

Exodus 1:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.

Analysis

And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses (וַעֲשֵׂה לָהֶם בָּתִּים, vaya'as lahem batim)—**He made them houses** means God gave them families/descendants, not merely physical buildings (cf. 2 Samuel 7:11, 27 where God "builds a house" for David). The Hebrew idiom "house" (בַּיִת, bayit) signifies dynasty, family lineage, posterity. This is remarkable because childless women might have feared remaining barren as midwives who defied the king's infanticide. Instead, God rewards their life-preserving work with their own enduring households. This principle echoes throughout Scripture: those who honor God in their work receive His blessing (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Historical Context

In ancient Near Eastern culture, establishing a household (family with descendants) was the highest blessing. The midwives risked their lives and potentially their social standing; God ensured their names and legacy endured. Archaeological and genealogical evidence suggests some priestly families may have descended from these midwives.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's reward of "houses" to the midwives encourage you when faithfulness requires sacrifice?
2. In what areas of your life do you need to trust that honoring God will result in His blessing, even when outcomes are uncertain?

Interlinear Text

יָהּ י	כִּי	יָרָא ו	הַמִּלֵּד ת	אֶת	הָאֱלֹהִים ים
H1961	H3588	feared	And it came to pass because the midwives	H853	God
		H3372	H3205		H430
וַיַּעַשׂ	לָהֶם	בָּתִּים:			
that he made	H0	them houses			
H6213		H1004			

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 11:38 (Parallel theme): And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

1 Samuel 2:35 (Parallel theme): And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

Psalms 37:3 (Parallel theme): Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 (References God): Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

1 Kings 2:24 (Creation): Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

1 Samuel 25:28 (Parallel theme): I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

Psalms 127:1 (Parallel theme): Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

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