

Exodus 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

Analysis

And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children (וַתַּחֲמֹל עָלָיו, vatachmol alav, "she had compassion")—The baby's crying provokes **compassion** (חַמָּל, chamal, "pity/mercy"). God uses natural human tenderness to save His chosen deliverer. **This is one of the Hebrews' children**—she knows the genocide decree; her recognition creates moral crisis. Will she obey her father's law or act on conscience? The text's simplicity heightens the drama: a moment's decision determines Moses' fate and Israel's future. Her compassion foreshadows God's greater compassion for Israel (2:24-25, 3:7-9).

Historical Context

Egyptian sources occasionally show royal clemency toward conquered peoples' children. That Pharaoh's daughter immediately recognizes a Hebrew child suggests physical or cultural markers (circumcision, swaddling, the ark's style). Her willingness to defy the decree indicates either strong character or confidence in her royal immunity.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the princess's compassion despite knowing the child's identity challenge you to act mercifully regardless of tribal or political divisions?
2. What does this moment teach about God's use of human emotion (even in pagans) to accomplish His redemptive purposes?

Interlinear Text

וַתִּפְתַּח אֶת וַתִּרְאֵהוּ מְלִידֵי י וְהִנֵּה בֵּן עַר
And when she had opened it she saw H853 children H2009 and behold the babe
H6605 H7200 H3206 H5288

בָּכָה וַתַּחַמֵּם ל עָלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר מְלִידֵי י
wept And she had compassion H5921 on him and said children
H1058 H2550 H559 H3206

הָעִבְרִים יֶמֶס זֶה:
This is one of the Hebrews H2088
H5680

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 3:8 (Parallel theme): Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

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

1 Kings 8:50 (Parallel theme): And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:

Psalms 106:46 (Parallel theme): He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

Nehemiah 1:11 (Parallel theme): O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Proverbs 21:1 (Parallel theme): The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.