

Was Moses Circumcised?

The KJV says from Exodus 4:21-26:

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: 23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. 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 4:21-26)

NIV inserts "Moses" as the object of the Lord killing Pharaoh's firstborn. It in "him" and "he" in the Hebrew.

http://www.metaljazz.com/2008/04/passover_commentary_was_moses.php

Moses: uncircumcised lips

In Exodus 4:24-26, Moses is on the road to accost Pharaoh when the Lord comes to execute the death sentence. Zipporah, apparently understanding the reason for the attack, immediately grabs a piece of flint and whacks off their son's foreskin, dropping it at Moses' feet and calling him a "bloody spouse," her Midianite heritage possibly rebelling against this painful, gory practice. God is appeased.

The context: Immediately before this, God has instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh that Israel is God's firstborn, and unless the Chosen People are released, God will kill Pharaoh's firstborn. The unstated implication is that Moses, in order to utter such a challenge, must stand worthy in the case of his own firstborn -- who, contrary to the Covenant, is not circumcised.

Given that the son, Gershon, is the offspring of a gentile woman and of Moses, who was raised by Egyptians, the retention of his prepuce up to that point doesn't seem unlikely. In fact, Exodus suggests that, although circumcision was practiced -- not universally -- by Egyptians (a fact not mentioned in the Torah) as well as by Hebrews, Moses himself was not circumcised.

The veiled revelation of this condition arrives in Exodus 6:12 and again in 6:30. Moses is complaining about being assigned as an interlocutor despite his lack of qualifications: He

calls himself what the New American Bible translates as a “poor speaker” and the King James Version more literally renders as “of uncircumcised lips.”

For “uncircumcised,” Moses uses the Hebrew word “arel,” which at root refers to something loose or disordered, particularly a foreskin. Moses’ choice of terminology (he says “uncircumcised” twice, and the word doesn’t relate to lips anywhere else in the Old Testament) is hard to justify unless he intends to imply that it applies “as above, so below.”

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1391191/jewish/Was-Moses-Born-Circumcised.htm

Was Moses Born Circumcised?

Regarding Moses’ birth, we read that “his mother saw that he was good.” What did she see? One interpretation, cited in several classic sources, is that she saw that he was circumcised and knew that there was greatness in store for him. Being born circumcised was an expression of the otherworldly perfection that characterized the one who would speak face to face with G-d.

Midrash Tanchuma¹ lists Moses among seven special people who were born circumcised. They are: Adam, Seth, Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Job.

Avot D’Rabbi Natan² provides a longer list: Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Balaam, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Zerubabel, and Job.

Both of these Midrashim, as well as the Talmud³ and Shemot Rabbah⁴, see an allusion to Moses’ being circumcised in the abovementioned verse. Other interpretations can be found, however, where different significance is attached to these words.

Another linguist explanation

Throwing your son's freshly circumcised foreskin at your husband's penis to win an argument with God (Exodus 4:24-26)

<https://www.agameforgoodchristians.com/blog/2015/7/17/throwing-your-sons-freshly-circumcised-foreskin-at-your-husbands-penis-to-win-an-argument-with-god>

Exodus 4:24-26 is widely considered one of the most enigmatic and difficult to interpret passages of Scripture in the Hebrew Bible. So of course we decided to tackle it. Among the myriad issues and confusions with interpreting this text, let’s focus on four:

1. Who? (Pronoun confusion) ~ There are no antecedents for the male pronouns in this passage. It is not always clear who “he” or “him” refers to the five times they appear in this text. At times it could be Moses, Moses’ son, or YHWH. Because of this . . .
2. Who is going to die? ~ Is Moses the target of divine wrath or is it his son?
3. What’s the deal with the sudden circumcision and airborne foreskin?
4. What does □atan damim mean? ~ These are the Hebrew words most translations render as “bridegroom of blood” or “bloody husband” in verses 25 and 26. But what does that even mean?

Joshua 5:5 all circumcised

4 Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt.

5 All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not.

6 The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

7 So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way.

Genesis 17:10-14 Law of Circumcision

Moses would have been circumcised the 8th day in a Jewish home. Done by a priest.

Genesis 17:10-14

10. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

11. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.

12. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner--those who are not your offspring.

13. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.

14. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."