

# Exodus 1:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.

## Analysis

**And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them** (כִּי־חַיּוֹת הָנָה, ki-chayot henah, "for they are vigorous/lively")—The midwives' answer emphasizes Hebrew women's vitality contrasting with Egyptian women's weakness. **Lively** (חַיּוֹת, chayot) means "full of life/vigorous," suggesting the blessing of God manifesting in physical strength. Whether this is complete truth, partial truth, or tactical deception, it highlights the irony: Pharaoh's oppression couldn't weaken Israel—God's blessing made them strong even in bondage. The response satisfies Pharaoh (v. 20) and protects the midwives while allowing them to continue their work.

## Historical Context

Some scholars debate whether this is righteous deception (like Rahab's in Joshua 2:4-5) or literal truth. Ancient sources do note differences in birthing experiences among populations. Regardless, the narrative presents the midwives' answer as successful protection of God's people, later validated by divine blessing (v. 20-21).

## Related Passages

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do you navigate tension between complete transparency and wise discretion when protecting the vulnerable?
2. What does Hebrew women's "liveliness" despite oppression teach about God's blessing overcoming adverse circumstances?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	יְמִים	לְאֵת	כִּי	פְּרָעָה	הַאֲלֹהִים	וַיְתַאֲמֵן	כִּי	יְמִים	לְאֵת	כִּי	פְּרָעָה	הַאֲלֹהִים	וַיְתַאֲמֵן	
<b>said</b>	<b>And the midwives</b>	H413		<b>unto Pharaoh</b>	H3588	H3808	<b>women</b>							
H559	H3205			H6547			H802							
הַמִּצְרִיּוֹת	תְּבָרֵרִיּוֹת			תְּבָרֵרִיּוֹת	הַמִּצְרִיּוֹת		תְּבָרֵרִיּוֹת							
are not as the Egyptian women	Because the Hebrew	H3588			H5680		for they are lively	H2007						
H4713				H2422										
אֲלֹהִים	יְלֹדִים			יְלֹדִים	אֲלֹהִים		יְלֹדִים							
ere	come in	H413		<b>And the midwives</b>	H3205		<b>And the midwives</b>	H3205						
H2962	H935													