



Part 5: Lying For Love

In the ancient world, midwives played a central role in most developed societies. They did not just aid in delivery, but were advisers through the whole process of conception, pregnancy, birth and child care.

~ John H Walton
The IVP Bible Background Commentary

Biblical midwifery incorporated more than the delivery of newborns. It included pre-birth counselling of couples, caring for pregnant mothers, assisting during crises such as miscarriage or the death of the mother, and massaging the child in the womb to position the baby for head-first delivery. Midwives were respected and prominent members of society.

~ Kamila A. Blessing
Midwifery & Birthing Practices

Faced with the continued growth of the Israelite population, Pharaoh looked for another method of birth control: under his orders the Hebrew midwives were to kill all new-born boys. When they disobeyed out of reverence for God, they themselves were rewarded by the birth of children. God still rewards those who put him first.

~ T.D. Alexander
New Bible Commentary

Pharaoh's plan is foiled by the resourcefulness of midwives. Their significance in the narrative is heightened by their being named, when even Pharaoh is not.

~ William D. Johnstone
Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible

The king's plan to kill all the male babies would have met with great success except for the interventions of God. He used the midwives to confound the king. God uses the weak things of this world to defeat the mighty.

~ Warren W. Wiersbe
Expository Outlines

It is significant that fear of God motivated the midwives to disobey the king of Egypt, preserve the lives of the infants, and present the matter to Pharaoh in a less than truthful fashion. In return God blessed them.

~ Catherine Clark Kroeger
The IVP Women's Bible Commentary

The midwives are the only women in Exodus to act in an overtly political sphere, having direct contact with Pharaoh. Their rebellion uses deception as the only tool available to them.

~ Drorah O'Donnel Setel
Woman's Bible Commentary

Pharaoh's attempt to deprive the Israelites of male leadership is first of all frustrated by the courage of two women. The midwives' lie is not disapproved of.

~ Walter Houston
The Oxford Bible Commentary

Even though the midwives lied to Pharaoh, they are praised for their outright refusal to take infant lives. Their reverence for life reflected a reverence for God.

~ Kenneth L. Barker
Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary

It would appear that the midwives deliberately twist the truth in the interest of preserving life. We may be inclined to question the ethics of these women, but clearly their action is approved by God who rewards them for reverencing him and preserving life rather than obeying Pharaoh and destroying life.

~ James K. Hoffmeier
Evangelical Commentary on the Bible

The midwives were forced to choose between obeying God and obeying Pharaoh. They chose to obey God, at the risk of their lives. Their example challenges those who excuse their unethical behaviour by saying, "I was just following orders." God does not accept that excuse.

~ Abel Ndjerareou
Africa Bible Commentary

We must obey God rather than men.

~ **The Apostle Peter, Acts 5:29**