

Pillar Passage Exodus 4:21-24  
Jed Brown  
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Welcome to another Pillar Passage. Today we are looking at one of the most surprising and obscure passages in Scripture, Exodus 4 verse 24. But before we get to that verse, I'm going to show the context, because the context is crucial.

This brings up a rule of Bible study, whenever you come across a passage that seems obscure or very hard to understand to you; one of the most effective ways to understand is to simply read the context. Either read what came before or keep reading. Almost always, the critical bits of data come to the forefront as we do that.

Here, let's look at it in its context. This is after Moses has left Egypt and gone to Midian. The Lord has told him to leave Midian. He now has a wife, Zipporah. He is to go back to Egypt. "When you go back to Egypt," God says, "see that you do before pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart (pharaoh) so that he will not let the people go. And you shall say to pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.' The firstborn son is crucial here.

That all makes some sense to us, and then verse 24. Out of the blue, it seems, 'at a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death.'

What's going on? Didn't you tell him to go to Egypt? Why are you not seeking to put him to death?

'Then Zipporah,' Moses' wife, 'took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin'—not Moses', his son's—'and then touched Moses' feet with it' What's going on here? 'and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me! So he let him alone.' The *Lord* let him—probably Moses—alone. 'It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

What happens next? All is well. 'The Lord said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.'" They meet and they go and meet the people of Israel, because God has seen their affliction. They bow their heads and worship. All is well.

So, what is going on here?

Well, two bits of data; Number 1, we know that circumcision already existed here. It was the mark of the covenant people of God. This was instituted long before this with Abraham in Genesis. 'The Father of Many Nations'—but 'The Father of Israel'. It appears that Moses has not circumcised his son. As he sets off to do the Lord's will. The Lord's will—and the Lord will end up doing this on the night of the exodus—to kill the firstborn son of Egypt. This is what will happen. Moses has not, however, circumcised *his* son. So the Lord comes and meets with him.

Now it is possible that the “him” here in verse 24 is not Moses, but Moses’ son. The most likely case, however, is that it is Moses, but it could be Moses’ son because he is not circumcised. But most likely it is Moses. Moses is under judgement here, and so is the son.

Zipporah does something that is probably just what occurs to her in the moment, but is also of massive, massive significance for the rest of the Bible. Zipporah takes a flint and circumcises her son. She takes the skin—surely the blood skin—and she touches it to Moses’ feet; which in those days was considered the most filthy part of the person. The part of the body that pictured the filthiness of mankind. She takes the blood of the firstborn son—she takes that blood and places it over the filthiness of Moses. Can you picture now what is happening?

Then Moses—who once killed a man in Egypt, an Egyptian guard—and who will be one who delivers the news of blood, blood of the firstborn to Egypt. She declares him to be a bridegroom of blood. In other words, declaring to Moses and before God, you are cleansed. You are cleansed by the blood of the firstborn son.

There is something very significant in this entire picture here. What’s happening. That is just because someone is close to God; just because God has sought you, and you grew up in church, you had godly parents. That doesn’t make any of us—any of those things—any better off than the most vile “Egyptian.” We are all under God’s wrath. In this case, the people of God were under God’s wrath. The people of God, as we will see in the exodus, needed a deliverer. Just as Abraham was told to go up on Mount Moriah and sacrifice his son—his son Isaac. Then at the last second, God provided the ram in the thicket. God provided the sacrifice to redeem Abraham’s son, we are all in need of a redeemer—a redeemer of blood.

This is a vivid picture of the exodus when God Himself will come and provide His firstborn Son and would spill His blood so that we could be wedded to God; so that we could be united to God forever and ever, so that we might be bridegrooms of blood.

Our most filthy places—whatever it is for you—covered with the blood of the firstborn Son. Made to stand righteous before Him—righteous. And able to stand before Him just as resurrected His Son stands before Him. This is an odd, odd situation and yet it is an odd piece of scripture that points us to some of the most amazing truths of the Bible. It brings us right to the center of God’s redemptive work in the world.