

**Introduction:** If we are honest, we have to admit that the more we know about God and His ways, the more UN-comfortable we get. \*\*\* Do we really want to pick up a cross and die to ourselves, our personal desires and hopes and dreams, every day (Luke 9:23)? Do we always want to be crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)? Do we want to share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death (Philippians 3:10-11)? Do we enjoy giving sacrificially to those in need? Jesus said to give to everyone who asks of you (Luke 6:30; Matthew 5:42). \*\*\* Yet all of this is what every follower of Jesus is asked to do, and more! \*\*\* As we consider what Scripture says about Moses' wife, and priest's daughter, Zipporah, how do we react to her anger and disdain over the requirement of circumcision in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:9-14)? She strongly implied the shedding of blood associated with circumcision offended her. ***Even those close to a priest can be offended by God's ways.*** \*\*\* Yet the sacrificial system soon to be given in the book of Leviticus, with the shedding of blood of animals for forgiveness, consecration and peace with God, points to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on The Cross. This is the ONLY way God has given for humanity to be forgiven and reconciled into a relationship with Him. \*\*\* The portion of Paul's teaching we heard, with its inspiration from the words given to Isaiah (from chapter 55), tells us God's wisdom and power are so much greater than ours that we must accept them and live by all His ways. His will, expressed in His Word, must become our will! \*\*\* We will now discover these truths, and more, in our passages.

**I. Moses fled Egypt and was guided to a priest's family where he stayed and married a daughter; then Yahweh called him back to Egypt, but sought to kill him until his wife circumcised their son. (Exodus 2:15-22; 4:19-26)**

- A. When Moses fled from Egypt, God guided him to a priest three hundred miles away; Moses agreed to stay with him, and he gave his daughter to Moses. (Exodus 2:15-22)
1. When Pharaoh heard [Moses slew an Egyptian] he sought to slay Moses, then Moses fled and stayed in the land of Midian and sat by a well. (Verse 15)  
**Death threat:** When Moses heard Pharaoh knew he slew an Egyptian and hid him in sand (verses 10-14), and was determined to do likewise to him, Moses ran away.  
**Midian:** Midian (strife) was three hundred miles southeast of Egypt on the eastern side of the eastern 'thumb' of the Red Sea.
  2. The seven daughters of the priest of Midian came to water their father's flock, then shepherds came and drove them away; but, Moses stood up, helped them and watered the flock. (Verses 16-17)  
**Priest of Midian:** He is priest of Elohim-God, but later he knew Yahweh, the Covenant God, did wonders in Israel, so he is a legitimate priest.  
**Moses:** Moses stood up for the priest's seven daughters, doing what was needed so they succeeded in what their father assigned them.
  3. They came to their father Reuel who asked why they came quickly; they said an Egyptian delivered and drew water for them, and watered the flock; he asked them [about Moses] where and why, call him to eat bread. (Verses 18-20)  
**Reuel:** The priest's name means 'friend of God'. It may be a title certifying his legitimacy.  
**Questions:** He questions his daughters: why they hastened to come this day? Hearing of the man, he follows up with: Where is he? Why did you leave him?  
**Invitation:** He then commands them to go to him and call him to eat bread with them.
  4. Moses was content to dwell with the man who then gave him his daughter Zipporah who gave him a son called Gershom. (Verses 21-22)  
**Moses:** Apparently the two men bonded from the start. The name of Moses' bride means 'female bird'.  
**Son:** Zipporah soon had a son to nurture. The name Moses gave him means 'stranger there' because Moses felt himself a stranger in Midian, but was grateful Reuel gave him a family. (God's people are strangers everywhere.)
- Application:** God's arranging of Moses' marriage to Zipporah should move us to always thank God for His perfect guidance that gives us what we need when we need it.
- B. Yahweh called Moses back to Egypt to confront Pharaoh and Moses took his family; but, one night Yahweh sought to kill Moses until Zipporah circumcised their son. (Exodus 4:19-26)
1. Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, 'Go, return to Egypt, for all seeking your life are dead'; Moses took his wife and sons, mounted them on a donkey and went back to Egypt with the rod of God in his hand. (Verses 19-20)  
**Yahweh's command:** Yahweh commanded Moses to go and to return to Egypt.  
**Moses' response:** Moses obeyed by putting his family on the Ancient Near East's equivalent of a jeep, the vehicle of ordinary people.
  2. Yahweh commanded Moses to do in Egypt all wonders He put in his hand to do before Pharaoh, whose heart He would harden to not let Israel go serve Him, and to say He is slaying Pharaoh's firstborn son. (Verses 21-23)  
**Mission:** Moses' mission was to make it clear to Pharaoh, through wonders Yahweh gave Moses, that he must let His firstborn son Israel go to serve Him.  
**Hardened heart:** Both Yahweh and Pharaoh will harden Pharaoh's heart so he will refuse to let Israel go to serve Yahweh.  
**Son killed:** Pharaoh's punishment is the death of his firstborn son in the Tenth Wonder, when all Israel's firstborn will be spared 'under the blood' of Passover lambs.
  3. In a lodging place one night, Yahweh met and sought to put Moses to death; but Zipporah cut off her son's foreskin with a flint, then she touched Moses' feet saying he is surely her bridegroom of blood because of circumcision. (Verses 24-26)  
**Lodge for night:** One night on the journey to Egypt, Yahweh sought to kill Moses because he had not circumcised Gershom in Midian.  
**Zipporah:** Zipporah knew what to do to save her husband, quickly performing the circumcision Moses neglected to do.  
**Anger at Moses:** She calls Moses Reuel's son-in-law, perhaps inferring Reuel did not practice bloody circumcision, and Moses had followed suit with Reuel. So a daughter of a priest is offended by God's requirement of bloody circumcision.

***Even those close to a priest can be offended by God's ways***

**Jesus:** But Jesus' crucifixion, by the 'offense' of His blood sacrifice, covered the sins of all people, Jews and strangers to God and His ways.

**Application:** Unlike Zipporah, let us all accept and embrace all the offensive truths about God's character and teachings, even sacrifice and self-denial, unlike Zipporah AND two sets of sons of God's priests.

**Eli's sons:** After Hannah's praise prayer, Eli's sons are shown to be offended by God's ways for priests by two flagrant sins: sleeping with women serving at the gate of the Tabernacle, and taking meat for themselves from burnt offerings, of which all meat was to be burned (1 Samuel 2:12-36).

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**Aaron's sons:** Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, disrespected God's Torah given to Moses by offering unauthorized fire before Yahweh, and they died (Leviticus 10:1-14).

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**II. After God did wonders for Israel in Egypt, Moses' father-in-law brought his family to him at the mount of God; and, through the foolishness of preaching a crucified Messiah, believers are made strong in God's 'weakness'.** (*Exodus 18:1-5; I Corinthians 1:20-25*)

- A. When Moses' father-in-law heard of the wonders God did for Israel in Egypt, he brought Moses' family to meet him at the mount of God. (*Exodus 18:1-5*)
1. Then Jethro priest of Midian heard of all God did for Moses and Israel, because Yahweh brought Israel out from Egypt. (*Verse 1*)  
**Jethro:** Jethro means 'abundance of him (God?)' and is probably his birth-name. He heard of the Ten Wonders (plagues) of Yahweh on Egypt, and salvation at the sea.  
**Application:** It is right for us, as well as Jethro, to praise God for all His wondrous deeds of salvation.
  2. Jethro had taken Zipporah after Moses sent her away and her sons named Gershom and Eliezer, because the God of Moses' father helped and delivered him from Pharaoh's sword. (*Verses 2-4*)  
**Shielded Moses' family:** Jethro protected his daughter and her two sons at a safe distance from Egypt while Moses was doing God's dangerous mission there.
  3. Jethro came with Moses' sons and wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camping at the mountain of God. (*Verse 5*)  
**Reunion at Sinai:** Moses was reunited with Zipporah, just before he went up Mount Sinai to receive all the instructions (Torah) of God's Covenant with Israel (Exodus 19 and following).
- B. Paul wrote that through the 'foolishness' of preaching the crucifixion of Messiah, people who continue in the faith of Him and His act, are saved and empowered by God's mighty 'weakness'. (*I Corinthians 1:20-25*)
1. Where (the) wise? Where (the) scribe? Where (the) skilled reasoner of this age? Has not God indeed made foolish the wisdom of this world? (*Verse 20*)  
**God makes humans fools:** Paul is inspired to use rhetorical questions to say that the best human thinkers in the world at this time are made like a fool (Greek root: mōrōn) by God.
  2. For since in the wisdom of God (not the world knew through the wisdom of God) God was pleased through the foolishness of preaching to save those believing. (*Verse 21*)  
**Not known God's wisdom:** Part of God's wisdom is that the world, people not knowing God through Jesus and The Holy Spirit, cannot understand God's wisdom  
**'Foolishness' of preaching:** People refusing to believe IN Jesus and His work of salvation, consider preaching about Him to be foolishness; but those given grace to continue to believe IN Jesus are saved.
  3. Since Jews are demanding signs and Greeks (Hellenists) are seeking wisdom. (*Verse 22*)  
**Signs and wisdom:** Paul says Jews foolishly want dramatic signs from God; and, similarly, Greeks seek philosophical wisdom.
  4. But we are preaching Christ had been crucified, indeed to Jews a stumbling-block; but to the various nations, foolishness. (*Verse 23*)  
**Preach Christ crucified:** Again, Jesus' shedding of blood as He gave his life (Leviticus 7:11-14) on The Cross is the perfectly acceptable payment for the sins of all who accept it by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-10).  
**Jews and ethnicities:** But Jews stumble over the idea that their expected conquering King would die a disgraceful death; and, all the 'nations' (Greek: ethnōs), without The Holy Spirit, can only consider a dead King foolishness. In these ways people without God are like Zipporah and 'bloody' circumcision.
  5. But to those called (by God), both Jews and Greeks, (He is) Christ (Messiah-King): power of God and wisdom of God. (*Verse 24*)  
**To the called:** All whom God has called, and who are answering His call in the affirmative, no longer view Jesus as men of this world view Him, but know Him as God's Way to salvation through forgiveness and are reconciled to God.

*God's ways are not man's ways.*

6. Because 'foolishness' of God is being wiser than men; and, 'weakness' of God mightier than men. (*Verse 25*)  
**God's 'foolishness':** Paul concludes by declaring what men of this world consider God's foolishness is far above what the wisest people can understand without God's Spirit.  
**God's 'weakness':** Further, what men without God's Spirit consider His weakness, dying for sinners is His way of overpowering the accuser of men, to snatch them out of his evil hands (John 16:5-11).

**Application:** We must all surrender our highest thoughts and greatest areas of strength to God's 'foolish' wisdom and 'weak' power, because *God's ways are not man's ways*.

**Conclusion:** Moses fled for his life from the king of Egypt and he was guided to a priest's family where he stayed and married one of the priest's daughters, Zipporah. When Yahweh called him back to Egypt, Yahweh sought to kill him until his wife circumcised their son, but she was angry at him because of the shedding of blood. After God did wonders for Israel in Egypt, Moses met his father-in-law and family at the mount of God. Finally, through the 'foolishness' of preaching the crucifixion of Messiah, people who continue in the faith of forgiveness through His sacrifice are saved and empowered by God's so called 'weakness'.

As we get closer to The High Priest, Jesus, let us pray He will help us put away all that offends us about God.

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