

# A Faithful Father-In-Law

## Exodus Chapter 18

Exd 18:1 **1) Family Reunion** vs 1 - 12

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

- Jethro is Moses' father-in-law. Moses had sent his wife away to Jethro at some time before or during the encounters (ten plagues) with Pharaoh. And Jethro hearing of all that God had done and knowing Moses was in the wilderness, gathered Moses' family up to rejoin them.
- Jethro was a priest of Midian. Midian was a son of Abraham. Genesis 25:1-2. He was probably taught the existence of one true God. But in Genesis 25 the sons of Abraham (except Isaac) was set away. Being in the lower portion of the Middle East away from Abraham, Jethro could easily have become tainted in his theology. He may have believed in Jehovah yet had adapted to the culture around him.
- Verse 11 Jethro, upon hearing God's work in delivering Israel, realized Jehovah's supremacy.

Exd 18:2 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had sent her away,

Exd 18:3 and her two sons, of whom one was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

Exd 18:4 The other was named Eliezer, for {he said,} "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Exd 18:5 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camped, at the mount of God.

Exd 18:6 He sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

Exd 18:7 Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent.

- Jethro sends word ahead and upon hearing the word sets out to greet his family.
- There is great respect from Moses to his father-in-law.
- Remember even though Moses was educated in all the wisdom of Egypt for 40 years, Moses spent 40 years more in Jethro's household. What could he have learned from a priest of Midian and tending sheep? Possibly more practical knowledge from Jethro than Egypt as to leading this New Nation Israel.

Exd 18:8 Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey, and {how} the LORD had delivered them.

Exd 18:9 Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians.

- Moses told Jethro the good as well as the difficult thing as they believed the Lord.
  - Moses' testimony was honest. Do we tell the accounts of how the Lord leads us with honesty. The goodness and the hardships.
  - Just telling the goodness and not the hardships will tend to paint the picture of how wonderful we are. Sharing the hardships will show our frailties and give the hearer a real picture of what they can expect.
  - This helps the hearer realize that they are normal when they run into hardships as well.
  - Example: Friday Evening I was tired after a long week of work, It was cold outside and I didn't want to go out street witnessing. After wrestling with my flesh and still reluctantly going, hoping that we would cancel street witnessing, The Lord really met us out there, strengthened us and gave us wonderful encounters with people that needed to hear the gospel.
- Jethro rejoiced in the good that the Lord had done to Israel. Not over the destruction of Egypt.

Exd 18:10 So Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, {and} who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

Exd 18:11 "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people."

- Jethro gives glory to God for deliverance.
- Jethro knew that Jehovah was the one true God but he is stating, as we say, this proves the greatness of God. He already knew but it is always exciting to hear the testimony of God displaying His greatness among men.
- KJV = "*Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.*"
- God is greater than those things and man is proud of in themselves.

Exd 18:12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Exd 18:13 **2) Fatherly Advise** vs 13 - 27

It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening.

- This was a long line. This catches the eye of Jethro.
- Isn't interesting that we get busy in the things of the Lord but we so need other people to see what we cannot see. Moses was busy doing what he believed God wanted him to do. But he couldn't see that there was a better way.
- He needed Jethro's input.

Exd 18:14 Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do **you alone** sit {as judge} and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?"

- Jethro sees the problem is not that people have problems, but that Moses is doing this alone.

Exd 18:15 Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God.

- Moses sees that he is the only one having conversations with God. He is the only one.

Exd 18:16 "When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws."

Exd 18:17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good.

Exd 18:18 "You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

- Two reasons this is not good.
  - Moses couldn't keep this up and do all this by himself
  - The people will grow tired of waiting for you. Eventually their problem/concern will grow to bitterness and anger against Moses.

Exd 18:19 "**Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you.** You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God,

Exd 18:20 then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.

Exd 18:21 "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place {these} over them {as} leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

Exd 18:22 "Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear {the burden} with you.

- Jethro's Counsel
  - 1) You need to be the Peoples Representative before God
  - 2) Teach the people the statutes and laws of God so they know how to walk and work
  - 3) Use the godly Elders around you

- Elders were already in Israel (Ex 3:16; 3:18; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5+6; 18:12) God had told Moses to go and take the Elders regularly. He had them, gave them a title but didn't give them any authority.
- **Fear God** - One who has lived life and has the wisdom or perspective of longevity. But the position should also have more than age. "Men Who Fear God" was Jethro's first criteria. One who fears God will live godly. One who doesn't fear God will live as they please.
- **Men of Truth** - Jesus said (John 17:17) "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*" Elders need to be believers and students of the Word of God. With Moses, it was the word that Moses received and taught. These Elders would have to be receiving the spoken word, and receive it and readily believe and apply it to their lives.
- **Haters of Dishonest Gain** - Interesting for this to be mentioned as Jethro's criteria. He uses the strongest possible word, HATERS. This would prevent those in the ministry for the money but leave those who are in it for ministry. (service) Cannot be bought, cannot be bribed, doesn't expect entitlements.
  - 1) Acts 6 - Apostles appointed some to serve tables so they could be studying the Word of God
  - 2) 1 Timothy 3:1-6 - Prerequisite for Elder. All character traits except for "apt to teach" "*This [is] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice,*"
- 4) The organization would be quite large but effective. Jethro advised to place Elders over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. As the number of people decreased the more intimately involved the Elder would be in the lives of the people.
- 5) The godly Elders screen all the disputes but those that the Elders cannot handle, those were brought up to Moses to take before God.

Exd 18:23 "If you do this thing and God {so} commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace."

- DL Moody said " I'd rather put 100 men to work than to do the work of 100 men"
- "Do this thing" & "And God so commands" not just the word of Jethro. But his advise and God 's affirmation.

Exd 18:24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

Exd 18:25 Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

Exd 18:26 They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.

Exd 18:27 Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell, and he went his way into his own land.

- Moses prayed and received God's affirmation of Jethro's counsel and followed through.
- Deut 1:12-18 tells us how Moses selected the Elders. He had the people select them.
- Jethro went home.

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