

# The Family of Moses

## **MOSES**

Name means: Drawn out of the water (Exodus 2:10)

*When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."*

- Father is Amram – Ex. 6:18-20, Num. 3:19, 26:58, 59, 1 Chron. 6:2, 23:13 and Amram was of the Tribe of Levi.
- Mother is Jochebed – Ex. 6:20, Numbers 26:59 (Levite married Levite)
- Sister is Miriam – Ex. 15:20-21 prophetess, Numbers 12:1-10 leprous
- Brother is Aaron – Exodus 4:14, 6:23-25 took a wife

**REUEL or JETHRO** (see longer explanation below)

Name means: Friend of God

Priest of Midian

Known by many names, Reuel (Exodus 2), Jethro (Exodus 18), and Raguel (Numbers 10:29)

**Exodus 2:18** *And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day?*

## **ZIPPORAH**

*Wife of Moses, daughter of Reuel*

**Exodus 2:21** *And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.*

**Exodus 4:25** *Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.*

**Exodus 18:2** *Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,*

**Numbers 12:1** *And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.*

## **GERSHOM**

Name means: Stranger, or alien (Ex 2:22)

First son of Moses with Zipporah

Was circumcised late by Zipporah in Exodus 4:

**Exodus 2:21-22**

*21. Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage.*

*22. Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, "I have become an alien in a foreign land."*

### **Exodus 4:20**

*So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.*

### **Exodus 4:24-26**

*24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. 26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.*

### **Exodus 18:1-6, 27**

*1. Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 2. After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her 3. and her two sons. **One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become an alien in a foreign land"; 4. and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."** 5. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God. 6. Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."  
27. Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.*

### **Judges 18:30-31 - grandson was an idolater**

*"Then the Danites set up branding the grandson of Moses as an idolater: an idol [from the home of Micah] for themselves. Jonathan, son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the time that the land went into captivity. So they maintained as their own Micah's idol that he had made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh."*

### **1 Chronicles 26:24**

*And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures.*

## **ELIEZER**

Name means: God my help (Eli-ezer)

Second son of Moses, born to Zipporah in Midian before the Exodus.

**Exodus 18:4** And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:

**1 Chronicles 23:15** The sons of Moses were, Gershom, and Eliezer.

1 Chronicles 23:17 And the sons of Eliezer were, Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many.

1 Chronicles 26:25 And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son.

# WORD STUDIES

## GERSHOM

**Exodus 2:22** And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Exodus 18:3 And her two sons; of which the name of the one *was* Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land:

Judges 18:30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

1 Chronicles 23:15 The sons of Moses *were*, Gershom, and Eliezer.

1 Chronicles 23:16 Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel *was* the chief.

1 Chronicles 26:24 And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, *was* ruler of the treasures.

## ELIEZAR

**Exodus 18:4** And the name of the other *was* Eliezer; for the God of my father, *said he*, *was* mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:

1 Chronicles 15:24 And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and Obededom and Jehiah *were* doorkeepers for the ark.

**1 Chronicles 23:15** The sons of Moses *were*, Gershom, and Eliezer.

1 Chronicles 23:17 And the sons of Eliezer *were*, Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many.

1 Chronicles 26:25 And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son.

# Reuel or Jethro

Jethro was the father-in-law of Moses and father of Zipporah. Jethro is first mentioned in the Bible in Exodus 2:16 where he is described as “a priest of Midian.” He is also referred to as Reuel (verse 18), which could indicate the equivalent of a last name.

The name Reuel means “friend of God,” so the fact that the Bible calls him first by this name may mean that he was a priest of the Most High God, rather than a pagan deity as some have suggested.

Many people in the Bible were called by two names such as Jacob (Israel, Genesis 35:10), Simon (Peter, Luke 6:14), Matthew (Levi, Mark 2:14; Matthew 9:9), and Paul (Saul, Acts 13:9). Sometimes the name change was due to an encounter with God. Other times it may have simply been a second name, in the way that a man named Ben Jones may be called both “Ben” and “Jones.”

Exodus 2 details the account of Moses’ first encounter with Jethro. When Moses was on the run from Pharaoh, after having killed an Egyptian, he found himself in Midian by a well. Jethro’s seven daughters were shepherdesses who came to the well to water their sheep. However, some men chased the women away, and Moses came to their defense. In gratitude for Moses’ care of his daughters, Jethro invited him for dinner.

**Over the course of time, Jethro gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses for a wife, and they had two sons (Exodus 2:21; 4:20).**

Moses stayed with the Midianites for forty years until God called to him from the burning bush (Exodus 3). Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, gave him his blessing to return to his people in obedience to God (Exodus 4:18).

Jethro is highlighted again in Exodus chapter 18. Moses had sent Zipporah and their sons back to Midian, rather than take them to Egypt, perhaps due to the dangers he would face in leading an entire nation out of slavery. Moses clearly trusted Jethro to take good care of his family and use wisdom in knowing when to reunite them.

In Exodus 18, Jethro brings Zipporah and the children to Moses at Sinai. The relationship between Moses and Jethro was always cordial (verses 7–8), and Jethro offers some fatherly advice when he sees the overwhelming responsibility facing his son-in-law (verses 13–27).

Moses takes Jethro’s advice on how to delegate authority: “Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said” (verse 24). Moses then sends Jethro back to Midian with his blessing (verse 27).

From all we can tell in the Bible, Jethro was a godly man of integrity who played a small part in God’s great story of deliverance for the Israelites. He is a good role model for in-laws. He offered wise counsel, stepped in to help when needed, and then got out of the way.