

Shincheonji may point to the midwives of Exodus 1 who did not follow through with killing the Hebrew babies, but instead spared them, even lying to Pharaoh in order to protect the innocent lives.

Doctrinal Issues

When we examine scripture, we have to be careful not to add and subtract to God's word. While it is true that the midwives did lie to Pharaoh, to use this story as a way to justify the use of deception to carry out God's kingdom is an example of adding and subtracting to God's word.

[Exodus 1:17-21](#) - **But the midwives feared God**, and did not do as the king of Egypt had [p]commanded them, but let the boys live. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them." So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. **And because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.**

Explicitly, God blessed the midwives because they feared God and spared the Hebrew boys.

For a more thorough analysis:

[Exodus 1:16](#) contains the instructions of the Egyptian king to the Hebrew midwives concerning the murder of Hebrew male babies at the time of delivery: "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth ... if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live" (NASB).

This, then, was a command for them to commit infanticide. The narrative goes on to say that in order to avoid perpetuating this heinous act, they resorted to a strategy of delay. That is to say, they managed to slow up their response to the call from a woman in labor to such an extent that the baby was already born and safely tucked away in its crib by the time they finally arrived at the house.

As the midwives explained to Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women ... are vigorous, and they give birth before the midwife can get to them" ([Exod. 1:19](#), NASB). From the standpoint of the midwives' arriving too late, this was probably true. They simply did not divulge the fact that their tardy arrival was deliberately planned.

They might easily have been caught by the Egyptian police if they had been put under twenty-four-hour surveillance; so they ran a real risk of detection, trial, and execution. But when faced with the choice between penetrating systematic infanticide against their own people and misleading the king by a half-truth in order to avert this calamity, they rightly chose the lesser ill in order to avoid the greater. God did not honor and bless these two brave women for their withholding part of the truth; rather, he blessed them for their willingness to incur personal danger in order to save the lives of innocent babies.

In this connection the question is sometimes raised as to how just two midwives could have served a community of two million people during a period of high birth rate. Of course they could not have served so many Hebrew mothers without numerous assistants. But it was normal Egyptian practice to set up a bureaucratic chain of command in connection with almost every government agency or activity. Each department had its own overseer, directly responsible to the head of government, whether on the national level or on the provincial level. In this case the king appointed two seasoned professionals in this field to operate a regular obstetrical service under government supervision. We cannot tell how many assistants Shiphrah and Puah had at their disposal, but they apparently instructed them carefully about the technique of late arrival in order to preserve life. Thus Pharaoh had only the clever overseers to deal with and to interrogate, and they turned out to be more than a match for him. Hence God gave them both the blessing of raising many children of their own, as a reward for their courage in risking their lives to save the babies of others.

Gleason L. Archer, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Zondervan's Understand the Bible Reference Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 109–110.