

Exodus 2:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

Analysis

And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock (בָּאוּ כֶּרֶעִים וַיַּגְּרְשׁוּם יָקֹם מֹשֶׁה וַיְשַׁעֵּן) vayavo'u haro'im vaygareshum vayakom Mosheh vayoshi'an)—**Shepherds... drove them away**—bullies exploiting the vulnerable, a pattern Moses consistently opposes (cf. v. 12). **Moses stood up** (יָקֹם, vayakom, "arose/stood") implies decisive action. **Helped them** (וַיְשַׁעֵּן, vayoshi'an)—significantly, this is from the root ישע (yasha, "save/deliver"), the same root as "salvation" and "Jesus/Yeshua." Moses' character shows through: defender of the oppressed, rescuer of the helpless. God is shaping His deliverer through these wilderness experiences.

Historical Context

Water rights disputes were serious in arid regions, often leading to violence (Genesis 21:25). Male shepherds typically had priority over women at wells. Moses' intervention against multiple shepherds shows courage and physical strength developed in Egypt. This episode demonstrates Moses' character to Jethro, leading to marriage and adoption into Midian.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' pattern of defending the oppressed (Hebrew, v. 12; Hebrew, v. 13; Midianite women, v. 17) reveal consistent godly character despite his flaws?
2. In what situations is God calling you to 'stand up' and deliver the vulnerable from oppression?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא אֲוֹתָם	וְרֹאשׁ יְמִינֵי	וַיִּגְרַשׁ إِمְמָדָה	וַיַּקְרַב	מֹשֶׁה	וַיַּשְׁעַת
came	And the shepherds	and drove them away	stood up	but Moses	and helped
H935	H7462	H1644	H6965	H4872	H3467
וַיְשַׁׁבֵּב אֲתָם	אֶת צָבָא				
them and watered	their flock				
H8248	H853	H6629			

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 29:10 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Genesis 21:25 (Parallel theme): And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

Exodus 2:12 (Parallel theme): And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.