

**CRITIQUE OF THE MARRIAGE OF MOSES IN THE CONTEXT OF  
CHRISTIAN LEADERS' MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA**

**By**

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## Abstract

Some Christian leaders have erroneously thought that the in-depth spirituality and endowed spiritual power have automatically relieved them of vital family responsibilities and covered their social responsibilities at home front. Hence, they neglected the duties they ought to have performed to their wives and children. The resultant effects of this kind of negligence and lackadaisical attitude have bred types of children that the society has given them proverbial and biblically derogatory names such as “children of Eli”, “children of Samuel” and “children of pastors”. This study took critical and historical approaches to investigate problems attached to the marriages of Moses, Zipporah and contemporary religious leaders, using Exodus 4:18-26 as a textual background. The purpose was to suggest some lasting solutions to the menace of lack of home responsibilities that spiritual leaders should have performed at homestead but failed to do. The significance of the study would benefit the spiritual leaders, the wives and the whole society. Findings revealed that spiritual power endowment does not fill the vacuum of sexual, financial, moral supports, love, communication, physical warmth and presence that the wives need and parental training of the children and they should carry their family responsibilities along with their spiritual assignments.

**Keywords:** Marriage, Moses, Challenges, Spiritual Leaders, Contemporary Christianity

## **Introduction**

Issues concerning the families of spiritual leaders have been receiving various critical attentions from both within the Christian folds and in the society. The reason for this is not farfetched considering the sheer fact that these families have been perceived from many quarters as “sacred”, “special”, spiritual and coated with “elements of divinity”. As a result, high demands and expectations are attached to the families of the spiritual leaders. While God has placed great spiritual responsibilities on His emissaries and expects that they minister to the spiritual needs of the people around and abroad, the home front must not be neglected as well. However, the reality on ground is that the spiritual focus and duties of church leaders receive more attentions than the home fronts and this has led to the neglect of the personalities involved in the homes such as wives, children, siblings, relatives and extended family members (Adejuyigbe, 2012:277-278). This “sacred” negligence has led to many social menaces and vices in the lives of their wives and children and this has jeopardized good testimonies of the work of the ministry.

Leaders are the people that the subject or the governed look up to for godly examples to emulate. Balogun (2017:152) submits that leadership is naturally a position held in trust for the people, which portends that a leader or leaders are trust worthy people that others can follow. At the same time Adeogun (2009:1-3) rightly posits that it is the lubricant of development of a nation or any organization. It then follows that home as the first institution or organization in human society is committed to the hands of a father and husband who is a leader at the societal unit. If there is no “lubricant” for the joy, peace, caring, love, romance and good provision at home, there will be no mutual relationship and sound communication at home. Here lies the importance of a good leader at home from the heads. Adejuyigbe rightly observes that after Jesus Christ, the next factor is home (2012) for the Christians and especially Christian leaders.

The complaints and even cries have severally been heard from many wives and children on the negligence of their husbands and fathers in the name of the work of the ministry. Kent is of the position the there is a deep passion for security in the heart of every woman at home (1991:67). The absence of this instinct has led to many strives among husbands and wives at homes. Various accusing fingers have been pointed to the fathers, the leaders of the families for negligence, poor communication, good treatments, provision at home, partial and temporary abandonments and the likes at homes. Many wives have decried sexual starvations, irregular home allowances, lack of food provisions, companionship, communication, fellowship, the warmth of the husband and wife being together,

harassments in the name of the divine calling, threats of curses under anointing and annoyance, battery and domestic violence. Many wives are suffering in silence due to the negligence if not “partial divorce”, which Yerokun (2016:67-75) decries that it is not the therapy for family peace and stability and abandonment at home. Many other resultant effects of all these omissions are better imagined than experienced in the lives of many wives.

The problem addressed in this study has to do with the rate of negligence and divided attentions from the spiritual fathers at home in the name of the work of the ministry. Using the marriage of Moses and Zipporah as a case study in Exodus: 4:18-26 text, the study adopted a critical-historical approach and secondary data for the source of information and a critique of the marriage of Moses and Zipporah. The challenges from the marriage of Moses and Zipporah were juxtaposed with the challenges of the modern spiritual leaders in the contemporary Christianity. The purpose of the study was to see how the negligence of Moses in his marriage with Zipporah posed a lot of dangers to him at last and spiritual leaders could learn from him and appeal was made for the avoidance of over concentrations on the work of the ministry to the negligence and if not abandonment of the responsibilities in the home fronts. The significance of this study is to create and recreate a great sensitization to the spiritual leaders in the sense that they should be aware that spiritual power, anointing and gifts they carry does not cover the practical responsibilities at homes.

### **Moses: A Man, Prince, Murderer, Run-away Fugitive, Called and Commissioned as a Prophet**

Quite interesting was the fact that Moses (Kitchen, 1982: 792) was born during a dangerous period in Egypt by pious parents. Other Jewish parents had suffered infanticide from the hands of the bloody and wicked Pharaoh, who was keenly interested in the indigenization of the Egyptian dynasty and rule in the land. The hatred he had for the foreigners was also extended to the Hebrews who had affinity with the Hyksos. The Hyksos has ruled over the Egyptians for over one hundred and fifty years (Armstrong, 2023). Now, any uprising of the foreigners must be ruthlessly dealt with by the indigenous Egyptians. The shrewd way to deal with this was to kill all the newly born male children who were perceived as future warriors in the society. The living adults should be subjected to rigorous labours so that the physical power would be weakened and they would remain as slaves. The infanticide order was decreed and it must be carried out by the emissaries of the emperor of the day, Pharaoh Ramses (cf. Exo. 1-2).

The name “Moses” has been a debate among many scholars. It bothers whether it has Egyptian origin or Hebrew source. Martin Noth is of the opinion that the original matter in the Pentateuchal traditions “about Moses connects him with Egypt and this account for the origin of his name-Moses”. Knight (2023:2) has rightly positioned that to doubt the historical existence of a great personality such as Moses is to unintelligibly deny that facts of the history of Israel. Exodus 2:10 tradition, it says, “She called his name *Moseh*, and she said, “Because I drew him out of water-*m<sup>e</sup>sitihu*. Some scholars have identified the “she” here as the daughter of Pharaoh. While others argue for the mother of Moses based on the antecedent of the “she” in the passage. Kitchen is of the position that the name came from the Hebrew mother of the child and Exodus 2:10 clearly links the name *Moseh* with his being taken from the waterside (*mashah*, to draw forth). The wateriness connections with the name *Moseh* has its pun play on the meaning of the name: as an active participle, it means, “one who draws forth” or “drawn from water” and so on (1982:794-799).

Moses was a man who grew up in the palace of Pharaoh, the emperor of the day and he was equally a potential prince and king in Egypt. The task of nurturing and growth of Moses to adulthood was handed over to an adoptive mother under disguise. He was preserved by faith according to the writer of the Book of Hebrew (Heb. 11:23). His parents were from the Levite tribe in Israel according to the writer of the Book of Exodus. The early part of the book opens with the story of the suffering of the Hebrews in the hands of the Egyptians and the birth of their deliverer. Having attained the education age, Moses was handed over to *harim* for training. “The *harim* are the residences established in the ancient near east in which, the Pharaoh of 1550-1070 BC established for the education of the children of the kings” (Kitchen, 1982). There is no detailed biblical account of the forms of education that Moses received in Egypt than he was schooled in the wisdom of the Egyptians (Knight, 2023). The purpose of such school could not be far-fetched from the fact among others than to inculcate in Moses the kingly culture in the areas of ruling principles, understanding and regulations, proven character, self-discipline, political bureaucracy and international diplomatic relations as a potential king.

With all the Egyptian education and efforts of Pharaoh in order to produce an Egyptian royal prince and king in Moses, the Jewish consciousness and nativity had not departed from him. Having the right knowledge that he did not belong to the Egyptian race, Moses developed hatred toward the taskmasters appointed to oppress his people and another mind: a mind of racial identity with his people and to suffer with them, seeking their liberation by human efforts. In this pursuit, he

became a murderer. He killed an Egyptian overseer or a taskmaster when he saw him beating a Hebrew fellow on the field (Ex. 2:11ff). This led to his flight to Midian for asylum from Pharaoh where he met the daughters of Jethro (Knight, 2023). The calling to liberate the Israelites from Egypt came to him in a burning bush in Horeb, later Sinai with a dramatic change in his life. There he had a new knowledge of God of the fathers of the Hebrew.

### **Marriage of Moses with Zipporah, a Midianite and His Failure in the Family**

The assistance Moses rendered to the daughters of Jethro fascinated him to Jethro and he invited him to his house. Jethro later gave Zipporah, being the oldest daughter, to the new stranger in marriage and he became his in-law and herdsman. The marriage led to the birth of a promising son, Gershom, which means “stranger there” or “a sojourner” or “temporary resident”. The temporariness of the name he gave to his only son recorded in Mosaic tradition in the Pentateuch shows that Moses knew that he did not have a permanent residence in Midian. He was still longing for his people in Egypt, at least. Whether Moses told Zipporah after he got home could not be confirmed and/or ascertained in the texts that he has been called by the God of his fathers. But how soon he would return to his people with his wife is a question that calls for a critique in another study in the future.

Of course, Moses knew that he was not a member of the Midianite family of Jethro but of Abrahamic covenant, yet he failed to show this in the life of Gershom. He failed and/or delayed the circumcision of Gershom till later times until there was divine intervention and family crisis on the circumcision. The marriage of Moses with Zipporah was quite interesting and fascinating in the sense that the name he gave his son, Gershom indicated that he recognized his temporary sojourn in Midian but failed to fully incorporate his son as a member of Abrahamic race through circumcision as the Torah demanded (cf. Gen. 17). He failed to put the mark of Abrahamic covenant on his son and thereby endangered his life according to the regulations in Genesis 17:14, *And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.* Here we see Moses attached to the cattle rearing of his in-law but forgot and failed to circumcise his only son in the foreskin on the eighth day. Many spiritual leaders do not see their children as important to be taught the law of the Lord that has called them to the ministry until when they grow up and become adults with certain convictions other than the biblical convictions. This has led to the moral crises at homes of many spiritual leaders.

When God called and commissioned Moses, the issue of circumcision became a struggle between him and Zipporah. Zipporah was from Midian and she was a foreigner to the Abrahamic covenant, as a result she did not want her son to be circumcised because it was a strange custom to her. The issue of circumcision was peculiar to the ancient Israel among the ancient near eastern nations. Therefore, Zipporah was not knowledgeable about this covenant-related religio-cultural practice. Moses did not carry her along with adequate information on circumcision. One fact remains that Moses was grossly committed to the task of cattle rearing of his in-law to the neglect of his family. He failed to enlighten Zipporah about circumcision and Gershom was of age, perhaps an adolescent by now and she considered the pains Gershom would undergo in a sudden mutilation of his foreskin. Whereas he should have been circumcised on the eight day of his birth according to the covenant and instruction from Yahweh (cf. Gen. 17:14).

Here we see Moses as a Hebrew with the Midianite heart and his failure to Gershom Jewish upbringing. There is here a gap that certain spiritual leaders still keep some secrets away from their wives till it is almost too late for any remedy in their relationship. When he decided to return to Egypt as he was instructed, the reality dawned on Zipporah that she must leave her father's house and follow her husband to Egypt. Unfortunately, on the way to Egypt there was a crisis on circumcision, it was a turning point for Zipporah. Circumcision was a cardinal trademark of ancient Israel in the Mesopotamian world. After the circumcision of Gershom and Eliezer, we did not hear of Zipporah again for a while. Certainly, she took a radical decision and finally returned to her father only to resurface again in the journey to Moses in the wilderness with her father in Exodus 18.

Apparently, Moses did not consider Gershom as an heir of the heritage of Abrahamic covenant because he refused to circumcise him. He neglected his own family and did not obey the law of circumcision, which all Hebrew male children should follow (cf. Gen. 17). On the way to Egypt, Zipporah resisted the strange idea of circumcision of her son. Moses was under death threat from God who had both called and commissioned him (Exo. 4:24-26). Moses did not put the "salvation" and inheritance of his own son into consideration above the ministry. Apparently, this was not a priority to him but the work of the ministry. He was eager to go and deliver his people from the Egyptian oppression while he put his own family involvement in the blessings of Abraham to the background. Here we could observe a similarity with the life of some spiritual leaders of contemporary Christianity. Souls-saving messages and teaching are aired on the pulpit, radio stations, television and other media but the assurance of the salvation of their own family

members are not considered as very essential to them. The moral decadence found in the families of many spiritual leaders originate from this negligence, which should be curbed.

### **Marriage of Moses and Zipporah: Great Neglects and their Impacts in the Life of Moses**

There is more to the family situations of Moses and Zipporah under a critical watch. Moses got to the family of Jethro probably at the age of forty or a little above. He was due if not over due for marriage and was given Zipporah in marriage. The question raised in the marriage is: why was it that it was Gershom only that the marriage produced after long years of waiting? What was Moses preoccupied with for forty years in the house of Jethro that it was only two children the marriage produced at the end? Was Zipporah no longer able to bear more children after the birth of Gershom? Definitely, there could be sexual strivings in the family. Ogunkunle (n.d. 55) rightly submits that the sexual act within marital bond is the sacrament of the marriage covenant. He further claims that it is an outward act which signifies an inward commitment. In the age of strong attachment to child bearing in the ancient near east, where many children were considered as wealth and great blessings from God, Moses could not have settled for only a child or two.

Apparently, Moses as a Hebrew never discussed the issue of circumcision with Zipporah, a Midianite in the family. Therefore, she resisted the move even under divine death threat against her husband (Exo. 4:24-26). The absence of Moses in the family created this vacuum in the heart of Zipporah. She saw it as a way of mutilating her sons in the name of a strange God she did not intimately know. Moses had to choose between life and death before God at this critical time. He had to choose between following the resistance of his wife or obeying the voice of God. It was under this pressing situation that he now discussed the issue of circumcision with his wife for the first time. Remember, it was Zipporah that circumcised Gershom because the children were with her on the way to Egypt and not Moses. And because she did not wish to lose the husband she did not obey on the matter of circumcision; she was forced by the situation. Unlike Abraham who circumcised his family members and himself on the day God told him to do so (cf. Gen. 17). Later, she said to Moses “You are a husband of blood to me” because cutting the sensitive part of a male child at adolescent age with blood gushing out was strange to her religion and cultural practices (cf. Exo. 4:26).

We could observe the factor of communication gap between Moses and Zipporah as we witness in some families of the contemporary spiritual leaders. Here we see

the utter omission and negligence of Moses in the mission. Many contemporary spiritual leaders are eager to run the ministry but without carrying their wives and children along. Jim Burns (2006:11) rightly observes and submits that it is imperative for the couple to make their marriage a top priority. He pointed out an error in his personal marriage when he observed that he was investing very little energy to his marital relationship due to his over concentration on the youths he was pasturing and his wife was suffering from loneliness. He enjoyed his work as a pastor but his wife was in agony of loneliness and she doubted it if the marriage would have any children at all that could further worsen the situation and the man would not be around for the children to see and know their father.

In a similar case, Zipporah wanted attention, warmth, communication and not an affair with husbandry in Midian or prophetic activities in Egypt and in the wilderness. At this junction Zipporah returned back to her father who had given her to a stranger who could not afford a rented apartment but only found a residence in his father in-law with the two children. Part of the reasons might be the spiritual imbalance between the two. Moses seemed not to carry along the faith in Yahweh with his family. Besides the fact that he was attached to his job and not his wife, Zipporah felt being a stranger in her matrimonial home. One could argue that many contemporary spiritual leaders fail to carry their wives along on the works of the ministry, thinking that their wives are not the ones God called God only called them. The resultant effects of this omission are responsible for marital fallouts that many undergo in the families. Zipporah did not consider the prestigious position of her husband and call of God upon her husband. According to Verret (2021:1) Much of the tension that Zipporah had in her marriage with Moses started after Moses began to step into his role as the liberator of the Hebrews.

Zipporah, as a woman of Midian, did not share the spiritual values of her notable husband who found himself acting against the sacred tradition of Israel. This may be one reason why he named his second son Eliezer, meaning “The Lord of my father was my help.” To keep the peace, Moses compromised with his unbelieving wife and withheld circumcision, the sign of God’s covenant, from Eliezer. The Lord intervened, and as a sign of divine displeasure....

The fact that Zipporah was not spiritual and humble enough to submit to the headship and religious convictions of her husband should be shifted on Moses who had lived in the family for almost forty years without training and informing his

wife about his religious convictions and Abrahamic covenant conditions he must necessarily and strictly obey. Many contemporary spiritual leaders are good orators in teaching and preaching but their wives are “stammerers” or having tamed tongues with cords in speech when it comes to speaking to the spiritual gatherings in the ministry due to the fact that their husbands do not uplift and upgrade them for the work of the ministry beyond “companionship at home”.

Moses became a partial “divorcee” from this moment until Exodus 18 due to the struggles in the family. Zipporah wanted the family trees, the children on her side but Moses did not bother. He did not consider his children being part of the heirs of the Promised Land he was sent to go and lead the Hebrews to inherit. Moses gave them two historical and religious names but did not go further to integrate the two children into the faith of God of his fathers and whom he called his Helper-*Eliezer*. Truly, he gave them the names but Zipporah controlled their hearts. A little wonder today that many children are attached to their mothers because they love who they always see them at home. It is unfortunate today that some spiritual leaders are divorcees and partially divorced due to the gaps they have created in their family. The shame cannot help the ministry either. It is alarming today that many spiritual leaders’ homes are in shamble and disarray simply due to the fact that there are omissions created in the name of the work of the ministry (Verett:2021).

### **Moses: Marriage, Ministry, Miracles, Mountaineering and the Challenges to the Religious Leaders in the Nigerian Christianity**

We have highlighted some issues in the marriage of Moses and Zipporah from above, we now turn to some other factors that border one’s mind, which we believe should be of concerns to the spiritual leaders in the contemporary Christianity.

#### **Engrossed with the Ministry not Marriage**

Commitment in one aspect of the ministry could lead to failure in another aspect of the work of the ministry. Inability to weigh and balance the whole system could be a bane on the ministry and bring great reproach to the work. Adewale calls for striking a balance between marriage and ministry (2008:21-24; Verrett, 2021). The call of Moses to go and liberate the Hebrews in Egypt became a great delight to Moses after much argument with Yahweh. The work of the liberation of the Hebrews became a great preoccupation for him and he did not bother about his marriage. Zipporah returned back to her father with her two children and left Moses empty and alone. Moses did not consider his future posterity among the Hebrews. Aaron and his children were provided for in the ministry under Moses but Moses did not bother about his own children. They were anointed and decorated as priests

forever in the priesthood among the ancient Israel but Moses had no portion and provision for his family. Many spiritual leaders in the contemporary Christianity are challenged in this area in the sense that they have limited time for their children at home but for the work of the ministry. The wives and children should be catered for in all its ramifications (2008, 20-23).

### **Engrossed with Miracles but Miserable at Home**

Moses was after miracles from Yahweh in order to prove to Israelites that Yahweh has called him. He had enough of miracles but to the detriment of his marriage. Zipporah, Gershom and Eliezer were not there in order to witness the wonders of Yahweh, God of Israel. Miracles are good for their purposes in the ministry but its abuse can have disastrous effects on the ministry. Quite a number of spiritual leaders of contemporary Christianity are always on the mountains, camps, hills and sacred centres fasting, praying and seeking spiritual powers in order to produce miracles in the ministry.

The women at home suffer sexual starvation, emotional trauma, loneliness and burdens of single parenting while their husbands are alive and legally married to them. A current example of the family of a notable prophet in Lagos is still fresh in the memory. He abandoned the wife at home for the past three years without any tangible information and reasons for this. The wife had been alone in the house with the children suffering. He claimed that it is God that directed him to leave the home for spiritual reasons, power endowment and miracles in the ministry. Juxtaposing this scenario with the biblical injunction, one discovers that this is far away from the biblical teaching.

### **Engrossed with Prophetic Messages but no Communication at Home**

Marriage experts have discovered that one of the major causes of problems in the family is lack of communication (Adewale, 2008; Alabi, 2017: 6-12). While Moses was not eloquent in speech as he complained before God yet he was always loaded with prophetic messages for Pharaoh and the Hebrews. The messages were timely and current for the liberation of his people but Moses had no communication with his wife, Zipporah. If he had had sound communication with his wife, she would not have abandoned him and returned back to her father. Many spiritual leaders in the contemporary Christianity have sound messages and sermons for their congregation safe the wives at home. This lack of sound communication at home has led to terminal and incommunicable illness in the body systems of their wives

such as blood pressures, insomnia and many others. As they are called to the ministry of the word, message delivery to the congregations of saints and supernatural manifestations, they should at the same realize the fact that they are supposed to communicate with their wives at home.

### **Engrossed With Mountaineering**

In the Ancient Near East, sacred places abound though mostly in the raw, crude and primitive forms as seemed best to them. Many places considered to be sacred included the unique altars, Oaks, Mamre trees, lakes, ponds, wells, streams, stones, trees, falls, grounds, hills, rocks and mountains among others. No doubt that people in the ancient Mesopotamia had the idea of mountains as dwelling places of God/gods. Ancient people also conceived of uncommon places as the abodes and dwellings of the numinous and gods with incorporeal sensibilities. Hence, they built their temples around them and considered them as being sacred. Several precincts, territories, quarters and vicinities were regarded as the territories of gods and the numinous (Alabi,) As a result, they were regarded as sacred places. They also served as places of encounter with the incorporeal world and receipt of divine messages. Among all these places, mountains appeared to be more prominent than others. It could not have been strange to Moses to hear the voice of God of his fathers from the mountain, the purported mountain of God, Horeb or Sinai. Definitely, it became the “mountain of God” after the theological reflections of the activities of Moses and the Israelites on the mountain generations after (Alabi, 2013).

Moses first had his encounter with Yahweh around the Sinaitic vicinity and the call came to him from the mountaintop. Hence, it could be said that the second home of Moses was the mountain, which served as place of receipt of revelation and super-sensible messages (cf. Exo. 2-3; 19; 34). This undoubtedly affected the affairs of Moses with Zipporah and the children. Moses was not there when his family members needed him because he was engrossed with mountaineering. When he was always on the mountains he could not be on the bed with his wife at home for the attention, care, love and romantic warmth she needed. It poses many great challenges to many wives and children when the fathers who also double as spiritual leaders are always on the mountaintops for fasting, prayers, vigils, self-abstinence for spiritual reasons and not available for the family members. Mountains cannot be the second homes for the spiritual leaders in the twenty first century ministry and be fulfilled in the work of the ministry, especially when the family members at home are not fully happy. The two are indeed compatible if they can be married together and well balanced. The contemporary Christian leaders should be aware

that there are times for abstinence for spiritual, ministerial and other hierarchical reasons and there are times to be at home with ones' family members for good nurturing and care for the family members.

### **Engrossed with the Congregation but Absent at Home**

It was glaring that Moses was engrossed with the congregation nearly all the time. The Pentateuchal traditions are full of the activities, interventions, intercessions, guidance and counselling intermediations of Moses among the congregation. He did this to a fault and neglect of his own health and family. The attention he gave to the congregation was to the failure of the sustenance of his personal family. Until Jethro his father in-law came and rightly counselled him about the dangers attached to such ministerial engrossment (cf. Exo. 18). Moses was not conscious of the need of his person, age, health, home, wife and children. This reflected in his relationship with Zipporah and the two children. While he was always in the midst of the congregation, his wife and children were missing among them. He did not take into cognizance the importance of his portion in the Abrahamic inheritance. It was the same congregation of people who murmured against him and attempted to stone him to death on many occasions (Exo. 5:22-23; 14:10-12; 16:2-3; 17:1-7; 32:1; Num. 11:1-10). Spiritual leaders in the contemporary Nigeria should see to it that there is time for the congregation and time for their family members in the work of the ministry, balancing the equations.

### **Engrossed with the Inheritance of the Promised Land**

While it was a thing of joy to Moses and the Israelites to get to the Promised Land, being focused and hopeful of leading them to the place; he could not see his immediate family members being part of the heirs. Moses was particular and interested in the congregation inheriting the Promised Land but he felt his family members were not inclusive. The "exclusivistic" attitude of Moses toward his immediate family among the congregation led to their remoteness and abandonment among the congregation. Every preparation for the inheritance of the Promised Land was made by Moses except for his family. Unfortunately, the people Moses tried to save did not consider him at all. At the end of the whole show, they made him stumbled to the grievous end that he did not cross the River Jordan to the Land of Canaan. Moses and his family inheritance were buried on Mount Nebo/Pisgah (Deut. 34:1-4).

## **Engrossed with Fighting the External Enemies but Defenceless at Home**

Fighting the enemies of God and His people was thrilling to Moses, especially with the support of Jehovah, *El-Gibbor* (cf. Exo. 15; 17), the God of war, mighty in battle (cf. Exo. 15; Ps. 24). Moses enjoyed the victory on his side as the leader of thousands of people under him. After all, they provided adequate standing army for him and there was supernatural power behind them all. But the internal enemies of sexual starvation, inadequate communication with his wife and inability to take a decision on the circumcision of his son, Gershom, could not be fought by him. Modern spiritual leaders are equally preoccupied with deliverance ministry in order to save their members from the “paws of cats and lions” of the enemies while some of their children are under demonic attacks, obsessions, oppressions, possessions and exhibiting various forms of delinquencies and menace in the tertiary institutions and society at large. It is high time that spiritual leaders refocus their attentions to their families and children. Moses’ experience in the areas of marriage and ministry should serve as a lesson to the contemporary spiritual leaders to take care of their primary assignment on earth, which is their home. Home should be the first “church” for the spiritual leaders in the contemporary Christianity if we want to reduce the menace from the society because children from godly homes are also involved in the social delinquencies and misdemeanours we experience nowadays. Zipporah’s harsh and nagging character should also serve as lessons to the women who do not appreciate the call of God over their husbands and stand in the vacuums created by the absence of their spouses. Despite the fact that her name means, “a little bird or dove or sparrow”, she lived an opposite lifestyle of her name. A Midian name, Zipporah means “a little bird,” “a sparrow.” She deserted Moses in the wilderness at crucial time only for her to return to him after he had gained great fame and honour in the empire. For this kind of character no one ever bore her name in the entire Old and New Testament. It appeared that Zipporah loved her husband when things were good, great and rosy. Definitely, when she heard that Moses was the leader of a great nation with miraculous attestations, contrary to the shrine of gods she was used to, she felt she could return to Moses under the garb of her father who had already given her to the poor Moses, a shepherd in their house few years ago. We could see examples of Zipporah among the contemporary Christian women, who got married to poor ministers but deserted them when things went contrary to their expectations. We encourage the women folks who got married to the spiritual leaders to be accommodating enough and cooperate with elements of maturity. It is good enough to have the understanding of the work of the ministry while supporting their husbands in the vineyard of the work. Naggings, fighting,

shouting and not showing elements of cooperation and standing in the gap when things are not going the way they should are not good marks of women as of old.

## **Conclusion**

When Moses became the mighty leader and law-giver of Israel, there was the episode when Jethro, his father-in-law came out to the wilderness to see Moses and brought with him Zipporah and the two sons. The union was devoid of any restraint for Moses graciously received them and neither disowned nor ignored his wife and sons. But after this visit during which Jethro gave his over-burdened son-in-law some very practical advice, nothing more is said of Zipporah. She disappears without comment from the history of the Jewish people in which her husband figured so prominently. “Neither as the wife of her husband nor as the mother of her children did, she leaves behind her a legacy of spiritual riches.” How different it would have been if only she had fully shared her husband’s unusual meekness and godliness and, like him, left behind footprints in the sands of time!

Indirectly, she led Moses to be a polygamist at last and Moses became one of the spiritual leaders in the biblical records who turned out to be a polygamist because of the home crises (Num. 12:1ff). One major conclusion in this paper is the fact that spiritual power carriage and outstanding anointing upon the spiritual leaders who are also husbands does not mean that they should shirk their responsibilities at home. The spiritual power does not cover the role they should perform at homes. Another factor is they should avoid their children being tagged as “children of Eli”, “children of Samuel”, “children of Belial” and so on. Spiritual duties should be given due attention while the home fronts should be carried along with the ministry. Wives at home are not angels but human. The angelic character of the wives at home could turn to anger where there is no love, warmth, communication and romance. Remember, the difference between angel and anger is the letter “l” and “r” which could translate to “letting loose” the bottled anger in them due to absenteeism and negligence at home or overconcentration on the spiritual work and regret of failed responsibilities at home. It should be noted that spiritual endowment with power and spiritual authority do not fill the vacuum of sexual, financial, moral supports, physical warmth and presence that the wives need from their husbands; the training and discipline and so on that the children deserve from their fathers. Also, it is to sound the warning to the spiritual leaders that success at home is a measuring rod and yardstick for success in the ministry. If the work of the ministry must be free from any fault and disgrace, the spiritual fathers must not shirk their

responsibilities at home fronts. Further academic investigations can still be done on this study by scholars as it serves as an eye opener.

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