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Now a Priest in Midian had Seven Daughters

2: 16-22

Now a priest in Midian had seven daughters DIG: How is the exodus foreshadowed in the deliverance of Reuel's daughters? What other important men and women in the Bible meeting at a well? How did Moshe's act of driving the shepherds away serve as a microcosm of the later exodus deliverance?

REFLECT: Have you ever dropped out and sat on the spiritual sidelines for an extended period of time? How did this better prepare you for your future? How has ADONAI used you because of it?

Moses fled to the land of **Midian**, which for the next forty years was **his** home. It is the area of the southern Sinai Peninsula, the same area in which Mount Sinai is located. The one in charge of that territory was not a king but a **priest**. **His** name is **Reuel**, which means *the friend of God*. When we get to **3:1** we are told: **Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian**, and some have seen a contradiction between the two accounts. But **Jethro** is not a proper name; it is a title like Pharaoh, Kaiser, Cesar or President.

However, **Moses** did not learn about the **God** of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from this man; **he** learned about **Him** from **his** parents until the age of five. At this point **Reuel** is a polytheist, and is not convinced of monotheism until we get to **18:9-12**.



Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock (2:16). Women watering animals was very common in the TaNaKh (**Genesis 24:11-19**). Here is another biblical example of a guy meeting the right girl by a well. Isaac's servant, Eliezer of Damascus, found Rebekah by a well (**Genesis 24:15-16**). Where did Rebekah finally meet Isaac? At Beer Lahai Roi, or *the well of the Living One* (**Genesis 24:62**). Jacob also met Rachel by a well (**Genesis 29:1-14**). And of course, **Jesus** talked with a Samaritan woman by a well (**John 4:126**).

Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock (2:17). This act serves as a microcosm of the later exodus deliverance. Here **the women** are victimized and oppressed by **shepherds** who drive **them** away from the water. **Moses** stands up for the persecuted and rescues **them** from the oppressors. The word **rescue** simply means *saved or delivered*. The same verb is generally used for the deliverance of **the Israelites** out of **Egypt**. **That day ADONAI saved Isra'el from the hands of the Egyptians (14:30a)**. The word for **drove away** is also used later when **Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence (10:11)**. The character of **Moses** is emphasized here. **He** was brave, loved justice, took the side of the weak and the oppressed. Those traits would serve **him** well in the later deliverance of **the Hebrews**.²⁷

When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them: "Why have you returned so early today?" The watering of **their father's flock** should have taken much longer. **They answered** and said: **An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds**. At this point **Moses** probably dressed, talked and was clean-shaven like **an Egyptian**. **The girls** concluded by saying: **He even drew water for us and watered the flock (2:18-19)**.

"And where is he?" he asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat." A man with **seven daughters** was anxious to find out who this guy was! During the course of the meal, an agreement was made and **he** would live with **them** from that point on. **Moses agreed to stay with the man (2:20-21a)**. So **ADONAI** was working behind the scenes and this stranger was accepted into **Reuel's** family.



Later, **Reuel** would give **his daughter Zipporah**, which means *ladybird*, **to Moses in marriage**. Normally the **marriage** proposal came from the family of the bridegroom. But occasionally, under unusual circumstances like this, the custom was reversed. The father, of course, had the authority to make such decisions, with their society being totally patriarchal in nature. Later, **Zipporah gave birth to their first son, and Moses named him Gershom**, a pun which means *an alien there* or *banishment*, and refers to **Moses'** realization that **he**, at first somewhat homesick and lonely, was **an alien in a foreign land (2:21b-22)**. **He** was a man in exile from **his** home country and the people of **his** birth. **Moses** was *an alien*, as were **his Israelite** countrymen in **Egypt** and **he** was finally experiencing their plight. **His** son's name was a constant reminder of **his banishment**.²⁸

Two general points of application need to be made here for those who follow **Christ**. First, believers are called to understand and take to heart, the truth that **God's** plan for the universe and eternity will come to pass despite sin. Do we think that in some way our sin will thwart **ADONAI's** decrees from operating in the world? Not even Satan, at his most wicked and hateful moment, can hinder the providence of **YHVH**. Even the very gates of hell are powerless to block **God's** purposes for the universe. May we hold to that truth.

Secondly, may we grasp the truth that **the LORD** will use us, like **He** did **Moses**, despite our sin. That, of course, does not give us a license to sin, but **God** employs frail and weak vessels to proclaim the gospel to a dying world. **Yeshua** uses redeemed sinners to proclaim the excellences of **Him** who has called us out of the darkness! **ADONAI** uses **His** people, despite their weakness, failure and sinfulness, for **His** glory and **His** purposes.²⁹