

~ZIPPORAH (162)

(Zip-po'rah) [Bird, or, possibly, Small Bird]

- The wife of Moses. **Zipporah** met Moses at a well, when she and her six sisters were watering their fathers flocks. When certain shepherds came on the scene and, as was their custom, attempted to drive the girls away, Moses helped the girls out, even watering the flocks himself.
- For this kindness he was invited to the home of **Zipporah**, and eventually her priestly father Jethro gave her in marriage to Moses.
- Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and as usual they came and drew water and filled the gutters to water their fathers flock. (**Exodus 2:16**)
- And as usual the shepherds came and drove them away. At this Moses got up and helped the women out and watered their flock. (**Exodus 2:17**)
- So when they came home to Reuel their father he exclaimed; How is it you have come home so quickly today? (**Exodus 2:18**)
- To this they said; A certain Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and, besides, he actually drew water for us that he might water the flock. (**Exodus 2:19**)
- Then he said to his daughters; But where is he? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Call him, that he may eat bread. (**Exodus 2:20**)
- After that Moses showed willingness to dwell with the man, and he gave **Zipporah** his daughter to Moses. (**Exodus 2:21**)
- **Zipporah** bore two sons to Moses Gershom and Eliezer.
- Later she bore a son and he called his name Gershom, because, he said; An alien resident I have come to be in a foreign land. (**Exodus 2:22**)
- And her two sons, the name of one of whom was Gershom, because, he said; An alien resident I have come to be in a

foreign land. (**Exodus 18:3**)

- And the name of the other was Eliezer, because, to quote him, the God of my father is my helper in that he delivered me from Pharaoh's sword. (**Exodus 18:4**)
- When Yehowah sent Moses back to Egypt, **Zipporah** and their two sons started out to accompany him. Along the way a very serious incident occurred, the rather obscure account of which says; Now it came about on the road at the lodging place that Yehowah, actually Yehowah's angel, **LXX** got to meet him and kept looking for a way to put him to death.
- Finally **Zipporah** took a flint and cut off her sons foreskin and caused it to touch his feet and said; It is because you are a bridegroom of blood to me. Consequently he let go of him. At that time she said; A bridegroom of blood, because of the circumcision.
- Now it came about on the road at the lodging place that Yehowah got to meet him and kept looking for a way to put him to death. (**Exodus 4:24**)
- Finally **Zipporah** took a flint and cut off her sons foreskin and caused it to touch his feet and said; It is because you are a bridegroom of blood to me. (**Exodus 4:25**)
- Consequently he let go of him. At that time she said; A bridegroom of blood, because of the circumcision. (**Exodus 4:26**)
- Scholars have offered many interpretations of this passage, some of these being incorporated into modern Bible translations. [See **CC, JB, KX, LA, NE, RS**, as well as the German **Zürcher Bibel**, the Spanish **Bover-Cantera** and the French **Crampon, Lienart, and Segond** versions.]
- Such interpretations attempt to settle questions as to whether it was Moses or the child's life that was threatened, whether **Zipporah** touched the feet of Moses or the feet of the child or the feet of the angel with the foreskin. They also venture opinions as to why **Zipporah** said; and to whom she said; You are a bridegroom of blood to me.
- It seems that it was the child's life that was in danger in view of what the Law of circumcision states at;
- And an uncircumcised male who will not get the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, even that soul must be cut off from his

people. He has broken my covenant. ([Genesis 17:14](#))

- That **Zipporah** circumcised the child because she realized what was needed to set matters right, that she cast the foreskin at the feet of the angel who was threatening the child's life to demonstrate her compliance with Yehowah's Law, that **Zipporah** addressed Yehowah through his representative angel when she exclaimed;
- You are a bridegroom of blood to me, doing so to show her acceptance of a wifely position in the circumcision covenant with Yehowah as the husband.
- Not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, which covenant of mine they themselves broke, although I myself had husbandly ownership of them, is the utterance of Yehowah. ([Jeremiah 31:32](#))
- But there is no way of Scripturally settling such questions with certainty. The literal reading of the ancient Hebrew in this passage is veiled in the idioms used nearly 3,500 years ago. This is why literal translations, **NW, RO, YG**, and others, **AS, KJ, DA, DY, JP, MO, LE**, including the ancient **Greek Septuagint**, are not clear on these matters.
- Apparently **Zipporah** returned to visit her parents, for, following the Exodus, **Zipporah** and her two sons accompanied Jethro back to Moses at the wilderness camp.
- Now Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses father-in-law, got to hear about all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how Yehowah had brought Israel out of Egypt. ([Exodus 18:1](#))
- So Jethro, Moses father-in-law, took **Zipporah**, Moses wife, after the sending of her away. ([Exodus 18:2](#))
- And her two sons, the name of one of whom was Gershom, because, he said; An alien resident I have come to be in a foreign land. ([Exodus 18:3](#))
- And the name of the other was Eliezer, because, to quote him, the God of my father is my helper in that he delivered me from Pharaoh's sword. ([Exodus 18:4](#))
- So Jethro, Moses father-in-law, and his sons and his wife came to

Moses into the wilderness where he was camping, at the mountain of the true God. (**Exodus 18:5**)

- Then he sent word to Moses; I, your father-in-law, Jethro, am come to you, and also your wife and her two sons with her. (**Exodus 18:6**)
- **Zipporahs** newly felt presence there apparently provoked Moses sister Miriam to jealousy, and she, along with Aaron, seized upon **Zipporahs** Cushite background as an excuse for complaint against Moses.
- Now Miriam and Aaron began to speak against Moses on account of the Cushite wife whom he had taken, because it was a Cushite wife he had taken. (**Numbers 12:1**)
- This does not indicate that **Zipporah** had died and Moses had remarried an Ethiopian woman, as is commonly contended, for although Cushite usually refers to Ethiopians, it can also embrace those from Arabia.

See Also CUSH 2

See Also CUSHITE