

Bible e-Study /Women of the Old Testament #6
Shiphrah and Puah

“And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own”
Exodus 1:21

NUGGET – This is a section of scripture often overlooked and yet full of meaning and grace. Looking at just the section ([Exodus 1:15-22](#)) where these midwives, Shiphrah and Puah are mentioned shows us that God's kindness comes to the aid of those who fear Him. Verse 21 is an example of God's kindness being reflective of the faithfulness of His people.

In reading about Shiphrah and Puah we learn that they feared God rather than the King of Egypt. We understand that when it says they feared God that means they trusted in God. They put their trust in the Lord and His ways. That is why they could not kill the baby Hebrew boys as the king had told them to do. It is interesting to note the parallel between these women's act of faithfulness to God and God's way of rewarding them:

- Shiphrah and Puah did not kill the baby boys and so the families of the Hebrews continued to grow in number
- God gave to Shiphrah and Puah families of their own

In the King James Version it says that “God made them houses.” That is the King James English for saying that God gave them a heritage; that He established for them a lasting legacy. By God giving them families and having Moses write down in scripture their acts of faithfulness, their names have been recorded and remembered through the ages. God gave them a ‘house’ that has endured.

These women give us an example to follow. We too are to have trust and faith in God and in His ways. For us that means we are to trust in Jesus Christ and His word and not give in to the temptation to compromise that away. God's grace is given to those who trust in Jesus. Trust, not compromise, is what Shiphrah and Puah show us by their example of faith.

Remember that God's reward to the midwives paralleled their faithful acts. So God rewards us according to what Christ has done, not according to our sins. We have the righteousness of Christ as ours given to us as a gift because that is what Christ did in obedience to God. Christ was righteous before God and God's parallel reward to us is the gift of Christ's righteousness to all who believe in Him.

APPLICATION - God gives us the righteousness of Christ and Christ was righteous in all His ways despite the pressures and temptations of Satan. Shiphrah and Puah obeyed God's ways and did not give in to the demands of the king of Egypt.

1. In our day we too face the temptation to give in and compromise our faith in God's grace to us through the cross of Christ. What temptations to compromise do Christians face in our day and age?
2. When the temptation to compromise comes, walk out your front door and turn around, or do something to picture your house or home. Let that picture remind you that God has given you the promise of a lasting legacy in Christ – that your legacy of faith comes from the righteousness of Jesus and that will last longer than that of even Shiphrah and Puah

PRAY – give thanks to God for both Shiphrah and Puah who, together, remind us of God's legacy for us through Christ's righteousness given to us.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

'HEARING, SHARING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL'

Rev. Thomas A. Rhodes, Pastor

PO Box 5, 600 East Aldrich Road, Bolivar, MO 65613

(417) 326-5506 www.zionlutheranbolivar.org

*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

In looking at [Exodus 1:8-22](#) we learn that the Hebrews were under persecution by the new Egyptian government that did not know Joseph. It seems that what the Egyptians feared most was numbers. The number of Hebrews was growing hugely and this caused anxiety among the Egyptian leadership. So their solution was selective infanticide.

In fact what is described here is essentially what is today called partial birth abortion. When Shiphrah and Puah are told to kill the baby boys they are to do so as the Hebrew mothers give birth on the birthing stool. That is nothing more than two large flat rocks that the mothers squatted on and that allowed the midwives to have a space in which to work and help deliver the babies. But this place of life is what the king of Egypt wanted to turn into a place of death.

And this was selective death. This sounds like it could be modern day China where baby girls are the targets not boys. The point is that to control the population the killing of babies was used. Shiphrah and Puah were to see to the killing of the baby boys as they came out of the mothers and not give them a chance at life. Not much has changed in the world in thousands of years. We still need a savior.

(By the way, it is unlikely that these were the only two midwives among the huge numbers of Hebrews. Most notes indicate that these were the leaders or chief midwives who managed the work of many others. Egyptian records from that time indicate that nearly every skill, craft or profession was managed by overseers who were responsible to the government.)

Also there is an issue of Shiphrah and Puah lying and then being rewarded by God. Clearly God issued a favor to these women for the deceit they showed to pharaoh. But how do you reconcile that with God's commands to not lie? I would suggest a few things to think about in this regard.

- Their first obligation was to God not to pharaoh. They had an obligation to God to preserve life that superseded the obligation to not lie.
- They trusted in God and not in themselves. They were not deceitful to God or themselves about what they were doing. Their deceit was aimed at one who was clearly God's enemy and out to thwart Him. (So, does the end justify the means?)
 - Look at [Acts 5:28-30](#), what bearing does this example of Peter's obeying God rather than men have on this discussion?

Peace in Christ, PR.