

October 6, 2011 Gals of Scripture study

## The Mothers of Moses - Jochebed and Pharaoh's Daughter

Our Text: Exodus 2: 1-10 and Hebrews 11:23



The Egyptian Papyrus plant grows 8-10 ft. tall as an impressive, weeping specimen plant and is great for filtration in farm ponds.

The Egyptian Papyrus plant was imported from the Nile River and this famous plant was used to record scriptures in the ancient Bible.

<http://www.tytyga.com/product/Egyptian+Papyrus+Grass+Plant>



This one contains dates and figs but a similar one could have been used by Jochebed; however, she would have added pitch and tar to make it watertight.

Tar pitch is a [viscoelastic polymer](#). This means that even though it seems to be solid at room temperature and can be shattered with a hard impact, it is actually fluid and will flow over time, but extremely slowly. The [pitch drop experiment](#) taking place at [University of Queensland](#) is a [long-term experiment](#) which measures the flow of a piece of pitch over many years. For the experiment, pitch was put in a glass funnel and allowed to slowly drip out. Since the pitch was allowed to start dripping in 1930, only eight drops have fallen. It was calculated in the 1980s that the pitch in the experiment has a viscosity approximately 230 billion ( $2.3 \times 10^{11}$ ) times that of water. <sup>[1]</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch\\_%28resin%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_%28resin%29)

## 2:3 Moses' Ark

**But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket (*ark of bulrushes, KJV*) for him and coated it with tar (*slime, KJV*) and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.**

The Hebrew word translated *ark* in the KJV is better translated *basket*, the word is the same for both. Also the KJV bulrushes were actually papyrus plants. Moses' basket was made of the leaf of the papyrus, which is a reedy plant that in those days grew plentifully on the banks of the Nile, and which was used by the Egyptians for making garments, shoes, cords, baskets, boats, sails, and a variety of other things. The roots were dried and used for fuel. The pith of the stem was boiled and eaten, but it was used mainly in making papyrus paper. The inside bark was cut into strips, which were sewn together and dried in the sun, forming the papyrus used for writing. Papyrus grows today in Egypt, in Ethiopia, in the Jordan River valley, and in Sicily.

The tar or slime that the Levite woman mixed with pitch to coat the ark is brittle when cold, but melts easily and runs freely when heated. Together they are tenacious when set and make a firm cement. In preparing the

small vessel for the infant Moses, his mother probably plaited the papyrus leaves together, and then coated them with a mixture of hot tar and pitch. When the coating cooled, it would have been firm and waterproof.<sup>1</sup>

### **Exodus 2:1-2**

1. In your own words describe the events of these two verses. Look behind the scenes. How do you think the family kept the baby quiet? If a close neighbor heard the newborn's cries, what do you think he or she would have done? What if the neighbor had herself just lost a newborn to Pharaoh's decrees? Why at three months could Jochebed "hide him no longer"?
2. How do you think you would have reacted in these circumstances? Like Jochebed? Like the other mothers?

### **Exodus 2:3-4**

3. The events here go straight to a mother's heart. How do you think Jochebed felt as she walked away from the river?

### **Exodus 2:5-6**

4. Pharaoh's daughter, a member of the royal family, part of the race that was oppressing the Israelites, now enters the picture. What is most obvious about her from these verses?
5. Why do you suppose she was allowed to disobey her father's harsh edict?

### **Exodus 2:7-10**

6. Compare verse 9 and 10. What conflicting emotions do you think Jochebed must have felt?

### **Re-read Exodus 2:10**

7. What is the significance of the words "he [Moses] became her son"?
8. What purpose of God was at work here?

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & customs of the Bible* (Rev. ed.). (99). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

The majority of the information (other than Scripture) for tonight's study came from Women of the Bible written by Ann Spangler and Jean E. Syswerda, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan and copyrighted 1999.

### **Hebrews 11:23**

9. This verse says that Moses' mother and father acted "by faith". Their one goal was to protect and save their child. Fear for our children's safety—for their spiritual and physical lives—seems to be an inescapable part of parenting. What part does faith play in child rearing? What is your greatest fear for your child? How can you "by faith" respond to your fears?

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