

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

2 And there went a man of the house of Le-vi, and took to wife a daughter of Le-vi. (2) And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. (3) And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. (4) And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. (5) And the daughter of Pha-raoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. (6) And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. (7) Then said his sister to Pha-raoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? (8) And Pha-raoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. (9) And Pha-raoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. (10) And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pha-raoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Mo-ses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

(11) And it came to pass in those days, when Mo-ses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an E-gyp-tian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. (12) And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the E-gyp-tian, and hid him in the sand. (13) And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? (14) And he said, who made thee a prince and a judge over us? thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the E-gyp-tian? And Mo-ses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. (15) Now

when Pha-raoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Mo-ses. But Mo-ses fled from the face of Pha-raoh, and dwelt in the land of Mid-i-an: and sat down by a well.

(16) Now the priest of Mid-i-an had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. (17) And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Mo-ses stood up and helped them, and water their flock. (18) And when they came to Reu-el their father, he said, How is it that yea re come so soon to-day? (19) And they said, An E-gyp-tian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and more-over he drew water for us, and watered the flock. (20) And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. (21) And Mo-ses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Mo-ses Zip-po-rah his daughter. (22) And she bare a son, and he called his name Ger-shom; for he said, I have seen a sojourner in a foreign land.

And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of E-gypt died: and the children of Is-ra-el sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. (24) And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with I-saac, and with Jacob. (25) And God saw the children of Is-ra-el, and God took knowledge *of them*.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TWO
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. Of what tribe were Moses' parents? (2:1)
2. What were the names of Moses' father and mother? (6:20)
3. Did Moses' mother hide her baby only because he was a goodly child? (Ex. 2:2. Compare Hebrews 11:23; Acts 7:20)
4. How long was Moses hidden at home? (2:2)
5. Where was the baby Moses placed? (2:3)
6. How was the "ark" made watertight? (2:3)
7. Who watched over the babe in the basket? (Ex. 2:4; Num. 26:59)

8. Who saw the ark among the flags? (2:5)
9. Who actually fetched the ark? (2:5)
10. What did the baby do when the ark was opened? (2:6)
11. What was the reaction of Pharaoh's daughter when she saw the child? (2:6)
12. What did the baby's sister offer to get for Pharaoh's daughter? (2:7)
13. How could Exodus 2:7-8 illustrate Romans 8:28?
14. Where did Moses' mother bring the boy after she raised him past infancy? (2:10)
15. Who called his name *Moses*? (2:10)
16. Why was his name called *Moses*? What does that name mean? (2:10)
17. How old was Moses when he went unto his brethren? (2:11; Acts 7:23)
18. What did Moses look upon when he went out unto his brethren? (2:11)
19. What did Moses see that grieved him? (2:11)
20. Was slaying the Egyptian necessary? (2:12)
21. What did Moses suppose that his Hebrew brethren would understand when he killed the Egyptian? (Acts 7:24-25)
22. What was done with the Egyptian's body? (2:12)
23. When two Hebrews fought, was just one at fault, or were both at fault? (2:13)
24. How quickly had the Egyptian's death become known? By what means had it become known? (2:14)
25. How did Pharaoh react to the news of the Egyptian's death? (2:15)
26. To what land did Moses flee? Where is this land? (2:15)
27. Where did Moses sit down in this land? (2:15)
28. How many daughters did the priest of Midian have? (2:16)
29. What was the name of the priest of Midian? (2:18; 3:1)
30. What was the labor of the priest's daughters? (2:17)
31. How did Moses help the priest's daughters? (2:17)
32. What surprised the priest of Midian about his daughters' return? (2:18)
33. Why did the daughters refer to Moses as an "Egyptian"?

(2:19)

34. Who drew the water from the well? (2:16, 19)
35. What invitation was extended to Moses? (2:20)
36. What was Moses content to do? (2:21)
37. What change in Moses' manner of life took place when he settled in Midian? (Compare Ex. 3:1 and Acts 7:22)
38. Who became Moses' wife? (2:21)
39. What was the name of Moses' son? (2:22)
40. What does the name of the son of Moses mean? (2:22)
41. Who was Moses' second son? What does his name mean? (Ex. 18:2-4)
42. Was it a long time or a short time before the king who sought Moses' life died? (2:23)
43. Did the death of the king of Egypt ease Israel's bondage? (2:23)
44. What sound effects came from the children of Israel in Egypt? Why? (2:23-24)
45. Did Israel's crying have any effect? (2:23-24)
46. What did God remember? (2:24)
47. What connection is there between Israel's groaning and God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (Ex. 2:24; Compare Gen. 15:13-14)
48. Tell four things God did when Israel cried and groaned. (2:24-25).

EXODUS 2: THE MAKING OF GOD'S MAN

Things needed in the making of God's man:

1. God-fearing parents; 2:1-2
2. Divine direction and providence; 2:3-9
3. Training; Acts 7:22
4. Personal decision; 2:11; Heb. 11:24
5. Courage to act; 2:11-13, 17
6. God's chastening; 2:14-15, 21-22
7. Patient endurance; Heb. 11:27; Ex. 18:4

EXODUS 2: MOSES' DECISION IN EGYPT

I. *He refused . . .*

1. To be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Heb. 11:24).
2. To enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25).
3. To cherish the treasures of Egypt (Heb. 11:26).

II. *He decided . . .*

1. To stand with Israel, the people of God (Heb. 11:25).
2. To deliver his people (Acts 7:24).
3. To suffer ill treatment.
4. To share the reproach of the Messiah (Christ) (Heb. 11:26).

EXPLORING EXODUS: Notes on Chapter Two

1. *Who were Moses' parents?*

His father was Amram, a man of the house (or tribe) of Levi. He was a grandson or later descendant of Levi. The genealogy in Ex. 6:16-20 almost certainly has some names omitted. (See notes on Ex. 6:16-20.) It appears from Ex. 2:1 that Amram himself went out and took a wife of his own choosing, a somewhat unusual act in a time when fathers usually arranged marriages for children.

Moses' mother was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi (possibly a first generation descendant of Levi, and maybe his only daughter). She was born to Levi in Egypt (Numbers 26:59). She would have been Amram's aunt, but was not necessarily older than he.

2. *Was Moses the firstborn son in his family?*

No. He had a brother, Aaron, three years older than he (Ex. 7:7). Also he had a sister, Miriam (= Mary), several years older yet. Some interpreters have proposed that since Miriam is called the "sister of Aaron" in Ex. 15:20, that perhaps she and Aaron were children of Amram by another wife. But Numbers 26:59 says plainly that Jochebed bore all three children.

3. *What was noticeable in the appearance of the infant Moses?*

He was incredibly beautiful. The Hebrew Bible says he was a "good" (*tov*) or "goodly" child. Acts 7:20 says he was "exceeding fair" (literally "fair to God," or "fair like God"). "The very beauty of the child seemed to be a particular token of divine approval, and a sign that God had some special design concerning him."¹

This statement about his beauty does not really suggest that the parents would have been less willing to save his life if he had been an ordinary baby.

4. *Why was the baby Moses hidden?*

Because of the king's commandment to slay all baby boys. But his parents (both of them!) were not afraid of the king's commandment, and hid him for three months (Heb. 10:23).

5. *Why could not the parents continue to hide the baby?*

Any parents of a normal strong-lunged, three-months-old baby know why such a one would be hard to hide. (The clothesline would betray you!)

The Jewish *Midrash* (Interpretation) of Exodus says that the Egyptians would go from house to house where they suspected a Hebrew child might have been born. This is possibly true.

Later Jewish tradition preserved or invented many traditions about Moses' infancy and youth. We read them in Josephus, the *Midrash*, and other Jewish sources. They are often very interesting. In the same way in later centuries Roman Catholic traditions about the infant Jesus and his mother Mary were brought forth in addition to the simple brief Biblical stories about Jesus' childhood.

6. *How was Moses hidden "by faith"?* (Hebrews 11:23).

Since "faith cometh by hearing," maybe God had given some revelation to the parents about the future of the child and what they should do. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that Amram foretold how Moses would deliver Israel, while his wife was still expecting.²

¹C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 427.

²*Antiquities*, II, 9, 3.

Such traditions are unverifiable. The faith of Moses' parents may have simply been based only on their knowledge of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed (descendants). This knowledge could have been learned from their parents or grandparents. They had faith in what had been told to them, and dared to risk their safety because of this faith.

7. *How important was the child Moses?*

No words can tell how important he was. Through this child God was preparing the emancipation of Israel at the very time when Pharaoh was planning their extermination! This Moses would become the greatest personage of history prior to Jesus.

How important the birth of any child may be! No one could have foreseen Moses' influence. What if Moses or some other child destined for greatness had been murderously aborted by his mother?

8. *What preparations were made for placing Moses upon the water? (2:3-4)*

His mother took an ark of bulrushes, a basket or chest made of papyrus.³ (The scripture does not say that she *made* it.) The Hebrew word translated ark (*tebah*) is used in the scripture only in reference to Moses' basket and Noah's ark. Perhaps that is significant, since both were means of deliverance, and possibly symbols of our deliverance.

Moses' mother coated the ark with slime (bitumen, or asphalt) and pitch (tar), making it watertight. She put the child in the basket, and placed it among the flags, or reeds,⁴ by the Nile river (probably one of the arms of the eastern Nile delta).

All of these acts seem deliberately and calmly done. Surely

³Papyrus was the plant whose stems could be made into paper. It grew in water or swamps and attained a height of 10-15 feet. Boats were sometimes made of it (Isaiah 18:2).

⁴The word for *reeds* in 2:3 is *suph*, the same term used to describe the Reed Sea, or Red Sea, in Ex. 13:18. This, however, does not prove that there were reeds growing in the Red Sea. The term *suph* also refers to seaweeds. Note its use in Jonah 2:5.

Moses' mother knew what time and place that Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe at the river. Placing the sister (Miriam) at a distance from the basket to observe suggests that they expected someone to come. We imagine that a spot used for royal bathing would be off limits to the general public.

9. *Where did Moses' mother stay while her babe was in the river?*

Apparently she went home, leaving her child in the care of Miriam and of God (Ex. 2:4, 8). Her confidence in both was beautiful.

10. *Who was the daughter of Pharaoh who found Moses?*

We really do not know. The princess who later became queen Hatshepsut was probably then a young woman; but this does not prove that she was the daughter of Pharaoh referred to in the Bible. We favor the idea that she was the one, but we do not know. R. K. Harrison suggests that the woman was only one of the daughters in one of the numerous royal harems scattered about Egypt.⁵

11. *Why should the daughter of Pharaoh go to the river to bathe?*

Probably this was a religious ceremonial washing of some kind. The Nile river was the lifestream of Egypt. The ancient Egyptians regarded the river as worthy of divine honors. They wrote hymns to it.⁶ They felt that its waters imparted fruitfulness and long life. Note that Pharaoh made frequent trips out to the water (Ex. 7:17; 8:20).

12. *Why did Pharaoh's daughter have compassion on the babe? (Ex. 2:6)*

Three reasons may be suggested: (1) natural female tenderness (which is a beautiful, needed gift from God!); (2) religious teaching among the Egyptians which required tenderness toward the suckling infant;⁷ (3) the providential

⁵*Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 575.

⁶"Hymn to the Nile," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (hereafter referred to as ANET), edited by James B. Pritchard (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1955), pp. 372, 373.

⁷F. C. Cook, ed., *The Bible Commentary*, Exodus-Ruth, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), p. 9.

control of God.

13. *What care was given to the infant Moses by his mother after she got him back?*

Every possible care. He received physical care. The term "nurse" in 2:7, 9 means to "suckle." Both Josephus⁸ and the Jewish *Midrash*⁹ say that the infant Moses rejected the breasts of Egyptian women before being turned back to his mother. This seems like a superstitious yarn.

But we can be completely sure that the child Moses grew up with spiritual care also, hearing songs and words about God and his people Israel. As far as we know the only training Moses could have received about God was that which he received at home as a very young child. But the earliest impressions upon a child often stick with him all his life. This certainly proved true in the case of Moses.

A wise teacher was asked, "When should a child's education begin?" He replied, "In the life of his great-grandmother." Observe the effects of Eunice and Lois upon Timothy (II Tim. 1:5).

Observe how the faith of Moses' mother was rewarded. Previously she cared for Moses at great peril; now under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter. Previously she cared for him at her own expense; now she gets royal wages for doing it.

Observe also how important the women were in the life of Moses. His mother, his sister, Pharaoh's daughter—all played vital roles in his career. All honor to the wonderful women of all ages who fear the Lord! Moses' wise mother knew what some "emancipated" women of our times do not know, namely that service at home to her family will have more powerful influence on the world than competing with men for authority. Who had a more lasting powerful influence on the world, the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut or Moses' mother?

⁸*Antiquities*, II, ix, 5.

⁹Amos W. Miller, *Understanding the Midrash* (New York: Jonathan David, 1965), pp. 56-57.

14. *What was Moses' youth in Egypt like?*

At an unspecified age (3-5?) Moses' mother turned him over to Pharaoh's daughter, who nourished him for her own son (Acts 7:21). He was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). This would include languages, such as Egyptian hieroglyphic, Babylonian cuneiform,¹⁰ and possibly the early Semitic alphabetic writing, such as was then in use down in the Sinaitic peninsula at Serabit El Khadim.¹¹ The Egyptians were also skillful in architecture, astronomy, and medicine.

Moses became "mighty in word and deed" as a young man (Acts 7:22). Josephus¹² tells of Moses' leading a victorious war against the Ethiopians, and consummating marriage with an Ethiopian princess. Could she have been the Cushite woman of Numbers 12:1? We can neither accept nor reject this information with complete certainty.

15. *Who gave Moses his name? Why? (Ex. 2:10)*

Pharaoh's daughter gave him his name. In Egyptian his name means "son of" (the water). The *-mose* in Moses is found in Egyptian names such as Ahmose, Thutmose, etc.¹³

In Hebrew, Moses' name is *Moshe*, derived from the verb *masha*, meaning "to draw out." It is remarkable that Moses' name would have meanings that related to his life in both the Egyptian and Hebrew languages.

16. *What great decision did Moses make in Egypt? (Ex. 2:11)*

¹⁰The so-called Amarna letters, written from petty kings in Canaan and Syria to Egyptian kings Amenhotep III (1413-1377) and Amenhotep IV (1377-1358), were written in Babylonian cuneiform writing. Apparently it was the international language of government and business at that time. See "Amarna Letters," in *Biblical World*, Chas. Pfeiffer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), p. 36.

¹¹Serabit el Khadim was a site in western Sinai where there were turquoise mines and a temple and a shrine to the Egyptian goddess Hathor. On these ruins, dated about 1500 B.C., are inscriptions in a very ancient alphabetic writing related to Hebrew. See Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible is True* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoods, 1937), p. 191; "Serabit el Khadim" in *Biblical World*, Chas. Pfeiffer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), p. 191.

¹²*Antiquities*, II, x, 1-2.

¹³Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), p. 211.

Moses chose to stand with his people, the Hebrews. Heb. 11:24 says that by faith he REFUSED to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The very fact that he *refused* implies that some offer was made to him.¹⁴ Moses' decision involved a complete severance from Egypt.

He made the decision when he was grown, at age forty (Acts 7:22). The decision may never have been publicly declared in the palace in Egypt, but Moses' deeds soon made clear whose side he was on.

Heb. 11:26 says that Moses chose to share the "reproach of Christ" (the Messiah). This reveals to us that Moses had some knowledge of the Messianic hope in Israel, a fact that we would not have learned from the book of Exodus alone.

17. *How did Moses demonstrate his decision?*

He "went out unto his brethren" (2:11) and "looked upon their burdens," supposing that his brothers (the Hebrews) would understand that God was by his hand giving them deliverance (Acts 7:25).

Observe that Moses "went out" to his brethren. He had not up till then lived among his fellow countrymen, and had not shared their hard lot.

Moses had to learn that God would give Israel deliverance by HIS own hand, rather than by Moses' hand. This lesson required forty years of sheep-herding in humiliation.

We must not, however, find fault with Moses' impulsiveness. At least he tried to do *something*. Simon Peter was also impulsive, and in an act of questionable violence he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (Mark 14:47). God used both Peter and Moses to do great things. Their decisiveness showed their potential for leadership, once they were properly disciplined. God does not get much service from those who know all the right things to do, but do not do anything.

18. *Was Moses' fearful when he broke with Egypt?*

No. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king" (Heb. 11:27). This refers to Moses' leaving

¹⁴Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus* (Chicago: Moody, n.d.), p. 19.

Pharaoh's house, not to his flight to Midian, for then he feared (Ex. 2:14).¹⁵

The "king" from whom Moses fled was probably the great Thutmose III (1502-1448 B.C.), who made seventeen military campaigns into Palestine and Syria, including a famous frontal attack on the city of Megiddo through a narrow mountain pass.¹⁶ Thutmose III was just at this time (about 1486 B.C.) coming to full power, having been a rival to Hatshepsut for many years. (Hatshepsut was both his mother-in-law and step-mother!)

19. *Why did Moses kill the Egyptian? (2:12)*

The Egyptian (probably one of the taskmasters) was smiting (beating) one of the Hebrews. The verb *smite* (*nakah*) in Ex. 2:11 is the same verb used in 2:12 to tell how Moses "slew" (smote, struck down) the Egyptian. This hints that the Egyptian was beating, or nearly beating, the Hebrew to death.

It is easy to question Moses' act. Why did he do it only when he saw no one was looking? Could he not have ordered the Egyptian to leave the Hebrew alone, since Moses was a prince? But such questions can never diminish the greatness of Moses.

20. *When two Hebrews fought, were both at fault? (2:13)*

No. One of them was bullying the other, then probably using the resistance of his victim as an excuse to fight him more. How true this is to human psychology! It is not always true that it takes two to make a fight. One who is oppressed by others may be equally oppressive himself if given an opportunity. Only the death of Christ and his love dwelling in us can reconcile men to God and to one another (Col. 1:21).

21. *How had Moses' deed become known?*

The slaying of the Egyptian could only have been made known by the Israelite whom Moses had saved the day

¹⁵Keil and Delitzsch, *op cit.*, 432.

¹⁶ANET, 234-237.

before. Imagine how fast and far the gossip grape-vine carried this news!

22. *Did Moses seek to become a prince and a judge over the Hebrews? (2:14)*

Not really. He made no threatening gestures toward the Israelites striving together. He merely asked the one man, "Why are you striking your companion?" The wrongdoer's reply to Moses resembles the words used by the Sodomites against Lot (Gen. 19:9).

23. *What does Moses' FEAR suggest to us? (2:14)*

It suggests the very human quality in an extraordinary man. Moses is not so different from us that we cannot identify with him.

It also suggests the truthfulness of the story in Exodus. A fictionalized narrative glorifying Moses might omit such a fact.

24. *Where was the land of Midian to which Moses fled? (2:15)*

Moses fled to an area in the southeast part of the Sinai peninsula, west of the Gulf of Akabah. The Midianites mainly lived east of the Gulf of Akabah; but some lived on the west side. It was there where Moses fled, going perhaps 250 miles from Egypt.

Two facts confirm the view that the land of Midian where Moses fled was west of the Gulf of Akabah: (1) In that area Moses later rejoined his Midianite father-in-law Jethro (Ex. 18:1, 5); (2) also Moses was herding sheep for Jethro near Mt. Horeb (Sinai), which is certainly west of the Gulf of Akabah. Sheep could hardly have been driven from the area east of the Gulf all the way to Sinai. The distance is too great and the terrain is too rugged and barren.

25. *Who were the Midianites?*

The Midianites were descendants of Abraham through his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:2, 4). They were thus remotely related to the Israelites.

R. Alan Cole comments that since later Israelites were bitter foes of the Midianites (Num. 25:17-18; Judges 6), it is unthinkable that the story of the Midianite sojourn of

Moses would have been invented by a later Israelite author.¹⁷ This is true; and it is a significant statement, since many Bible critics hold that Exodus was written by several authors living in the tenth or fifth centuries before Christ (long after Moses).

26. *What were the three main periods in Moses' life?*

THREE 40-YEAR PERIODS IN MOSES' LIFE

1. In Egypt, as a prince.
2. In Midian, as a shepherd.
3. In the wilderness (desert), as leader of Israel.

27. *Why did Moses sit down at a well? (2:15)*

Literally, He sat down by *the* well, probably the only one in the vicinity. Perhaps he sat down there because he was weary or thirsty, or because he hoped to meet someone. Wells were common meeting places in any area. Jacob met Rachel at a well (Gen. 29:10; Compare Gen. 24:11); and Christ met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4).

28. *What is indicated about the Midianites' religion?*

The Midianites knew God by the name *El* (Pl. *elohim*), a name which means "mighty one." This is indicated by the name *Reuel* (2:18), which means friend of God, or perhaps shepherd of God.

The Midianites had a priest (2:16). However, the extent of his knowledge of God seems very limited (Ex. 18:8-11). He did offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices (Ex. 18:12), although the exact way these sacrifices were made is not known.

The conduct of the shepherds toward Jethro's daughters (2:17) may indicate that his person and office were lightly regarded by the idolatrous and irreligious citizens of his immediate neighborhood.

29. *Describe Reuel's (Jethro's) family.*

He had a large family with seven daughters (some of marriageable age), and apparently a son, Hobab (Num. 10:29). A large Godly family is good. Jethro's daughters were industrious. No mention is made of Reuel's wife.

¹⁷Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Part of Reuel's family is later referred to as the Kenites (Judges 4:11; 1:16). The name *Kenite* in Aramaic means smith, or metal worker.¹⁸ It is a known fact that copper mines existed in the Sinai peninsula (near Ezion-Geber at the north end of the Gulf of Akabah) and turquoise mines near Serabit el-Khadim. Just possibly some members of the family were involved in mining, as well as shepherding.

30. *What were Reuel's other names?*

(1) *Raguel*. This form of his name is given in the King James version of Numbers 10:29, although the Hebrew form of the name there is identical to that which is spelled *Reuel* in Ex. 2:18.

(2) *Jethro*. (Heb. *Yithro*). This alternate name for Reuel is given in Ex. 3:1 and 18:1. *Jethro* may mean "his excellence." Ex. 4:18 gives a variant form of the name *Jethro*, *Jether* (Heb. *Yether*). We do not know why Reuel was also called *Jethro*. Several Biblical people had two names. Examples are Gideon-Jerubbaal (Judges 6:27, 32), Bartholemew-Nathanael, Solomon-Jedidiah (II Sam. 12:25), Simon-Peter (John 1:42), Jehoiachin-Jeconiah (II Kings 24:15; Jer. 24:1). Reuel's having an alternate name need not therefore surprise us.

31. *What is shown about Moses by his driving the shepherds away? (2:17)*

It shows that he was undaunted by his failures in Egypt to reconcile the fighting Hebrews and to deliver his people. He still had spunk to stand up against wrongdoing. His impulses led to immediate action.

It shows he was kind and courteous. The sisters were surprised that he drew water for them. Usually this was exclusively a woman's job.

The behavior of the shepherds was rotten and rank. They had apparently been imposing on the daughters for a long time, because when the girls were not delayed by the

¹⁸G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 65. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 834.

shepherds taking over the water they had drawn, they got home so much sooner than usual that their father was surprised. It is interesting to ponder whether Jethro knew of this regular water-well larceny, and if so why he had not stopped it.

32. *Why call Moses an Egyptian? (2:19)*

Culturally he was an Egyptian — in dress, in speech, and every outward aspect. But inwardly he was NOT an Egyptian; and it is from the heart that the expressions of life come forth.

33. *What is shown about Jethro by his having his daughters call in Moses?*

Hospitality, gratitude, recognition of good personal qualities.

Jethro rather scolds the daughters for leaving Moses at the well. "Why have you left the man? Is it because you have not been taught better? Is it because you are selfish? Is it because you did not understand or believe the man?" (*Preacher's Homiletic Commentary*). Parents should teach their children hospitality, especially when kindnesses have been extended to them.

34. *What significance is there to Moses "eating bread" with Jethro? (2:20)*

Eating bread in those lands means more than casual hospitality. It involves a personal pledge of friendship and protection.

35. *Was Moses happy to remain with Jethro?*

The expression "content" in 2:21 has no idea of satisfaction or of concession about it. Moses simply agreed to dwell with the man. Perhaps he felt he had nowhere else to go. The fact that he could stay forty years with Jethro suggests that Jethro must have been congenial. Ex. 18:14ff suggests that Jethro was wise.

36. *What do we know about Zipporah? (2:21)*

Very little. Her name meant "Bird" (perhaps "warbler" "twitterer").¹⁹ She wasn't loyal enough to the Abrahamic

¹⁹Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

convenant to see to it that her son was circumcised (Ex. 4:25). Moses sent her back to her father's house when he went back to Egypt to lead Israel out. She rejoined Moses at Rephidim near Sinai (Ex. 18:1-2). Unless she is the Cushite woman of Num. 12:1, we hear nothing more about her. The feeling strikes us that Zipporah was never really very sympathetic to Moses.

37. *What do the names of Moses' sons suggest? (2:22)*

Gershom means "a stranger there" (from Hebrew *ger*, stranger). Though Moses had safety and a wife and children, the name *Gershom* suggests that he felt a feeling of banishment in Midian.

A second son named *Eliezer* was born. See Ex. 18:4. His name means "My God is a help." This name suggests that as time passed Moses came to be more content, and to rely more fully on God. He did not lose his faith.

38. *What possible results came to Moses through his sojourn in Midian?*

(1) He learned to trust less in his own abilities. See 3:11. Such a lesson is good if it does not completely destroy our self-confidence, and if it causes us to depend the more on God.

(2) He learned patience, at least more patience than he had before.

(3) He learned many details about the land, its trails, oases, etc. He was later to lead the Israelites through part of the very territory wherein he labored as a shepherd.

(4) Possibly Jethro, as priest, may have had written documents that came into Moses' possession. The book of Job was probably written in patriarchal times (time of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob) in Arabia, which lay next to Midian. If this came to Moses' attention or he acquired it, this would help account for its presence in the group of books accepted as scripture (the canon).²⁰

²⁰The tract *Baba Bathra* from the Jewish *Talmud* (probably second century after Christ) says, "Who wrote the Scriptures? — Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam (Num. 23-24) and Job." *Baba Bathra* 14b-15a.

(5) One result sometimes credited to Moses' sojourn in Midian can be seriously questioned. This is the idea that Moses got the name of YAHWEH (Jehovah) from the Midianites (or Kenites), and some of his ideas about God's nature and laws. This is called the "Kenite theory."

According to the so-called Kenite hypothesis, Yahweh was originally the tribal god of the clan of Kenites headed by Moses' father-in-law Jethro. From them Moses allegedly first learned of the name and worship of Yahweh.²¹

The Scriptures do not indicate that the Midianites knew the name Jehovah. Moses was reminded of it by God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:13-16). Jehovah declared that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How could the Israelites have been induced to leave Egypt under the guidance of a God with whom they had had no previous association, and about whom they knew absolutely nothing?

Moses learned about God at the burning bush, and in the later experiences of leading Israel out of Egypt, and at Mt. Sinai. This knowledge was relayed to Jethro and accepted by him only after it was validated by the events of the exodus (Ex. 18:11). Jethro learned of Jehovah from Moses and not Moses from Jethro.

39. *What king of Egypt is referred to in Ex. 2:23?*

Probably the one who died was Thutmose III (1502-1448 B.C.). He was succeeded by his son Amenhotep II (1448-1422), who was probably the pharaoh at the time of the exodus. Amenhotep II continued the earlier oppression of the Israelites.

40. *What sound effects came from oppressed Israel? (2:23-24)*

(1) *Sighing*, which is often an expression of grief. Psalm 12:5.

(2) *Cry*. Compare Ex. 3:9 and James 5:4.

(3) *Groaning*. Compare Ex. 6:5.

²¹James King West, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 125. Compare H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Oxford U. Press, 1951), pp. 149-160.

The fact that the Israelites cried unto God shows that they retained some faith in the God of their fathers. When the old oppressing king died, they prayed in hope. But the bondage continued for a time.

41. *How important was God's covenant? (2:24)*

A *covenant* has always been the cornerstone of God's dealings with mankind. A covenant is variously defined as a commitment, bargain, agreement, arrangement, or will. God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others. God is unfailing in remembering his covenants.

Regarding God's covenant with Abraham, see Genesis 15. This covenant involved promises of Israel's increase in population, its enslavement in a foreign country, its deliverance, and the possession of the land of Canaan.

42. *What four actions are ascribed to God in 2:24-25?*

God heard . . . remembered . . . saw . . . knew. Ex. 2:25, when translated very literally, says, "And God looked upon the sons of Israel, and God knew." How beautiful! What more could anyone ask than that God would see us and know? To *know* means to know meaningfully, by experience. It often has the idea of intimacy, of approval, and acceptance.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

3 Now Mo-ses was keeping the flock of Je-thro his father-in-law, the priest of Mid-i-an: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Ho-reb. (2) And the angel of Je-ho-vah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. (3) And Mo-ses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (4) And when Je-ho-vah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Mo-ses, Mo-ses. And he said, Here am I.