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THE LIFE OF MOSES – LESSON 3

AT THE WELL OF MIDIAN

Moses fled from Egypt to escape the death order from Pharaoh. He went to the Arabian wilderness to the land of the Midianites on the east side of the Sinai Peninsula.

He found a water well where shepherds watered their flocks. It was there that he encountered seven young sisters who were tending their father's flock. The other shepherds, all males, always forced them to be last because men always had priority over women. It would usually be late in the day when the men were gone that they could finally water their animals or draw water for themselves.

Moses was watching this go on. The girls had already drawn water and filled the water troughs for their flock, but the men drove them back and took the water for their own flocks leaving none for the women who had drawn it.

Moses did not like this kind of injustice, so he took charge and drew water himself for their flock. After the flock had drunk, the women took their flocks home and Moses apparently remained near the well. When the women got home, they told their father about the incident. Their father reprimanded them for not being grateful enough to this man, whom they identified as an Egyptian, to invite him to their father's house to eat. He sent them back to fetch him.

The women's father was the priest of Midian, a position of significance. He was known both as Jethro and Reuel. Jethro seems to have been his honorary title of authority among the Midianites. His personal name of Reuel meant "a friend of God" much like Abraham's name. He was in fact a descendant of Abraham. Midian was the sixth of Abraham's eight sons, and the fourth of the six from his wife Keturah. It is likely that he had some knowledge of his forefather, because in later years Reuel (Jethro) acknowledged Jehovah as God and sacrificed to him, despite having been a priest in the pagan tribe of Midian.

Tomorrow we shall see how this all worked out for Moses.