



# ZIPPORAH

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### Who is Zipporah?

Zipporah means “a small bird”. Zipporah was the daughter of priest Jethro (named as Reuel too) in Midian and the wife of Moses. She had 6 sisters. She bore Moses two sons, namely, Gershom and Eliezer.

### Bible account:

**Exodus 2:16-22; 4:20, 24-26; Exodus 18:1-6;**

Exodus 2:16-22 - <sup>16</sup>Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. <sup>17</sup>Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup>When they came to Reuel their father, he said, “How *is it that* you have come so soon today?” <sup>19</sup>And they said, “An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock.”

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave **Zipporah** his daughter to Moses. <sup>22</sup>And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land.”

Exodus 4:20, 24-26 - <sup>20</sup>Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. <sup>24</sup>And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the Lord met him and sought to kill him. <sup>25</sup>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!” <sup>26</sup>So He let him go. Then she said, “You are a husband of blood!”—because of the circumcision.

Exodus 18:1-6 - And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people—that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took **Zipporah**, Moses’ wife, after he had sent her back, <sup>3</sup>with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land”) <sup>4</sup>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”); <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.”

### **Background information:**

Moses fled from Egypt to Midian where he lived (after the killing the Egyptian). Zipporah with her six sisters came down to a well to water their flocks. The shepherds drove them away but Moses helped and stood for the sisters to water their flocks. In return, they brought him home along with them. While Zipporah’s father, Jethro @Reuel (Exodus 2:18) asked about their early return than usual, they replied that an Egyptian helped them water their flocks. So, he thanked Moses by offering him bread to eat. Moses felt comfortable to stay with them tending their flocks in return. Jethro gave Zipporah in marriage to Moses. She bore him 2 sons, Gershom and Eliezer. It happened during that time, the King of Egypt died and the cry of Israelites as a bondage slaves reached God. Thereafter, Moses encountered God at the burning bush and God appointed him to redeem the Israelites from the slavery bondage from the Egyptians.

Moses told his father-in-law Jethro and left to Egypt with his wife and 2 sons. On his way, God sought to kill Moses. The reason was that Moses wasn’t circumcised after birth and was brought up as Pharaoh’s daughter’s son. In Genesis 17:14, God clearly commands to put to death the ones who are not circumcised. Moreover, in Exodus 4:22,23, God talked about Israel, His firstborn and killing the firstborn of Egypt. So, Zipporah being the daughter of priest, she immediately used flint to cut the foreskin of her son and threw it at Moses’ feet. She said that Moses was the husband of blood to her. On that note of blood covenant because of circumcision, God let Moses go. Zipporah acted very cleverly and sensibly at that moment to the incident.

Moses sent Zipporah back to her father with her sons whom she bore for him. After Moses came out of Egypt and was in the wilderness, Jethro took Zipporah and her sons to meet Moses. Later, we see Aaron and Miriam were jealous of the Ethiopian wife of Moses, who was Zipporah the Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1). It is not that Moses married twice and had another wife.

### **Lessons from Zipporah:**

- **Gratitude in action:** Zipporah and her sisters brought Moses to their home along with them who helped them at the time of need – stood for the girls at the well against the other shepherds and helped to water their flocks. They could have left him there at the well just thanking him. But, they went a step ahead and brought him home, as he was a stranger in their land. They helped him at his need.



- **Timely wisdom:** Zipporah acted in haste with wisdom when God sought to kill Moses. The action spoke much better than words. She saved her husband and her child through one act of wisdom.

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