

Cindy Cottone

# The Bible Corner



## A new life for Moses

Moses glanced sadly around him. The conditions in this place seemed to reflect his own life. Even at this early hour of the day, the hot Egyptian sun beat relentlessly, leaving everything in its wake dry and parched. A few scraggly bits of vegetation had managed to carve out a tiny existence for themselves in the cracked ground.

Moses had traveled through this desert for days, only pausing to lose a few precious moments to rest. Finally, he reached Midian. "What will I become in Midian?" thought Moses. "I wonder if they are still looking for me."

The events of the past week seemed hazy, and Moses struggled to clearly focus his thoughts. Then he remembered the murder again with dread. That was the reason Pharaoh's own army hunted him like a common criminal. Moses had killed the Egyptian official when he had seen him strike his friend, Ephraim.

"Dear God," Moses prayed, "I guess I've really messed things up this time. I'm truly sorry for my great sin. I just wanted to help my people. But I suppose that you can do without the help of a fool like me."

Moses looked up then and saw a young woman approaching the well. She appeared to take no notice of him as she lowered the bucket and filled her water pot. But just before she left, she turned suddenly to Moses and said, "Sir, you are a stranger in Midian. Do you need a cool drink of water?"

"Yes, thank you," Moses replied. "I am a long way from home."

"Well, here," she said handing him her water pot. "Take as much as you like to

refresh yourself. If you wait until later, you may not have the chance."

"Oh?" Moses questioned. "Why is that?"

"Because soon the shepherds will come to draw the water for their flocks. They won't let anyone else come near."

"Is that why you come to draw water so early?" Moses asked, smiling for the first time.

"Yes," she admitted. "My father is a priest here in Midian. But these shepherds have little respect for that. My sisters and I come every day to draw water for father's flocks. It usually takes us all day to finish, because the shepherds chase us away."

"What is your name?" Moses asked. "I am Zipporah, one of the seven daughters of Jethro," she replied.

"What, no brothers to help you?" Moses chuckled. "No matter, I have an idea. Go home and bring your sisters back with you. I guarantee that no shepherds are going to give you a hard time today."

"Okay," she said eagerly. "I'll be right back."

Moses watched Zipporah leave. Then she stopped for a moment and called back to him, "You haven't even told me your name! What shall I call you?"

"My name is Moses."  
"Moses. That's a very nice name," Zipporah said as she hurried away.

The shepherds had already gathered at

the well before Zipporah returned with her sisters. The shepherds were big, burly men, their faces weathered and ruddy from years of exposure to the desert elements. Moses watched them joking and laughing with each other. "It's so different from what I've known in my life," he thought. "Perhaps I would have done better as a shepherd."

Moses saw Zipporah coming in the distance with her sisters. He overheard one of the shepherds saying, "Ah, here come the seven fair maidens. Don't they ever tire of our teasing?"

Zipporah pointedly ignored the shepherds and walked directly over to Moses and introduced each one of her sisters to him.

"Okay," Moses said, "here's my plan. You and your sisters form a line by the well. I will draw the water and pass a filled pot to the first person in line. That person can take the water and begin filling the trough for the animals. When that is done, return to the end of the line until the trough is completely filled. Are we ready?"

"Yes, we are ready!" they chorused. With Moses as their leader, the sisters transformed their task into a game. They laughed and joked while the shepherds looked on angrily, not daring to say a word against Moses. By midday, the animals had all been watered, and Zipporah went into the house to help with the noon meal.

"Zipporah," her father questioned, "were there no shepherds at the well today?"

"Yes, father," she said, smiling. "There were many of the shepherds there."

"Well, how is it that you and your sisters have finished your job in half the time?" he continued.

"We had a special helper, father. A stranger from Egypt filled our water pots for us."

"Where is this man now?" asked Jethro. "I suppose he is still at the well," Zipporah answered, somewhat embarrassed. "Moses told us to keep coming back to the well for more water until the trough had been filled."

"Zipporah, where are your manners? Go back to the well at once and invite this Moses to share our meal."

So Moses returned that day to Jethro's house. When they had finished the meal, Jethro said, "Moses, it appears that you have a good mind. I could use a man like you to oversee all of my flocks."

Moses hesitated for a long time before he answered. Finally he replied, "I've never done that kind of work before. I just don't know."

"If you are willing, Moses, I'll even give you a place to live, here with us. Stay here tonight. You can let me know your decision tomorrow."

The next day, Moses decided to accept Jethro's kind offer, and soon proved to be a very good shepherd. Soon after that, Moses married Jethro's daughter, Zipporah. They had a child, and Moses named the boy, Gershom, meaning 'foreigner', because he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land."

Moses was content in his new life as a shepherd in Midian. Soon he forgot all about his earlier life in Pharaoh's court.

**For discussion:**

- 1) Why did Moses run away to Midian? Do you think God forgot all about him?
- 2) Was Moses sorry for his sin? Did God forgive him?
- 3) Moses was very sad about his own life, but he still helped Zipporah and her sisters. Do you think he felt better by helping someone else?

**For further reading:**

Moses goes to Midian and begins a new life in Exodus, Chapter 2:15-22.

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