

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 27, 2020

The Lord lead with you.

I wonder if I've seen your name in the headlines? You haven't seen mine. But I say this because I have read enough headlines and I have read enough Bible to know that most names that make headlines, whether or not all that important... And names that are important, whether you say, don't make headlines.

There were names, the world knows and names God knows. I'm gonna look at this today in the Book of Exodus, in the Hebrew Bible, the name for this book that we call Exodus in a Hebrew Bible, it is called names.

That's right, names. The second book of the Bible, names begin as God wants to pick up on any names that closes out the book of Genesis, God does not want any significant name to slip through the crack, I mean names of people that make a real difference in God's scheme of things, names that are big in the kingdom of God.

Now, I used to, when reading the Bible, I would come to a genealogy or a long list of names and my eyes will start to glaze over, I mean, who needs sleeping pills? There's like David's 30 men listed by name, or David 600 man all listed by name and then I realized the reason for God listing names in the Bible. It is God is telling us that there are names of people that are important to him. And that's what we have in Exodus 1, where God is going to add two more names important to Him, names that if you remember them in Bible trivia, you'd be doing a lot better than me.

As Exodus 1, the book of names opens, the Israelites are slaves in Egypt growing in number, so that the King of Egypt, the Pharaoh is getting nervous. And so he issues a mandate, it is the first pogrom, it is the first genocide of the Jews, as he command said every Jewish newborn male, baby is to be killed, which will in time, it means the end of the Jews, and Satan knows, he knows well that that would be the end of the line that would bring the Messiah...

I read Exodus 1, beginning in verse 15, The King of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphra and the other Puah, when you act as midwives to the Hebrew women... And you see them on the birth stool, if it is a boy, kill him. But if it is a girl, she shall live. But the midwives feared God. They did not do as the king of each of commanded them, but they let the boys live, so the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, Why have you done this and allow the boys to live? The midwife said to Pharaoh, because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them. So God dealt well with the midwives and the people multiplied. And became very strong.

Now, I'm reading the scripture today, because there's something here that stands out to me, and that is that God is taking names. God is naming names, as scripture thinks it is important that we know the names of these two midwives who fear the Lord, they revere the Lord, they were in awe of him, so that they refused, they will not kill the babies. Please note here that God wants us to know their names, Shiphrah and Puah, semitic names, it mean beautiful and splendor.

Water From Rock

Here were you are in an uber patriarchal culture, and the names of two women who fear the Lord are recorded, but not the name of the world's most powerful king. Here is the most powerful, the most feared man in the world at that time, the King of Egypt, and we're not even told his name. He is that insignificant. As far as God is concerned, in fact, Bible scholars to this day are still trying to figure out the name of the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus. The Bible doesn't tell us, but it does want us to know the name of two midwives who fear the Lord.

Now, this unnamed King, he's not happy, he calls the two midwives to give account, and I just have to picture these two slave women, dorphed in Pharaoh's massive opulent palace, and he's sitting on the throne and he commands him to explain themselves, Why have you done this and allowed the boys to live? I can well imagine these two women shaking in there sandals, I can imagine that they are afraid, except their fear of the Lord is greater than the fear of any king, and the text tells us how it played out for these two women so God dealt well with the midwives.

When I get to heaven, I just wanna thank these two women named Shiphrah and Puah for their bold, courageous action as they preserve the line of Messiah Jesus.

A few years ago, I was in Washington DC, and I made a trip out to Arlington Cemetery to the tomb of the unknown soldier. And I watched that dramatic changing of the guard, and as I stood there, I was moved by the words on the tomb, known but to God, known but to God. And I thought of how many of the heroes of the faith unknown to newspapers, unknown to the headlines, unknown to the world, known but to God, the real makers and shakers in God scheme of things are often known, but to God. In Luke 16:4, Jesus is warning the known religious leaders, he says to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your heart, for what is prized by human beings... What is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God. This is a critical time for our nation, it is a critical time for the church of the West, and the people who are going to make the difference will be Shiphrahs and Puahs. They're not gonna make the headlines, but they are known to God, people who will give themselves to prayer, At a critical time in the history of Jerusalem and Judah, God raises up a prophet name an Hananaih, and he tells King Asa to step up and to act with courage. Saying in 2 Chronicles 16:9, for the eyes of the Lord ranged throughout the entire earth to strengthen those whose heart is true to him.

That's exactly what God did for two slave women, Shiphrah and Puah, as they stood before the a king.

I'm thankful for a children's Sunday School teacher, I don't remember her name, God knows her name. But a children's Sunday school teacher who taught me a song that has stayed with me through the years, Dare to be a Daniel. Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose. Dare to make it known. After today, I wanna add a verse of that song. Dare to be a Shiphrah. Dare to be a Puah. Dare to stand alone.

I close with the words for you from St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:58, Therefore my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain.

I am Tim Smith, the fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening. Until next time.

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