

# Exodus 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.

## Analysis

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**And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live—Upon the stools** (עַל-הָאֹבְנַיִם, al-ha'ovnayim, lit. "upon the stones/bricks") refers to the birthing stool, a seat with an opening used in ancient deliveries. The selective infanticide of males reflects Pharaoh's dual strategy: eliminate future warriors while preserving females who could be absorbed into Egyptian population. This satanic attack on the seed recalls Genesis 3:15's promise and anticipates Herod's slaughter (Matthew 2:16). God will preserve His deliverer (Moses) through ironic means—Pharaoh's own household (2:5-10).

## Historical Context

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Birth stools (Hebrew ovnayim, dual form suggesting two bricks/stones for each foot) are depicted in Egyptian tomb reliefs. Female infanticide was rare in the ancient world; male infanticide served military and political purposes. This genocide sets up Moses' miraculous preservation as providentially ordained.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Pharaoh's attack on Hebrew boys illuminate Satan's ongoing war against God's redemptive purposes?
2. What does this passage teach about the value God places on every human life, even when powerful forces seek destruction?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	בְּיֶלְדָם	אֶת	הָעִבְרִי וְ			
And he said	When ye do the office of a midwife	H853	to the Hebrew women			
H559	H3205		H5680			
וַיִּרְאוּ	עַל	הָאֲבָנִים	אִם	בֶּן	הוּא	יָהֲמֹת
and see	H5921	them upon the stools	H518	if it be a son	H1931	then ye shall kill
H7200		H70		H1121		H4191
אֶת	וְאִם	בִּת	הִיא	יָחִיָּה:		
H853	H518	him but if it be a daughter	H1931	then she shall live		
		H1323		H2425		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 1:22** (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

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