

The Lord's Message: Shiprah & Puah: Women who Saved a Nation and Humanity

Date: August 2, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Exodus 1:6-21

We are continuing to study the Faithful Women of the Bible by looking at two remarkable women, Shiprah and Puah, who we probably do not know a lot about. To be honest, the Bible does not give us a lot of information on these women. Their faithfulness saved a nation and humanity.

Let us pray.

These two women are Shiprah and Puah. They were midwives who lived during the times when the Israelites were in exile in Egypt. To know why the Israelites are in Egypt you have to go back to the time of Joseph. God had given the Egyptian Pharaoh a dream. God had given Joseph the gift of interpreting dreams. In **Genesis 41:28-32** is Joseph's interpretation of the dream. So, after Pharaoh hears the interpretation of the dream, he appoints Joseph to see that new storehouses are built to store the grain during the time of plenty. This is to ensure that Egypt will have plenty to survive the drought. This appointment makes Joseph no. 2 person in command of all Egypt. The Israelites are suffering under this drought, so they come to Egypt for food. They find Joseph is already there and they end up settling in Egypt in the fertile land of Goshen.

We begin the Book of Exodus with Joseph and all his brothers passing away, **Exodus 1:6**. Now in verse 5, we learned that the Israelites came to Egypt with 70 people. In verse 7, we learn that the Israelites have "multiplied greatly and become exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them." How numerous they were? That answer is found in **Exodus 12:37**. "600,000 men on foot plus women and children." So given this answer, I would estimate 2 to 3 million people.

Now one could see how the leader of a country would be uneasy after allowing 70 people in and now the population has grown to 2 to 3 million. This is pointed out in the Bible in verse 9, "Look the Israelites have become much too numerous for us." Especially, when the leader did not know the history of Egypt as is stated in verse 8, "who did not know about Joseph."

I think that any leader should know about the history of the people they are leading. Many mistakes in leadership could be avoided if a good leader takes the time to study the history and listen to the people. Now to give the king some credit, 400 years had passed between Joseph and his time. God knows all things. Amen. God told Abraham that this was going to happen in **Genesis 15:13**.

Now, they were not slaves in Egypt for all of that 400-year period. When they first came, they were treated like royalty. But because of their growth in population, this king feared that they would side with the enemies of Egypt, **Exodus 1:10**.

In verse 11, the leader's plan was then to make them slaves to weaken them, so they would not side with the enemies. The plan was to use hard work as slaves to kill them off. God has blessed Israel from time of Abraham to now. God blessed them by increasing their population. This plan backfired on the leader because you cannot go against God and win.

So, when that plan did not work, the leader of Egypt came up with a more ruthless plan. In verses 15-16, He told the Hebrew midwives to kill the newly born boys, but let the girls live.

It is stated in the Bible in verse 17, that the midwives "feared God," more than they feared the leader of Egypt. So, they did not kill the newly born boys. In **Proverbs 29:25**, it says, "Fear of man is a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord will be kept safe." Jesus clearly states that we should fear God and not man in **Matthew 10:26-28**. This plan also backfired. You cannot fight against God and win. Sadly, there are people and leaders today that have not learned that fact. In the end, God will always be victorious.

Now, it was not the fact that Shiprah and Puah had not killed the newly born boys, but that they had also disobeyed the instructions given by Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader. To the Egyptians, Pharaoh was a god. So, Shiprah and Puah had disobeyed the Egyptian god, which is punishable by death. Due to his disdain for Israelites this was almost a certainty.

He summoned Shiprah and Puah to account for their disobedience in verse 18. They lied to him in verse 19. In the Bible, one of the Ten Commandments states that "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor," which is lying. In **Revelation 21:8b**, it says, "all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." In verses 20 & 21, God is kind and rewards the Hebrew midwives for their lying. Does God approve of their lying? What about the Christians and others that hid the Jewish people during the Nazi occupation and most likely lied to the Germans to protect them and their selves? Is God going to punish them? This is a major dilemma which I will try my best to sort out.

This is just my thoughts, and not God's. I interpret this text as God is exposing the evil that this leader wants to perpetrate on human beings who are made in the image of God. It is ridiculous for this leader who thinks that he can oppose God. It is both evil and stupid that he thinks midwives could perform this evil act and God would not be upset by it. If it was a lie that the midwives told, then it stopped them from performing an even greater evil act. The same is true for the Christians and others who protected the Jewish people during the Nazi occupation. You are free to argue with me on this point. God will be judge of us all.

I will also say that as Christians, we should never use lying as an easy out. In **John 8:44**, Jesus points out to us that the devil is the Father of all lies. Another point as Christians, we should never deny knowing Jesus as our Lord and Savior, even if it costs us relationships or our lives. Jesus confirms this in **Matthew 10:32-33**.

Another thought on Shiphrah and Puah. Their names are not Hebrew, but Egyptian. The Hebrews had lived so long in Egypt that they started to name their children with Egyptian names. Another thought for another day.

God blessed Shiphrah and Puah for their faithfulness by giving them families of their own. Even though their work was complicated by the evil decree of the pharaoh, they opposed and protected the newborn children. They took a leap of faith. Living by faith requires us to take risks, even when we cannot see the outcome. God's plan is always bigger than what we could ever imagine. It is because of this leap of faith that Shiphrah and Puah took Moses was born and lived to become the leader who would lead the Israelites out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, through the desert to the promised land. From the Israel nation, Jesus would be born to become the savior of all humanity who believed in Him. Because of their faithfulness, Shiphrah and Puah save a nation and all of humanity.

So, let us continue to listen to God and do what He says. Amen.