

A Study Guide of “Bloody Bridegroom” by Ronald B Allen

- read over the biblical text of Exod. 4:24-26 to be discussed in this article and make sure you understand the questions and preliminary issues the author brings up and plans to later address p. 260f

1) Do we know for certain who is being circumcised in this passage? Who are the two people who may have been circumcised?

Three Views

2) Allen begins his search for answers by offering the views of three different scholars, Brevard Child, Walter C. Kaiser, and John I. Durham. How does each scholar interpret the passage in question? What issues or uncertainties of each theory does the author question? How do they differ from one another on the following 4 questions: How does each handle: who was sick? Who was circumcised? Why is Zipporah upset? What is the significance of this strange passage?

Brevard Child:

Walter C Kaiser:

John I Durham:

Interpretations

3) Allen goes on to closely consider each verse and discuss his own interpretation. What conclusions does Allen draw about the contents of each verse?

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

A Proposed Scenario

4) When does Allen suggest that Moses’ first son was circumcised? Therefore does he assume that Moses’ second son was circumcised in this passage? Why or why not?

5) Was Circumcision exclusively a rite of the ancient Hebrews? How did the Hebrew’s circumcision differ from that of other ancient cultures? What type of circumcision was Zipporah “used to” as opposed to Jewish circumcision? How does Zipporah hold resentment against over this issue? Whose feet does Allen say Zipporah touched with the bloodied prepuce and what symbolism does he draw out of that toward Christ?

6) How might this passage explain the absence of Zipporah throughout a great deal of Moses’ time in Egypt and Moses’ marrying of another wife? Why did Allen suggest Moses as author didn’t really record all the details?