

Evening Worship August 28, 2016
"Moses' Family and Their Faith"
Exodus 18:1-12

I. *Jethro, the Priest of Median, Moses' Father-in-Law, who was this man?*

1. *A man whom Moses met and attached himself to during the worst time of Moses' life –*
 - A. *Moses had killed an Egyptian for beating a Hebrew - Exodus 2:11*
 - B. *When he found out that his murder was "known" – Exodus 2:14 – he fled Egypt and came to Midian, in Midian he sat by a well.*
 - C. *It is at the well Moses met Reuel's seven daughters --- Reuel = Jethro*
 - D. *Moses was content to live with Reuel and his daughters, and he was given Zipporah as his wife – Exodus 2:18-21*

2. *The Priest of Midian –*

He was either an idol worshipping priest / or a priest of the TRUE GOD, in the midst of an idol worshipping people. Scripture does not tell us, with certainty, what kind of priest Moses' Father-in-Law was when Moses first met him.

- A. *Some commentators say he had to be godly, as a godly man like Moses would have not associated with him if he were not.*
- B. *Others argue he was still unconverted and that he only became a believer in the true God, as we read here in chapter 18 of Exodus –*

"Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them." (Exodus 18:11 NKJ)

II. *If Jethro was unconverted until chapter 18 of Exodus, was Moses' wife, Jethro's daughter, Zipporah also unconverted when Moses first married her?*

1. *Some commentators conjecture that Zipporah and the children left Moses, went back to Jethro / Reuel about the time of the circumcision argument –*

And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him.²⁵ Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast *it* at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!"²⁶ So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"-- because of the circumcision. (Exodus 4:24-26 NKJ)

Why was not Moses' son circumcised already by this time?

Perhaps because they had been living in Midian and under priest of Midian rules, Moses was not so careful to keep God's laws?

2. *Moses met his wife and father-in-law shortly after committing murder –*

Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.¹² So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (Exodus 2:11-12 NKJ)

3. *He seemed DOWN at this time –*

When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. (Exodus 2:15 NKJ)

- A. *The well is mentioned because that is where Moses met Jethro's daughters.*
- B. *However, I picture Moses sitting quietly, seriously by that well, contemplating what he had done, and contemplating his situation.*
- C. *We have to think of where Moses was at THAT time, and not about where we all know he would be later.*

4. *Moses started moving back to God at the burning bush, and it is after the burning bush, as he is on his way toward Egypt, that circumcised his son.*

III. Moses had two sons: Gershom and Eliezer -

³ with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land ")

⁴ and the name of the other was Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh "); (Exodus 18:3-4 NKJ)

It is interesting to conjecture, when were these two sons born?

1. Gershom is easy, he was born to Moses and Zipporah while they were in Midian - "I have been a stranger in a foreign land ")
2. Eliezer is more difficult –
 - A. He is second born
 - B. It seems he is not mentioned as Moses, Zipporah and their son are travelling toward Egypt as it seems only one son is circumcised –

And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" ²⁶ So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"-- because of the circumcision. (Exodus 4:24-26 NKJ)

- Moses was delivered from the sword of Pharaoh even when he was born –
- However maybe this referred to his full deliverance, which happened ultimately when Moses, with Israel, crossed the RED SEA?

We do not read of Zipporah, Gershom and especially not Eliezer, from Exodus 4 for Zipporah and Gershom, at all before this verse for Eliezer!

My guess was Eliezer was conceived as Moses then three member family travelled toward Egypt, born while Moses was in Egypt, seemingly without his family and named after Israel's leaving Egypt!

IV. Even if Moses, Zipporah and Jethro all had strong faith even before the exodus, it is stronger NOW –

and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of

God. ⁶ Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her." ⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. ⁸ And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and *how* the LORD had delivered them. ⁹ Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ And Jethro said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ "Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, *He was above them.*" ¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and *other* sacrifices *to offer* to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. (Exodus 18:5-12 NKJ)

1. Moses' father-in-law and family come back to him after Israel's victory over Amalek – Exodus 17:8-17, Exodus 18:5-6
2. Moses met him with great affection – Exodus 18:7
3. Moses told him what God had done – Exodus 18:8
 - A. Starting with deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt
 - B. But including the hardships of the wilderness
 - C. God had got them though all
4. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law -
 - A. Rejoiced – Exodus 18:9
 - B. Blessed God – Exodus 18:10
 - C. Professed knowledge of God's greatness, faith – Exodus 18:11
 - D. Offered sacrifices, and fellowshiped with God's people – Exodus 18:12

If Jethro was not a believer before this point, he is one at this point! If he was a true believer before this time, now his faith was INCREASED!

"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15 NKJ)

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