

Exodus 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

Analysis

And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink (וַתַּקְרַב־לֹו תְּבַת גָּמָע אֶת־
vatiqach-lo tevat gome)—**Ark** (תְּבַת, tevah) is the same word used only for Noah's ark (Genesis 6-9), deliberately evoking salvation through water by God's providence. **Bulrushes** (אֶתְמָא, gome, papyrus reeds) and waterproofing (חֶמֶר יְפָת, chemar vazafet, "pitch and bitumen") show careful preparation. Jochebed doesn't abandon Moses—she strategically places him where Pharaoh's daughter bathes (v. 5), a calculated act of faith. **The flags** (יְמִסָּה, suf, reeds) will later name the Red Sea (yam suf), linking Moses' salvation to Israel's deliverance.

Historical Context

Papyrus reeds (*Cyperus papyrus*) grew abundantly in the Nile Delta. Egyptian nobility bathed in secluded river spots with attendants. Jochebed's plan relied on Egyptian custom and maternal compassion—principles transcending culture. The ark's construction shows resourcefulness and courage under genocide's threat.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the "ark" imagery connect Moses' salvation to Noah's and anticipate Israel's Red Sea deliverance?
2. What does Jochebed's strategic faith—acting wisely while trusting God for results—teach about balancing human responsibility and divine providence?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא יָכַל הָעֵד בְּאָפִינוֹ לֹא וַיַּתְקַרֵּב
H3808 **And when she could** not longer hide H0
H3201 H5750 H6845 H3947

וְבָצֵב שָׁם וְבָצֵב פָּת בְּתֵבֶת גַּמְאַת וְתַחַמֵּב הַבְּחִמָּת רְבִחִמָּת בְּחִמָּת
H8392 H1573 H2560 H2564 H2203 H7760
for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch and put

בְּהַיאָר שְׁפֵת עַל בְּסֵר וְבָצֵב וְבָצֵב תְּמִימָה
H0 H853 H3206 H7760 H5488 H5921 H8193 H2975
the child and put it in the flags by the river's

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:19 (Parallel theme): The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

Exodus 1:22 (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Genesis 6:14 (Parallel theme): Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

Isaiah 18:2 (Parallel theme): That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

Matthew 2:16 (Parallel theme): Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

Matthew 2:13 (Parallel theme): And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Genesis 11:3 (Parallel theme): And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter.