

Exodus 2:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land (וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גֵרְשֹׁם כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נֹכְרִיָּה, vateled ben vayikra et-shemo Gereshom ki amar ger hayiti be'erets nokhriyah)—**Gershom** (גֵרְשֹׁם, from גֵר, ger, "stranger/sojourner") memorializes Moses' exile and alienation. **Stranger in a strange land** (גֵר הָיִיתִי בְאֶרֶץ נֹכְרִיָּה) reflects Moses' identity crisis: Hebrew by birth, Egyptian by upbringing, now Midianite by marriage, yet belonging fully nowhere. This lifelong sense of exile prepared Moses to lead Israel—a nation of sojourners (Genesis 15:13, Leviticus 25:23, Hebrews 11:13-16). Gershom's name is testimony to humble dependence rather than triumphant confidence.

Historical Context

The motif of exile and sojourning runs throughout Moses' life and Israel's history. Abraham was called to be a sojourner (Genesis 12:1); Israel would sojourn in Egypt, wilderness, and ultimately long for the eternal homeland. Moses' personal exile equipped him with empathy for displaced people and trust in God rather than earthly security.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' naming of Gershom reflect his embrace of exile as identity, and how does this prepare him to lead a nation of sojourners?
2. In what ways does your experience of being a 'stranger' or outsider shape your dependence on God and sympathy for others?

Interlinear Text

וַתֵּלֶד	בן	וַקָּרָא	אֶת	שְׁמוֹ	גֶרְשֹׁם	כִּי
And she bare	him a son	and he called	H853	his name	Gershom	H3588
H3205	H1121	H7121		H8034	H1647	
אָמַר	גֵּר	הִנְיָ יְרֵא	בְּאֶרֶץ	נִכְרָה:		
for he said	I have been a stranger	H1961	land	in a strange		
H559	H1616		H776	H5237		

Additional Cross-References

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

Exodus 22:21 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Psalms 119:19 (Parallel theme): I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

1 Chronicles 29:15 (Parallel theme): For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

1 Chronicles 16:20 (Parallel theme): And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people;

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.

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