

Exodus 4:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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 (זִפְפָרָה צָרָה עַל־עֲרָלָת בָּנָה וַתַּגְעַע לְכֶלְיָו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חֲתָנָדָמִים אַתָּה לִי—) (אַפְּרָה צָרָה עַל־עֲרָלָת בָּנָה וַתַּגְעַע לְכֶלְיָו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חֲתָנָדָמִים אַתָּה לִי—) Zipporah acts decisively, using **a sharp stone** (צָרָה, tsor, flint knife) to circumcise their son. **Cast it at his feet** (וַתַּגְעַע לְכֶלְיָו, lit. "touched his feet")—whose feet? Moses' or the child's? Ambiguous. **Bloody husband** (חֲתָנָדָמִים, chatan-damim)—obscure phrase, possibly "bridegroom of blood" connecting circumcision to covenant marriage. Zipporah's tone seems reproachful—she finds this bloody ritual distasteful. Her action saves Moses' life but reveals marital tension over religious practice. She later returns to Midian (18:2), possibly due to this conflict.

Historical Context

Flint knives were traditionally used for circumcision (Joshua 5:2-3) even after bronze/iron tools existed, maintaining ancient practice. Zipporah's Midianite background may have made Hebrew circumcision customs foreign or objectionable. The phrase chatan-damim occurs only here, making translation difficult. Some see it as establishing circumcision as "marriage" (covenant cutting) between God and His people, sealed in blood.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Zipporah's reluctant obedience teach about the tensions that arise when covenant obligations conflict with cultural or personal preferences?
2. What does this crisis teach about ensuring that family religious practices align with covenant requirements, not just personal convenience?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּקְרֹב	זִפְפּוֹרָה	אַשְׁפֵּךְ	הַ	צָר	צָר	וַיִּתְכַּרְתֵּת	אֶת	עַרְלָת	בֶּן	הַ
took	Then Zipporah	a sharp stone		and cut off			H853	the foreskin	of her son	
H3947	H6855	H6864		H3772			H853	H6190		H1121
and cast	it at his feet	and said		סְפִנָּה		סְפִנָּה		דָם	הַ	לֵ
H5060	H7272	H559		H3588	husband	Surely a bloody		H1818	H859	H0

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 17:14 (Parallel theme): And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

2 Samuel 16:7 (Blood): And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

