

Exodus 2:1-4

וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֵוִי וַיִּקַּח אֶת-בַּת-לֵוִי: 2 וַתְּהֶר האִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן
וַתֵּרָא אֹתוֹ כִּי-טוֹב הוּא וַתְּצַפְנֵהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יָרָחִים: 3 וְלֹא-יִכְלֶה עוֹד
הַצְּפִינוֹ וַתִּקַּח-לוֹ תִּבְתָּ גָמָא וַתַּחְמְרָה בַּחֲמֵר וּבַזֹּפֶת וַתִּשֶׂם בָּהּ
אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּשֶׂם בְּסוּף עַל-שֵׁפֶת הַיָּאָר: 4 וַתִּתְצַב אַחֲתוֹ מֵרַחֵק
לְדַעָה מֵה־יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ:

Vocabulary

Verse 1

לוי name: "Levi"

בת "daughter" (not to be confused with בית "house")

Verse 2

הרה verb: "conceive" (BDB, 247)

צפן verb (3ms pronominal suffix): "hide" (BDB, 860)

ירח noun: "month" (BDB, 437)

Syntax & Miscellaneous

- Notice the morphological difference/similarity between the construct form of "house" and "daughter" noted above.
- The second clause of verse two, וַתֵּרָא אֹתוֹ כִּי-טוֹב הוּא, exhibits several interesting syntactic phenomena. The conjunctive ׀ indicates temporality "and when," the relative clause is marked by כִּי "that," and the conjunction in the following clause would be the resultant temporal marker, "then." Also, the verbless clause follows the normal typology S-P (subject-predicate).

Vocabulary

Verse 3

צפן verb (*Hiphil*): "hide" (cf. verse 2)

תבה noun (construct): "ark" (BDB, 1061)

גמא noun: "reed, papyrus" (BDB, 167)

חמר verb: "smear, cover" (BDB, 330)

חמר noun: "bitumen" (BDB, 330)

זפת "pitch" (BDB, 278)

סוף "reed" (BDB, 693)

שפת "side, bank"

Verse 4

יצב verb (*Hithpael*): "station oneself" (BDB, 426)

רחק "far away, distant, far"

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Syntax & Misc.

Verse 3

- As with the conjunctives in verse 2, the first two clause connectors should be understood sequentially: “and when...then.”

Verse 4

- The differentiation (i.e. determination) of clause boundaries is difficult for students. Consider this clause: וַתִּחַמְרֶהָ בַחֲמֵר וּבְזָפֹת. How does one decide which *waw* is a clause connector and which is a word/phrase connector? In this case there are several “markers.” The first *waw*, attached to the verb, connects two clauses together; whereas, the second connects two noun phrases together. The *beth* preposition repeated on the second noun denotes a compound object (in English: “with this and with that” or “with this and that”). Additionally, the diacritical mark, *athnach*, shows that this word is the end of the phrase; thus the *waw* is a noun connector and not the beginning of a new phrase.
- The verb, יִעֲשֶׂה “will happen,” should be understood as a modal (possibly “subjunctive” mood: “what might happen”). The Hebrew modal system (i.e. verbal mood) is even more disputed than the tense/aspect relationship.
- How might לְיָדָהּ be parsed?