

Exodus 18:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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—Gershom's name (גֶּרְшׁוֹם, 'stranger there') memorializes Moses' exile identity in Midian. The naming statement 'I have been an alien' (גֵּר הַיִתִּי, ger hayiti) shows Moses felt displaced in Midian despite marriage and family. This alien identity prepares Moses to lead Israel, themselves aliens in Egypt and now pilgrims in wilderness. The name teaches that God's servants often live as exiles, a theme Christ affirms: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation' (John 16:33). Peter calls believers παρεπίδημοι (parepidēmoi, 'sojourners,' 1 Pet 2:11), echoing Moses' named exile.

Historical Context

Gershom was born during Moses' 40 years in Midian (Exodus 2:22). His name reflects Moses' sense of displacement before God called him to lead Israel from Egyptian exile.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Moses naming his son 'stranger' prepare him to lead a people of exiles?
2. What does feeling 'alien' even in place of refuge teach about the believer's pilgrim identity?

Interlinear Text

וְאֶת	שָׁבַע	בְּנֵי	אֶשְׁר	שֵׁם	בְּאֶחָד	גֵּרֶשׁ
H853	And her two	sons	H834	of which the name	of the one	was Gershom
H8147		H1121		H8034	H259	H1647
וְאָמַר	גֵּר	בְּאֶרֶץ	גֵּרֶשׁ			
H3588	for he said	I have been an alien	H1961	land	in a strange	
H559		H1616		H776	H5237	

Additional Cross-References

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

Acts 7:29 (Parallel theme): Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

Hebrews 11:13 (Parallel theme): These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Psalms 39:12 (Parallel theme): Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

Exodus 4:20 (Parallel theme): And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

