

# 2

# WHEN LIFE IS EXPENDABLE



*When have you gone to great lengths to protect something of value?*

## QUESTION #1

## THE POINT

*Life is a gift from God we are to protect and preserve.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Over seventeen years have passed since 9/11, but those old enough to remember that day in 2001 can still tell you exactly where they were when they heard or saw the events occur. We watched, numb with shock, as reports showed two planes flying into the World Trade Center, one plane flying into the Pentagon, and another plane crashing into a field in Pennsylvania. The total estimated death toll was nearly three thousand people. As difficult as it is to comprehend, a greater tragedy in magnitude occurs every single day in America. More than three thousand unborn babies are killed by abortion in our nation every day. Since *Roe v. Wade* was handed down in 1973, over 60 million babies have died—the equivalent of 20,000 9/11 attacks.

Culture may not value all human life, but God does. Whether it is an unborn child, one with physical or mental challenges, or an elderly person who has become incapacitated, God sees a human being He loves deeply and who was created to bear His image. We should understand that God places a high value on life—and we are to protect and preserve His gift of life. Two women who lived in the harshest of times did just that, and God blessed them.

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## ***Exodus 1:16-17***

**<sup>16</sup>“When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.”<sup>17</sup> But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.**

Sadly, state-sponsored infanticide and genocide is more common than we may realize. Infanticide is the killing of infants, and genocide is the killing of a large population of people based on their ethnicity. Some people choose abortion merely because the unborn child is not the gender they want. Sex-selective abortions are most common in parts of South and East Asia. In countries such as China, India, and Pakistan, more girls are aborted than boys because the cultural norm in those countries is to value male children over female children. Throughout the twentieth century and continuing into recent history, we saw examples of genocide in Armenia, Nazi Germany, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur, just to name a few.

This form of wholesale slaughter is nothing new, however. Pharaoh threatened to use it to wipe out the Israelites enslaved in Egypt. He based his killing plan on race and gender. Only the Israelite boys would be killed. No ultrasound machines existed in that day, so the only way they would have known if it were a boy was by “serve as midwife to [them] and see them on the birthstool.” The biblical writer did not record how the midwives were to perform this violent act—but he did report that they “did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them.”

The reason for the midwives’ civil disobedience is simple: they feared God. Pharaoh’s commands were the highest law in the land, but these women chose to obey an even higher law. We don’t know how well these women understood the nature and character of God, but they apparently were at least aware of

***What are some ways our culture devalues life?***

**QUESTION #2**

right and wrong and were afraid of the consequences of disobeying God. It's very likely that the consequence for disobeying Pharaoh would be death; therefore, we see two brave women who were far more concerned about what God would do to them than about anything Pharaoh might do.

Pharaoh did not fear God; rather, he feared what he saw—the strength and numbers of the Israelites—and he acted foolishly. (See Ex. 1:9-10.) Egypt ultimately would suffer the consequences of Pharaoh's lack of fear—reverence and respect—for God. The midwives, however, feared God and experienced His benefit and blessing. God blesses those who trust and fear Him. As Solomon noted: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it" (Prov. 9:10-12).

God will remember all those who oppose injustices against the unborn, the aged, and the weak. When we stand up against the abuse of others, He is with us. When we fear God more than we fear people and work to protect life, our actions will greatly impact generations to come.

## **Exodus 1:22–2:3**

**1:22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live." ...<sup>2:1</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank.**

*What might it cost us to stand up for those who can't protect themselves?*

**QUESTION #3**

## BEING LIFE-PRESERVERS

*While no one can help everyone, each of us can do something to help preserve life.  
Choose one of the situations below and write a brief statement  
about something you might do to help.*

An unwed teenage mother-to-be struggles between abortion and adoption.

A newborn child has been placed for adoption.

An abused child needs a foster home.

An elderly woman without family has trouble keeping up her health and home.

Other:

"Religion that is pure and undefiled before  
God the Father is this: to visit orphans  
and widows in their affliction, and to keep  
oneself unstained from the world."

—JAMES 1:27

Exodus 2 introduces us to an Israelite couple: Amram and Jochebed. (See 6:20.) As with any mother, Jochebed surely loved her baby at first sight, and “she saw that he was a fine child.” She and Amram knew the law of the land, but because they feared God they did what they could to protect their son. Since he was still young enough that he slept most of the time, his parents “hid him three months.”

The child was still not out of danger. Jochebed realized her baby was growing bigger, and his cries were becoming louder; others soon would find out her secret. So “she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch” to waterproof it. With her heart no doubt breaking, she laid her precious son in the basket and placed the basket “among the reeds by the river bank.”

The Israelites did not have a Bible like we do today. In fact, the child, Moses, would grow up to give us the first five books of the Bible: the Pentateuch. Prior to that, the stories of faith were passed on orally. Moses’ mother may have had the story of Noah in mind as she prepared the basket for her son; the same Hebrew word is translated ark in the biblical account of the flood. God saved Noah; Moses’ mother, by faith, asked God to save Moses.

We must do all we can to protect the lives of others just as Moses’ parents protected his life. They did not know God’s plan for their son, but they knew they were doing the right thing. Just as God used Moses in unbelievable ways, He has a plan for each person’s life. Therefore, let’s do what we can to protect others, to stand for those who cannot stand for themselves.



***What steps can we take to protect those who cannot protect themselves?***

## QUESTION #4

## **Exodus 2:4-9**

**<sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.**

Throughout the story we see God at work. Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe at the right place. Did Moses cry at just the right time for her to hear him, or did she "just happen" to see him? Her heart was moved when she saw the baby, even though she knew he was one of the boys her father wanted killed.

Miriam discerned the woman's heart and made a wise—and brave—suggestion: "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" With one word to Miriam, "Go," Pharaoh's daughter thus secured Moses' protection and provision.

God was at work to accomplish His purposes. God is still at work today—and He wants to do His work through us! Some churches have campaigns to recruit foster families or to raise adoption funds to help families in their church seeking to adopt. Beyond adoption, we can and should also provide for the elderly, abused, those with physical and mental challenges, and outcasts. God's Word calls us to care for widows and orphans—those who are helpless.

"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

***What steps can we take to provide for those we protect?***

**QUESTION #5**

## LIVE IT OUT

We must do all we can to respect human life by protecting and providing for others. How can you do that this week?

- ▶ **Pray.** Pray each day for the thousands of unborn babies who are at risk right now. Pray for the women and families that have been impacted by abortion. Pray for our politicians and officials to enact pro-life legislation.
- ▶ **Discover.** Find out what ministries in your community support life and offer hope to those who feel helpless.
- ▶ **Get involved.** Find others in your community—the unborn, the aged, or those with physical and/or mental challenges—and work to see that they are not forgotten or devalued by society. Help them find their purpose and worth in Christ.



The number of ways life is devalued around us seems immeasurable and the challenges we face sometimes seem insurmountable. One believer at a time though—one church at a time—we can make a difference.

My thoughts