		Liberating	

#### Exercise 2

Find and underline in the Bible text the phrases that show God's wrath towards the Egyptians.

### Exercise 3

In the same text, mention sentences which show the reasons for God's violent actions.

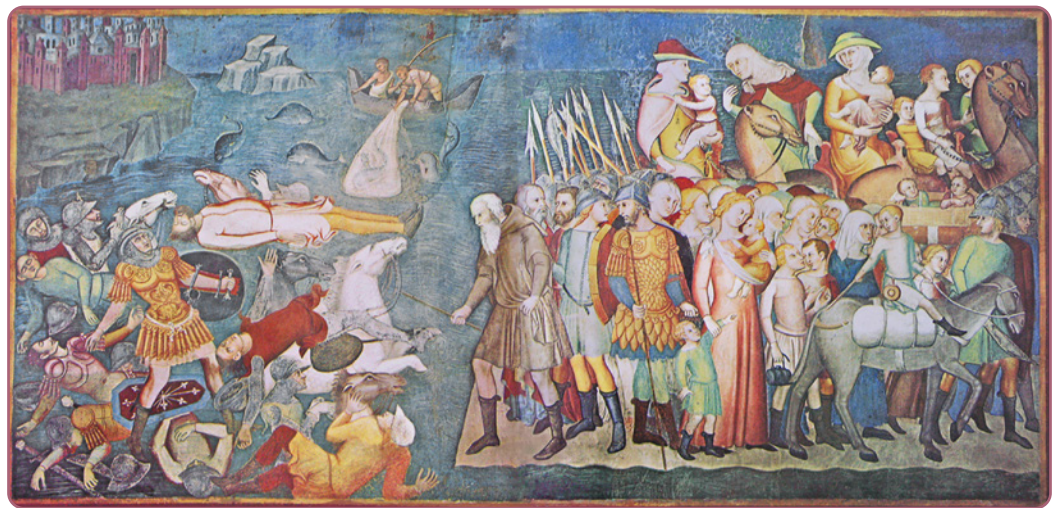


Figure 2.5  
Bartolo di Fredi, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*,  
Collegiate Church of San Gemignano, Italy, 1356  
Source: Wikimedia  
Commons: [https://  
he.wikisource.org/wiki/  
פירוש:SG\\_OT\\_304\\_Crossing\\_  
the\\_Red\\_Sea.JPG](https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/פירוש:SG_OT_304_Crossing_the_Red_Sea.JPG).

## Seeking for the deep interpretation

The biblical narration we read, describes a God who uses violence against humans. Let's read the following text and try to understand why the author of the Bible presents God like this. Maybe we need to consider something else?

### God as an avenger

All the events of the Old Testament\* were **transmitted orally for centuries before they began being recorded**. These Oral Traditions\* contained many expressions of emotion and tension, which were often exaggerated, and today we need to distinguish these from historical information. It's not our aim to discover what actually happened then, but to try to understand the significance it had for the life of those people who recorded the events centuries later, with the intention of proclaiming their faith in the one and only God. The one who, when needed, was always present and saved them from harm, evil and death. They were deeply convinced that they could not succeed on their own during those dramatically difficult times. This does not mean (as understood by those who interpret the Old Testament\* literally) that God killed children or enemies [...] Rather, it expresses their deep faith that, in this struggle, their lives and rights were protected by God. With such a view, history becomes **"sacred history."** That is, **when man recognizes Divine Providence in cases where life is preserved, protected, and escapes the danger of extinction.** And this God-savior of their lives is the one people trust.

(Ol. Grizopoulou & P. Kazlari, *Old Testament, The prehistory of Christianity, Class A Religious Education (Teacher's book)*, Athens: O.E.D.V., undated, p.58)

Based on the fact that the recording of historical events by biblical writers takes place many centuries after the events themselves, try to answer the following questions:

To which extent are these events accurately described? Do they include exaggerations because they serve other purposes? What are the purposes of this record?

## 2.5 SO FAR...

... we have learned ... understood ... clarified

In the Old Testament\*, the narration of the crossing of the Red Sea\* (Exodus\* 14:1-31) contains scenes of violence. It is violence exercised by God against the Egyptians, whom he eradicates, thus saving the people of Israel from their persecutors. **Approached literally**, this narration describes a God who is biased in favor of one particular nation and uses violence to bring another one to destruction.

The core of the historical events of Exodus\* took place around the 13th century BCE; however, the relevant texts of the Old Testament\* were recorded much later, in the 6th to 5th century BCE. The motivation for writing down narrations which had been passed down orally over centuries was not the study of history (in the contemporary sense of an accurate, objective understanding of events); but rather, it reflected concerns for the significance these narratives could have for people at the time of their recording. People of that era had already developed civilization, had settled in cities and their living conditions were essentially different from those of the period of the events narrated. **Therefore, the references of the Scriptures are not intended to provide exact historical information, as we understand it today, but rather to elaborate eternal theological truths, that will remain valid as long as there are people on Earth.**

Biblical authors attempted to graphically illustrate, absolutely and leaving no room for doubt, the omnipotence of the one and only God, in contrast to the weakness or even the non-existence of the pagan deities of that time. **Thus, their goal was to emphasize that their God is a unique, omnipotent protector and liberator.** Every time they lived through difficult and dramatic situations, he was present and saved them from every evil. Their profound conviction was that they could not cope with the hardships of life on their own, but God, through his saving interventions, protected their every righteous struggle.

Approaching the narration of the crossing of the Red Sea\*, as well as all the narrations of the Old Testament\*, from this perspective, we are able to understand the significance they have for us today and **distinguish** between the **“sacred history”** found in these texts and the **objective history** describing actual events.



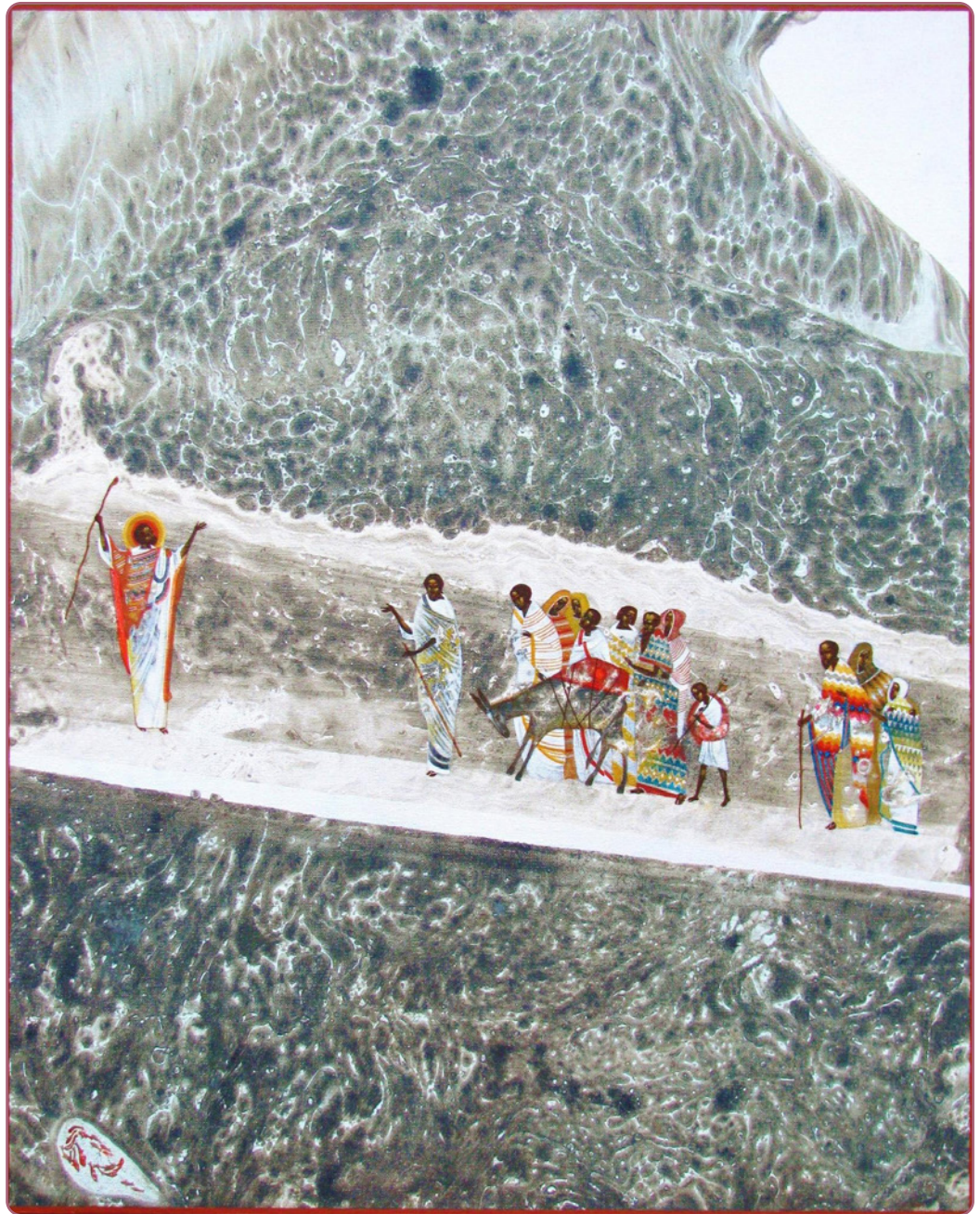


Figure 2.6  
Ivanka Demchuk,  
*Crossing the Red Sea*  
[https://www.etsy.com/  
listing/563765092/  
crossing-the-red-  
sea-original-print-  
on?ref=landingpage\\_  
similar\\_listing\\_top-  
2&pro=1&frs=1](https://www.etsy.com/listing/563765092/crossing-the-red-sea-original-print-on?ref=landingpage_similar_listing_top-2&pro=1&frs=1)

## 2.6 THE IMAGE OF TRUE GOD

### 2.6.1 EXERCISE 1 Who would I want to be my God?

Write down words that come to your mind spontaneously and try to give a description of this God.

### 2.6.2 EXERCISE 2 In the video, in the scene where Yiorgos chats with his mother about the rescue of the refugees\*, he asks “Mom, do you think God can do evil?” to which she answers, “Since we call him Father, I cannot imagine him harming his children.”

What can the phrase “God is Father” mean to a Christian?

In order to answer, we will use the following text from the New Testament\*:

Speaking to his disciples, Jesus says: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those that hate you and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he causes his sun to rise on both the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.” (Mt. 5:43-45)

Answer:

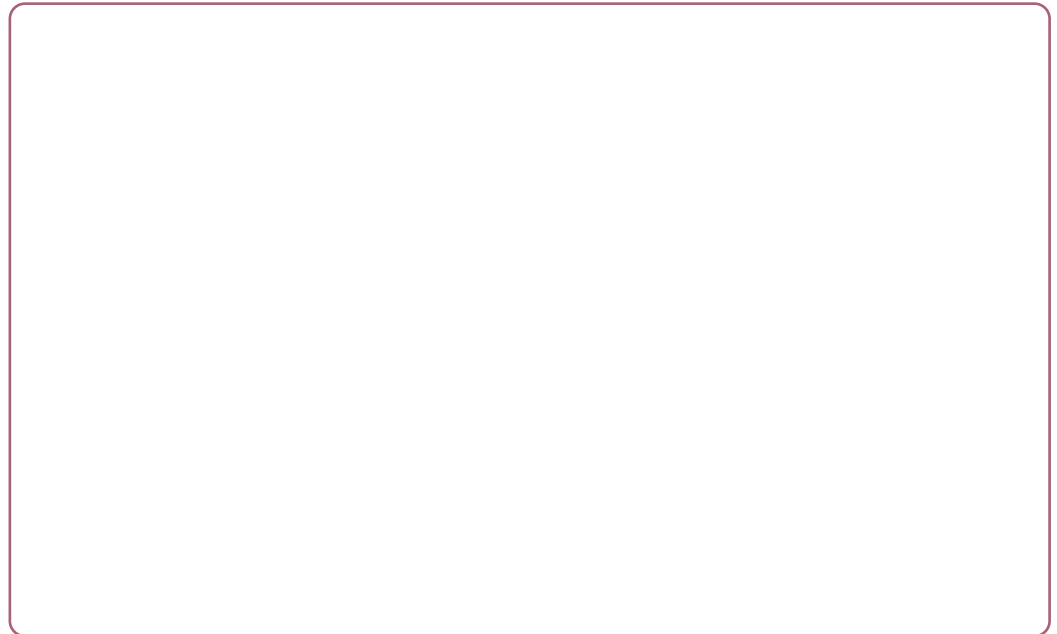
“Father” means that:

### 2.6.3 EXERCISE 3

God is Father to all men. Why, then, when we feel fear of the stranger and of the unknown, do we often need a strong God who protects only us and annihilates the one we fear?

When we are afraid, our image of God, but also of our fellow humans, is often affected by our insecurity. How can we deal with our fears towards strangers? In the following paragraph, underline the keywords that answer the above question. Explain your choice.

Let's remember what we saw in the video: Yiorgos shares his father's fear of the supposedly "dangerous" refugees\* and thus he remembers the story of the Old Testament\*. In the end, however, the youngsters' contact and acquaintance with the refugees\* eliminates the fear and creates feelings of friendship and familiarity with them.



### 2.6.3 CONCLUSION

According to the Christian tradition, God is ...

... Father, who loves all people with no exceptions and discriminations. God-Father, being Love himself, calls all of us to love all of our **fellow humans, even our enemies**, if we want to be his real children.



## 2.7 FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

After our discussions in class, attempt to answer the following questions. Compare your final answers with your original ones.

1. Why were the youngsters initially reluctant to help the refugees?
  - a. Because they did not want to waste time as they had planned to meet their friends.
  - b. Because they believed that refugees are dangerous to their homeland.
  - c. Because it was getting dark and they had to return to their homes.
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
2. In the biblical narration of the Exodus, which people are involved?
  - a. Greeks and Syrians
  - b. Egyptians and Greeks
  - c. Egyptians and Jews
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
3. In the biblical narration, which sea did the pursued people cross, in order to be saved:
  - a. The Aegean Sea
  - b. The Red Sea
  - c. The Mediterranean Sea
  - d. I do not know / No answer

4. Why is God shown, in the biblical narrative, to act violently and vengefully?
- a. In this way the faithful wanted to declare their trust in the one and only God, who is also the Savior of humankind.
  - b. Because God is violent and punishes those who do not follow His will.
  - c. Because God is just and His justice is sometimes rendered only by force.
  - d. I do not know / No answer

5. For Christians, God is the One who:
- a. Loves all men/women regardless of national origin, religious faith and social class.
  - b. Loves only those who believe in Him.
  - c. Like any father, He punishes those who want to harm His children, i.e. the faithful, even to the extent of using violence.
  - d. I do not know / No answer

## 2.8 ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS: MATERIAL FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION



Figure 2.7  
Nikolaos Gyzis, Greeks  
fleeing the Destruction of  
Psara, 1896-8  
Source: [https://commons.  
wikimedia.org/wiki/  
File:Cysis\\_Nikolaos\\_After\\_  
the\\_destruction\\_of\\_Psara.  
jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cysis_Nikolaos_After_the_destruction_of_Psara.jpg)

## Exodus (Edith Piaf)

They left during the winter sun  
They left running through the sea  
To erase fear  
To override fear  
That life had nailed into the depths of their hearts

They left believing in the harvest  
From the old country of their song  
Their hearts singing with hope  
Their hearts bellowing with hope  
They have reclaimed the road of their memories

They have cried the tears of the sea  
They have recited so many prayers  
“Deliver us, our brothers!  
Deliver us, our brothers!”  
That their brothers will pull them towards the light

They are there in a new country  
That floats with the mast of their boat  
Their broken hearts of love  
Their hearts of love lost  
They have found the land of love

## 2.9 GLOSSARY

Clarification of theological terminology, and also information on the historic personalities and places found in the book.

### **Canaan**

In the Old Testament, refers to the land settled by the Israelites, but also by its “Canaanite” inhabitants. The name means “country of purple” (Greek name “Phoenicia”) and comes from the main export product of the region, a substance used to dye fabrics deep purple. The land of Canaan is the Promised Land; the fulfillment of God’s promises to the people of Israel by enabling them to settle in this area after leaving Egypt.

### **Easter (Christian)**

With the feast of Easter, Christians celebrate the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who gave man the prospect of life, and freedom from death and evil in all its manifestations. They celebrate the restoration of life in its entirety and its victory over death which was brought by Jesus Christ.

### **Exodus**

The book of Exodus is the second book of the Bible and the Hebrew Bible and belongs to the historical books of the Old Testament. Exodus, together with the books of Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy is the Pentateuch (in Hebrew **Law** (Torah). In the Greek translation of the Septuagint (LXX) it was called “Exodus”, because the central issue is the exit (ie the liberation) of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The protagonist in the Exodus is Moses.

### **Merneptah (1224-1204 BCE)**

The 3rd son of Ramses II and his wife Isetnofret (and 13th son of Ramses, overall). With his army, Merneptah pursued the Israelites to the sea, but was unable to prevent them from fleeing.

### **Moses**

Charismatic personality of the Jewish nation and religion. Moses was a leader, a hero, a legislator, a prophet and a mediator between God and his people. He led the people of Israel to liberation from the Egyptians, crossing the Red Sea and through the Sinai Desert for 40 years. According to Jewish and Christian tradition, Moses received the 10 commandments from God. He receives special honour as a prophet from both Christians and Muslims.

### **Oral Traditions (Old Testament)**

Words and narratives that Jews, both men and women, repeated to each other outside their tents in the desert, and in their homes, whether hovels or palaces. At the heart of these narratives has always been the conviction that God is the great protagonist in human life. Most of these narratives were transmitted in ways that were easy to decipher: narratives, images, quotes, poems. In this way they were indelibly engraved in the memory of people and everyone was able to understand them. Centuries later, these narratives began to be recorded and gradually, a collection of texts was created that later became the Old Testament.

## **Pesach (Jewish)**

The word Pesach means “passage”. Jews celebrating Pesach remember that their ancestors crossed the Red Sea from slavery in Egypt into freedom.

## **Ramses II (1290-1224 BCE)**

Also known as Ramses the Great. He was the third pharaoh of Egypt's 19th dynasty and the most powerful of all Egyptian rulers.

## **Red Sea**

The narrow sea arm of the Indian Ocean between NE. Africa and SW. Asia, where it creates the ancient Arabian Gulf. At the time of the “Exodus” of the Israelites from Egypt, the Red Sea was also called the Sea of Reeds and was then a lake. The northern part, west of the Sinai Peninsula, is mentioned in the Old Testament book of Exodus as being crossed by the Israelites since, for a millennium, it was crossed only widthwise and never lengthwise.

## **Refugee**

Someone who is forced, by circumstances or by violence, to leave his or her home or place of permanent residence and seek refuge in a foreign country or country of ethnic origin. Often used in the plural to refer to populations of people moving in groups.

## **Testament**

The term literally means the last expression of a person's will, but in the Bible it is used to describe a Hebrew word meaning “treaty”, “alliance” or “agreement”. However, in addition to the meaning it can have for human relationships, the term is used specifically to denote the particular agreement that governs God's relationship (Gen. 9:8; Ex. 15:18; 17:1) with the people of Israel (Ex. 19-24) and aims to create the conditions for the salvation of all mankind. The responsibility for initiating the agreement lies with God, who determines its content and terms. But this does not abolish the freedom of man, who is free to accept or reject the agreement, which provides for rights and obligations for both God (faithfulness to promises, love and protection for his people) and man (faith in the One and Only God, and social justice). Thus the covenant does not define a God-master and man-slave relationship, but a father-son relationship (Ex. 4:22).

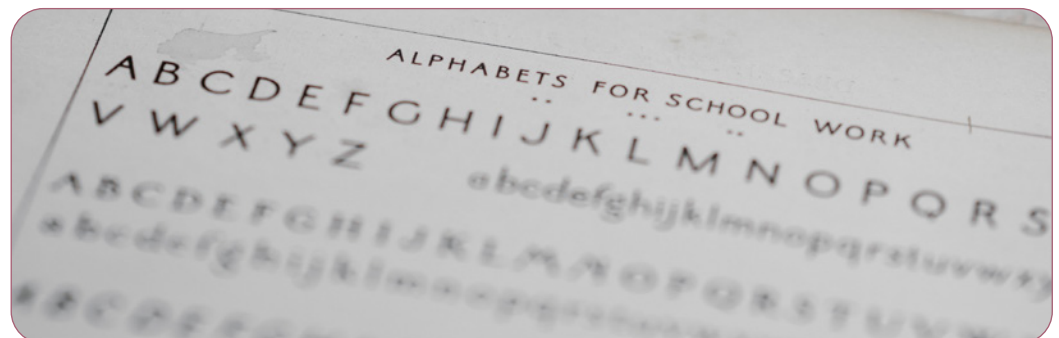


Photo: Annie Spratt | Unsplash

## 2.10 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

### **Coast at a Greek island, close to the Turkish coast. Evening**

Two youngsters, friends from school, have gone fishing on a rocky and steep coast. It's late afternoon. As they fish they talk.

STRATOS: *Have you heard? Yesterday, two more boats with refugees and migrants arrived on our island. But the sea was very rough and I heard their boat sank and most of them drowned.*

YIORGOS: *Saying the truth, I don't understand why they embark and risk drowning. And those who manage to reach our island, they live in miserable conditions. You see them everywhere.*

STRATOS: *Yeah, I know...*

YIORGOS: *My dad says that we can't afford more of them on the island. He also says that many of them come on purpose, in order to alter our faith and traditions. They are dangerous. May God put his hand.*

STRATOS: *What do you mean?*

YIORGOS: *My dad says that God stands by our side and that's why they are drowning, God doesn't let them carry out their plans for our country.*

STRATOS: *This reminds me of the story of the Red Sea Crossing we read the day before yesterday at school.*

### **In the class of Stratos and Yiorgos**

The teacher act with a bit of talent and with the help of slides showing illustrations on the story of the Red Sea Crossing. Some kids are very enthusiastic, some are a bit bored but the excitement of the teacher is contagious.

TEACHER: *And Lord said to Moses "Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. [...] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers." [...] and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. [...] Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea.*

*The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.*

### **Coast at a Greek island, close to the Turkish coast.**

YIORGOS: *Exactly. That's what my dad says! As of then, so and now God protects his believers and punishes those who try to cause them harm.*

STRATOS: *Do you mean that God destroys people? Does he harm people?*

YIORGOS: *Ehh ... I don't know. I never thought about it, but why not?*

STRATOS: *So, some people are his favorites and some others, "let them go hell", as we use to say?*

YIORGOS: *I'm not sure, but it could be that way. After all, everything happens as God wants to. Isn't that what they say? God can do everything. God is omnipotent.*

STRATOS: *I don't know man... But I really need to go. I don't think God will help me on my geography test tomorrow.*

### **Stratos strats walking away when Yiorgos sees a flickering flashlight in the sea and hears voices**

YIORGOS: *Hey, Stratos, look!*

STRATOS: *Where?*

YIORGOS: *To the sea, yo! There's a light there. Voices too, can't you hear?*

STRATOS: *Yes, right. I hear something. Let's go closer to see...*

*(From the side of the sea, voices are heard shouting in an incomprehensible language and in English they cry "Help")*

STRATOS: *There are people ... Refugees!*

YIORGOS: *They ask for help. Let's go... (Yiorgos moves towards from the sea)*

STRATOS: *Go where, Yiorgos? Are you crazy? Let's go home. It's perilous here.*

YIORGOS: *No, Stratos. They ask for help.*

STRATOS: *And how will we help them? You think we can?*

YIORGOS: *I don't know. We'll see.*



(The Refugee boat hits the cliffs, gets slashed and starts sinking. The waves hitting the cliffs push the boat adrift back to the sea. The passengers cry for help. Voices and screams of women and children are heard. A man from the boat throws a rope to the youngsters. The end of the rope slides into the water).

STRATOS: *It's dangerous here. Let's go. Let's go to find someone to help.*

YIORGOS: *Let's try to catch the rope they threw to us.*

STRATOS: *And what to do with it? Can we pull the boat?*

YIORGOS: *We will tie the rope to the cliffs so they can pull it themselves. Come on, hustle, there is no time to waste!*

*The youngsters manage to grab the rope and to tie it to a cliff. The passengers of the boat pull the rope and the boat, now half-deflated, finally approaches the rocky shore.*

STRATOS: *A baby. He gives us a baby.*

YIORGOS (exhausted and soaked): *Now, let's go call for help.*

STRATOS: *Yes, let's go...*

### **Night at Yiorgos' home**

Yiorgos' mother dries his hair and sits on the bed near him.

MOTHER: *It was dangerous what you did today, you know?*

YIORGOS: *You mean I shouldn't have done it?*

MOTHER: *I mean... what you did was madness.*

*(Pause)*

YIORGOS: *Mom, do you think God can do evil?*

MOTHER: *How did you come to this, right now?*

YIORGOS: *Answer me.*

MOTHER: *Hmm, let me tell you... Since we call him "Father" I can't imagine him hurting his children.*

YIORGOS: *Yes, every father loves his children, but sometimes he gets angry. Do you think dad will be angry with me? You know his views on immigrants and refugees ...*

MOTHER: *I know. But also, I know that if he sees a fire burning, first he will put out the fire and then he will look for the arsonist.*

YIORGOS: *Do you mean that dad, being there in my place, he would do the same?*

MOTHER: *Yes, that's what I believe. Your dad may have his ideas, but he puts compassion above ideas.*

YIORGOS: *And what's your own opinion?*

MOTHER: *I think that since you were there, you did exactly what you had to do. I'm very proud of you.*

(She kisses him, stands up and goes out of the room, turning off the light. Yiorgos lies on his bed and he recalls what happened a few hours ago. Shortly after, he falls asleep. He is exhausted).

### **Next day at the old olive mill**

The boys look at the old olive mill while they approach.

STRATOS: *Lucky we were there, eh? Or was it God's intent; you think?*

YIORGOS: *My grandmother says that God acts in his own way and many times, we can't even imagine them.*

*Arriving at the old olive mill, some of the refugees recognize them and approach them, smiling. One of the refugees, together with a girl of their age, comes to meet them.*

REFUGEE GIRL: *You are the boys who tied the rope of our boat yesterday, aren't you?*

YIORGOS: *(somehow confused and shy) Yyyyes, eh, you know ... we ... it was by chance, I mean ...*

STRATOS: *(almost apologetically) Yes, yes, it just happened we were there.*

REFUGEE GIRL: *Thank you very much. Thanks to you we have been saved.*

YIORGOS: *No, don't say ... Everyone would do that.*

STRATOS: *It was pure luck, that is.*

REFUGEE GIRL: *Some people call it luck. I name it the Hand of God. Yesterday you became God's hand.*

*The young girl approaches and gives Yiorgos something. She smiles at him and leaves. Yiorgos looks at his hand. The girl has given him a small glass bottle. He opens it and an exquisite fra-grance comes out.*

STRATOS: *What is it?*

YIORGOS: *Perfume. (He smells it.) Jasmine!*

STRATOS: *Jasmine. Divine! Come on, "God's hand", let's go now and you can give me a help-ing hand to clean our storeroom, as my father asked me to, otherwise nothing will save me from his hands!*

The two youngsters walk away laughing and teasing each other.

## 2.11 REFERENCES

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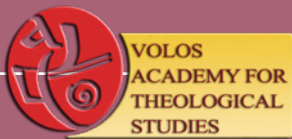
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