

Exodus 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

Analysis

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it (וַתֵּרֶד בַּת־פַּרְעֹה לִרְחוֹץ עַל־הַיָּאֹר) —God's providence orchestrates perfect timing: Pharaoh's daughter discovers the ark. Rabbinic tradition names her Bithiah ("daughter of Yah"), suggesting later conversion. **Came down** (יָרַד, yarad) to the river places her at the point of Moses' salvation. The irony is thick: Pharaoh weaponized the Nile for genocide (1:22); his daughter uses it for mercy. **She sent her maid** (אֶמְתָּהּ, amatah, "her female servant") to fetch the ark—curiosity or compassion compels the action.

Historical Context

Egyptian royal women had significant autonomy and wealth. Bathing rituals included servants and perfumes. Archaeological evidence shows the eastern Delta (Goshen area) was accessible to royal family members who had estates there. Pharaoh's daughter's status meant she could defy her father's decree with relative impunity.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of Pharaoh's daughter demonstrate His sovereignty over even the households of His enemies?
2. In what ways can you be God's instrument of mercy in systems designed for harm?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּרֶד	בַּת	פַּרְעֹה	לָרַחַץ	עַל	הַיָּאֵר	
came down	And the daughter	of Pharaoh	to wash	H5921	along by the river's	
H3381	H1323	H6547	H7364		H2975	
וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ	הֵלְכָה	עַל	יַד	הַיָּאֵר	וַתֵּרָא	אֹת
and her maidens	walked	H5921	side	along by the river's	and when she saw	H853
H5291	H1980		H3027	H2975	H7200	
הַתֵּבָה	בֵּת	וַיִּשְׁלַח	אֶת	אִמָּתָהּ	וַתִּקְחָהּ:	
the ark	among	the flags	she sent	H853	her maid	to fetch
H8392	H8432	H5488	H7971		H519	H3947

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:21 (Parallel theme): And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

Psalms 9:9 (Parallel theme): The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Psalms 12:5 (Parallel theme): For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

Psalms 46:1 (Parallel theme): God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Exodus 8:20 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Exodus 7:15 (Parallel theme): Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.