

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 2:1-10
“Boy in a Basket”

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Exodus 1:1-10

Verse 1-2

Now a man of the house 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.

- Exodus 6:20 tells us that this man’s name was Amram. He was the grandson of Levi and lived for 137 years. The woman’s name was Jochebed. She was also descended from Levi. These details establish that both of these people were Jews, descendants from one of the sons of Jacob.
- In the course of time, Amram and Jochebed conceived and she bore a little boy. This happened during the time when Pharaoh had ordered all of the Hebrew male babies to be thrown into the Nile and drowned.
- When the text says that Jochebed saw that this was a “fine child,” it means that she knew there was something special about this baby. He was in some way extraordinary. So she hid him for three months so that he would not be discovered by the Egyptians and thrown into the Nile as Pharaoh had ordered.
- This child was Moses.

Verse 3-4

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. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

- Eventually, Jochebed could no longer conceal the child. So, she took a basket and made it water tight. She put the child in the basket and put the basket in the Nile River close to the banks. Since people were throwing babies into the river to drown, the cries of an infant at the

edge of the Nile would not alarm anyone. They would simply assume that this was just another Hebrew child cast out to die.

- Also, Jochebed's plan is obedient to the Pharaoh's command. She did indeed cast the child she had born into the Nile. If anyone asked what happened to her baby, she could honestly say that she threw him into the river.
- Jochebed assigned her older child, a daughter, therefore in no danger, to watch over the basket to see that the child was safe. Her daughter's name was Miriam.

Verse 5

Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it.

- Pharaoh's daughter noticed the basket which contained the baby. Not knowing what was inside, she sent her attendants to retrieve the basket.

Verse 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.

- Pharaoh's daughter knew what she had found, a Hebrew baby boy. She also knew Pharaoh's order that all such infants were to be thrown into the Nile and drowned.

Verse 7

Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

- Miriam suggested to the princess that she might want a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby, as the baby was crying. Miriam was suggesting that the princess keep the baby alive in violation of Pharaoh's order.

Verse 8

"Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother.

- The princess told Miriam to go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby. Miriam returned with Jochebed, her mother and the baby's mother.

Verse 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.

- As a result of this strange twist of circumstances, Moses came under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter, and his own mother was hired to be his wet nurse.

Verse 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.

- When the child no longer required nursing, he was taken to the princess to live with her as her son.
- The princess named her son after her father. The Pharaoh's name was **Ahmose** or, possibly, **Thutmose**. The Egyptian word, "mose" means to be born. It sounds like the Hebrew word that means to draw out.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Boy in a Basket*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)