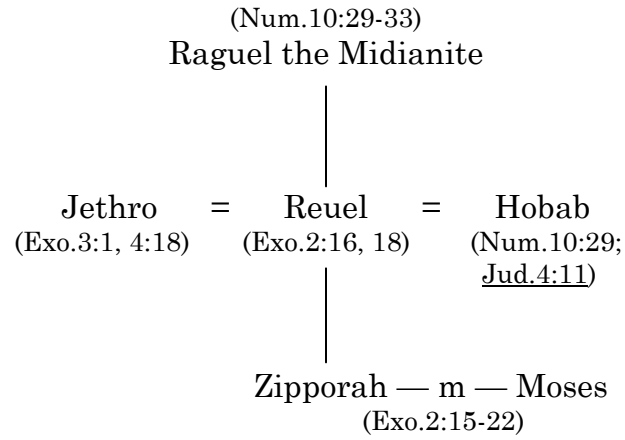


Jethro – Moses' father-in-law

The correct ancestry



That Jethro and Reuel are the same person has long been correctly established (cp. Exo.2:16, 18; 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-2, 5-6). However, a problem has arisen with regard to this Biblical personage. Mainly due to the similarity in spelling, it has become fashionable among modern scholars – even conservative scholars – to identify Moses' father-in-law Reuel (Exo.2:16, 18) as being the Raguel of Numbers 10:29. Nearly all standard reference materials so assert. As Numbers 10:29 relates that Hobab is Raguel's son, they then conclude that Hobab is Zipporah's (Moses' wife, Exo.2:21) brother and therefore Moses' brother-in-law.

However, this identification is erroneous. Judges 4:11 is decisive and confirms the above genealogy. This verse clearly states that Hobab is Moses' father-in-law – not his brother-in-law. In resolving biblical problems, we must not violate sacred Text.

That Scripture would refer to an individual by so many different appellations should not confound the student. Judas (not Iscariot) was called "Thaddaeus" in Mark 3:18 and "Lebbaeus" in Matthew 10:3. Indeed, Joseph's name was *Justus*, even though he was "called" *Barsabas* (Acts 1:23).

1. As Jethro means "excellency" or "minister", it was probably a title or his priestly name.
2. His original name was most likely "Reuel" after his father, Raguel.
3. Being Moses father-in-law and having joined himself to Israel during the second year of the Exodus, he became known among the Israelites as Hobab – a name of endearment meaning "beloved". This seems also to be the name associated with him among the Kenites.