

# Bible Heroes

Zipporah  
& Moses

Teachers  
Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

Often this story of Zipporah can feel unnecessary with such a long narrative, but it's the story of Moses downfall and redemption, it's the humanisation of a man whose face will one day shine from his direct contact with the divine. Without this story Moses can be seen as a man who just happened to be immensely blessed at every turn.

Main Passage : Exodus 2

Early in the morning, before the sun was up Zipporah and her sisters would call 'Seh, Seh' and the sheep would come running to them. Once the count was done they followed the trail away from home. No matter which way they went they had to find a well for the sheep to have a drink. Sheep need water.

One day when Zipporah got near the well she saw it surrounded by a sea of sheep and two men sat on the ground. These were lazy shepherds. Once they had stopped for water they would sit as the day got hotter and their sheep blocked the well. There wasn't another well nearby. She would have to wait for them to move or go and argue for them to move.

Carrying a small tired lamb, she went down towards the well. Once near she realised there was a third man, a strange man she'd never seen before. He wasn't sitting with the shepherds, perhaps he could help. He saw Zipporah coming, raised himself up and walked over to the other shepherds.

"Perhaps it's time you moved your sheep on to make way for others?" the strange man said in a loud clear voice.

"Why should we?" came the rough reply, "The silly little girls can wait"

"Oh, I see, you are bigger and stronger, they can not make you move on" said the strange man

"Yes indeed" the shepherds laughed

"I understand" the man replied. "I am a strong Egyptian man, I grew up in a palace, servants and slaves brought me everything I commanded."

Zipporah could see the men smiling, they liked this idea.

"In Egypt there were lots of slaves, we used them for everything, all the dirty work, all the heavy lifting. They weren't like us, they were foreigners in our land. When I was a babe there were so many of these foreigners they killed off all the males boys for a few years, threw them in the river. Sometimes you need to control the herd."

Zipporah was shocked but the men were still smiling.

"Took me a long time to learn that history lesson, they hid it from me, do you know why?"

"No, why?" the men eagerly replied

"Because that's where they found me, in a basket, in the water, that's what my name means, to be pulled from water - Moses"

Zipporah gasped.

"Oh yes," said Moses, "yes, I may have been brought up in a palace but I was born a slave. When I learned the truth I went to find my real family, I went into the part of the city where they lived. I looked at the teams of men and the women cleaning at the waters edge. Were these the faces of my brothers and sisters, my mother and father? There, I saw a slave master beating one of his men, a weak man, a small man, beating him for no reason, beating him because nobody would stop him. For the first time I got truly angry, so very angry. I followed that big slave master, that terrible man, I followed him and then...."

Moses hung his head and in a low whisper he breathed "then I killed him"

The two men weren't smiling anymore.

"You may be bigger and stronger than these girls but perhaps now you think it's time you moved your sheep on?"

The two men jumped up quickly, they kept looking back at Moses trying to decide if he was being truthful. Moses walked over to the well and silently threw down the bucket. By the time Zipporah's sisters arrived Moses had filled the ditch with water for the sheep.

"Is, is it true?" Zipporah asked Moses, "Did you really kill a man?"

"Sadly, yes" said Moses shamefully "It was wrong, so very wrong, and after I ran away because I was afraid I would lose my own life. I should have helped my people, I could have helped my people and I didn't."

When Zipporah arrived home early her father, Jethro, sent her back to get Moses. They invited him to eat to say thank you for his help. Jethro understood Moses, he understood the anger and the reasons for the wrong and invited him to stay. Moses became a shepherd, and after some time Zipporah and Moses were married. But Moses didn't forget his people and his old city.

**Today's heroes are Zipporah and Moses because they shows us the gift of history**