

## Exodus Chapter 18

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V: 1 “Jethro” Excess / Superiority; his excellence.

- Jethro: the priest of Midian. The Midianites are descendants of Abraham & Keturah, Abraham's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife.
- In **Exodus 2:18** Jethro is referred to as “Reuel” – which means “friend of God.”
- In **Numbers 10:29** Jethro is referred to as “Hobab” – which means “beloved” or “cunning”.
- Jethro appears to be a man of some stature or importance.
- Word has gotten out; the fame of the Lord has been spread abroad just as He said it would.

**Exodus 15:14-15** “<sup>14</sup>The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestina. <sup>15</sup>Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them;...”

V: 2-6 Having heard all the things that God had done for Moses and Israel, knowing that it was safe to do so, Jethro restored Moses' wife and sons to him.

- It would appear that sometime before he got to Egypt, Moses sent his wife and sons back to Jethro. They weren't with him through the 10 plagues and the actual exodus.
- David, when he was fleeing from Saul did the same thing with his family:

**1 Samuel 22:1-4** “<sup>1</sup>David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of the strongholds: and when his brethren and all his fathers' house heard it, they went down thither to him. <sup>2</sup>And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. <sup>3</sup>And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. <sup>4</sup>And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.”

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- It may seem like a nice touch that God would use Jethro to restore Moses' family to him; but it is very important for other reasons as well.
  - **Each family member serves as an important reminder to Moses:** and to us as well.
  - **Zipporah:** “small bird” or “sparrow”

- After God had commissioned Moses on Mt. Sinai, he was headed back to Egypt with his family when God struck out at Moses on the way.

**Exodus 4:24-26** “<sup>24</sup>And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. <sup>25</sup>Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me. <sup>26</sup>So He let him go: then she said, a bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.”

- Zipporah was a reminder to Moses of God’s covenant between God and His people, and the importance of keeping it.

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- **Gershom**: “Foreigner” “Stranger” – (Refugee)

**Psalm 39:12** “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.”

- Gershom serves as a reminder to Moses of who Moses is, just a sojourner, a pilgrim in a strange land, just a passing through.

Peter reminds us of the same thing:

**1 Peter 2:11** “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”

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- **Eliezer**: “God is my help”, “Comforter”
  - Eliezer serves as a reminder to Moses of God’s promises and who God is, that God is his help and his comfort.

**Psalm 27:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>When thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. <sup>9</sup>Hide not Thy face far from me; put not Thy servant away in anger: Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.”

**Psalm 33:20** “Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our shield.”

**Psalm 46:1** “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

**Psalm 63:7** “Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.”

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- Jethro knew where to find Moses – at the place of God.

V: 7 Moses met his father in law, and humbled himself before Jethro.

- There is genuine warmth between them.

**Psalm 51:17** “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, oh God, thou wilt not despise.”

V: 8-9 Moses testified to Jethro of all that God has done for him.

- God was honored in this relationship as Moses testified of the things that God had done.
- Moses relates:
  1. What the Lord did unto Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel’s sake.
  2. All the travail, hardship, difficulties – no food, no water.
  3. And how the Lord delivered them.
- Jethro rejoiced!
- Have you ever been excited to share something with someone and they just give you a ho-hum kind of response? Jethro shares in Moses’ excitement.

**Psalm 107:8** “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

**Psalm 96:4** “For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: He is to be feared above all gods.”

**Psalm 145:9-12** <sup>9</sup>“The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works. <sup>10</sup>All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. <sup>11</sup>They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; <sup>12</sup>to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.”

- It would seem that Moses and Jethro were of the same mind and same spirit – and that he and Moses had real fellowship.

**Isaiah 63:7-9** <sup>7</sup>“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses. <sup>8</sup>For He said, surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour. <sup>9</sup>In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.”

V: 9 “... *Goodness which the Lord had done...*”

- We see that in a couple of verses Jethro is worshipping the True and the Living God: this is the cause that leads to an effect.

**Romans 2:4** “... *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.*”

V: 10-11 Jethro blessed the Lord – praising Him the salvation of Israel.

**Psalm 68:19-20** “<sup>19</sup>*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. <sup>20</sup>He that is our God is the God of salvation;...*”

- Jethro acknowledged that the LORD is greater than all gods.
- God had pointedly and in short order humbled each of the Egyptian gods, demonstrating that they were powerless and not gods to be worshipped.
- Jethro may have been a polytheistic pagan who upon hearing all the things that the True and Living God did for Israel was convinced or converted.
- Can't say for sure, but this appears to be a point of conversion for Jethro.
- Not altogether an uncommon experience:

[King Nebuchadnezzar came to the same conclusion after seeing God work:](#)

**Daniel 4:34** “*And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.*”

[King Darius, the great Persian king came to the same conclusion:](#)

**Daniel 6:25-26** “<sup>25</sup>*The king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied unto you. <sup>26</sup>I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end.*”

[Elijah and the prophets of Baal:](#)

**1 Kings 18:39** “*And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, the LORD, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God.*”

V: 12 Jethro seemingly acts on his new found faith: truly the revelation of God prompts the worship of God.

- Jethro offers a burnt offering, sacrificing to God.
- Aaron and the elders of Israel join with Moses and Jethro in what looks like a fellowship offering to the Lord.

V: 13-16 Moses ministers to the people, sitting in judgment – essentially counseling, and instructing the people.

Judge: <sup>(H8199)</sup> shaphat, to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against); by impl. to vindicate or punish; to act as a law giver.

- Counseling: simply pointed instruction on a given topic or issue.

**2 Peter 1:2-3** “<sup>2</sup>Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and our Jesus our Lord, <sup>3</sup>According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

**Psalms 119:105** “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

- In any given counseling situation, it's instruction from God's word, how God's word applies to a situation – and the bottom line is that it always comes down to obedience or disobedience.
- Most people will come in for counsel for one of three basic reasons:
  1. They really don't know what to do and are sincerely looking for direction.
  2. They think they know what to do and their looking for confirmation.
  3. They know exactly what they want to do, and they are looking for justification of their view.

**Deuteronomy 17:8-13** “<sup>8</sup>If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose; <sup>9</sup>And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: <sup>10</sup>And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. <sup>11</sup>According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. <sup>12</sup> And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from

Israel. <sup>13</sup>And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.”

- The real focus in counseling is and should be instruction in the ways of God.
- Obedience is always the issue, whether someone else helps us to see it, or if we just happen across it during our daily reading, or if the Lord speaks to us in a sovereign way.

V: 17-18 It is interesting how God will often use other people to speak truth into our lives. We shouldn't limit God in how He would speak His truth, communicating His will to us.

- Moses can't do it all – he isn't intended to do it all.
- Jethro is a good man, he doesn't just point out the problem, he at the same time offers a solution.

V: 19 There are times when we need counsel, and we should be open to Godly counsel – Moses was.

**Proverbs 11:14** “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”

- Jethro narrows Moses' responsibilities down; he boils it down to three basic things:

“<sup>19b</sup>*Be thou for the people to God ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God*”

**Moses' 1<sup>st</sup> responsibility:** Pray to God on behalf of the people.

V: 20 **Moses' 2<sup>nd</sup> responsibility:** Teach them the word and show them the way.

- Teach them God's word, be a role model of God's word, show them how to walk, and the work they must do.

Speaking of Ezra:

**Ezra 7:10** “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

**Nehemiah 8:8** “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

**Isaiah 28:10** “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”

**Acts 20:27-28** “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”

V: 21 **Moses' 3<sup>rd</sup> responsibility:** Provide Godly leaders to help.

- Moses is to replace himself with Godly leaders in matters that do not effect his own responsibilities.
- Delegate responsibility, if someone else can do it and they are willing let them.
- 3 qualifications:
  1. Men that fear God.
  2. Men of truth, honest.
  3. Men that hate covetousness, financially responsible.

**Numbers 11:16-17** “<sup>16</sup>And the Lord said unto Moses, gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. <sup>17</sup>And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.”

The prophet Amos asks the question:

**Amos 3:3** “How can two walk together unless they be agreed?”

- When you have the same spirit, it's easy!

V: 22 Let those you've chosen judge, or do the work in all seasons – at all times, just let them take care of it.

V: 23 -24 If you will do this, and if God is in it you will endure or last and the people will be blessed.

- There is a need to be sure that God is guiding us in the things that we are doing.
- Moses was open to instruction, he was teachable – and God was in it.

**James 3:17** “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

- We see this same thing demonstrated in the church of Acts:

**Acts 6:1-7** “<sup>1</sup>And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. <sup>2</sup>Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. <sup>3</sup>Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. <sup>4</sup>But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. <sup>5</sup>And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: <sup>6</sup>Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup>And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

- The body as a whole was blessed and ministered to, in a sense the ministry expanded.

V: 25-27      Moses chose out able men, in a sense elders and deacons.

- Moses is re-united with his wife and sons. Jethro goes home; Moses has an easier time because of the counsel of his father in law, spreading out some of the responsibility, delegating some of the tasks, and the people are ministered to.