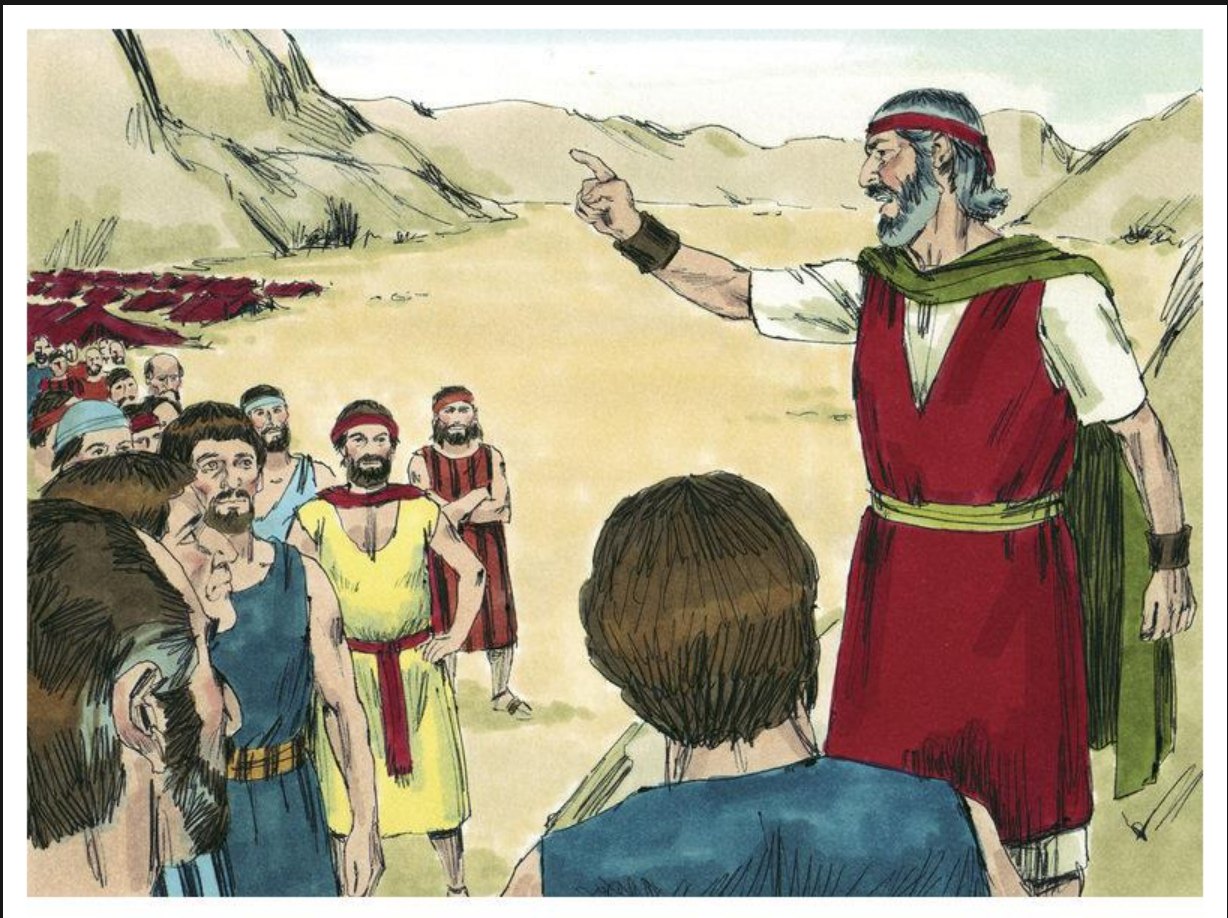


Parashat Yitro

Jethro - יתרו



Jethro (Exo 18:1 – 20:23)



(Picture by Sweet Media)

"The parashah is made up of 7,512 Hebrew letters, 2,021 Hebrew words, 148 verses, and can occupy about 235 lines in a Torah Scroll" - Wikipedia.org

Moses can be described as a great leader who humbly accepts advice from other godly leaders and does not try to do it all by himself.

Paragraph Divisions:

- (a) This great leader and his family re-united (v1-7)
- (b) Honor to God YHWH (v8-12)
- (c) Establishment of leadership (v24-26)

The Preparation process for bigger things

Jethro was an outsider whose counsel was of major benefit to Israel, while Amalek was an outsider as well, who launched a sneak attack (Deuteronomy 25:17-18) against Israel's weak and weary people. Centuries later, Jethro's descendants lived in Amalekite territory and would have been in grave danger when the Jews fought Amalek. When King Saul attack Amalek, he showed Israel's gratitude by warning Jethro's descendants to evacuate the area of the impending war (1 Samuel 15:6). What you do today can have grave consequences for your offspring or the greatest blessings. Both Jethro and Amalek knew what happened in Egypt. *Miracles alone do not transform the beliefs of the Amaleks of the world. Those who refuse to recognize the hand of God will always interpret events to suit their own purposes.* Jethro was also a minister of Midian and a former adviser to Pharaoh. Now he is a friend of Israel, maybe because of what he saw happened in Israel. Surely the God of Israel showed Himself strong against the gods of Egypt and brought them in total shame and destruction.

Jethro was received with the greatest honour and respect not only by Moses, but by the entire nation. When Moses went out to meet him, Aaron, Nadav and Avihu would have followed and if these leaders went, then the nation would follow as well. It is like a royal reception.

In verse 3 we read about the name of the first son, Gershom (גֶּרְשֹׁם) and in verse 4 the name of the second, Eliezer (אֱלִיעֶזֶר). The name Gershom comes from Ger and sham (foreign & there). The name of the second son, Eli-ezer means "my God is help". In these two names, we see the life of Moses. He lived as a foreigner in Egypt and God helped him to overcome Pharaoh and lead the people out of bondage to the land Canaan. It is not uncommon for people of that time to name their children after the circumstances surrounding them at the time. See the names of the sons of Jacob.

Also, we find the word 'help' in verse 4 and in 1 Sam 7:12; it means to do for someone what he/she cannot do for him/herself. He specifically said that God was his help, referring to God as the only one that could help him.

In verse 9 we find the word נִיחַד. It occurs only here and in Job 3:16 and Psalm 21:6. It is a common word in Aramaic and translates as 'he shuddered'. It also alludes to the word prickles, for his happiness was so great that he felt physically thrilled, like someone who may weep or become faint when he is overwhelmed with unexpected great joy.

In verse 10 we find the word בָּרוּךְ. It is a qal passive participle. The verb means 'to enrich in praise'. It means that He (YHWH) would be enriched by the praises of the people. I think that most of the time we

put little value on our praises, but by studying the Hebrew meanings of the words, we can see that our praises are of utmost importance.

11 *"Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods; yea, for that they dealt proudly against them.' YHWH used their pride against them to bring their doom upon them and at the same time salvation for His people Israel."*

Verse 12 teaches us that in all things, we should honour God first. Here Moses honoured God, YHWH, first through a burnt-offering and then sacrifices. The latter for the people to feast on as well. The sacrifices as a forerunner of the peace offerings. The burnt-offering is also written in the singular, because that was exclusively an offering to YHWH. The verse ends with: 'to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law **before God**'. Bread is lechem and it means 'ALL THE FOOD', meat included. Before God – this refers to a covenantal ritual and signified that they were in communion with the Deity and one another. We read in **1 Corinthians 11:24-28 (TLV)**:

"and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in memory of Me." In the same way, He also took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in memory of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the Lord's cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and then let him eat of the bread and drink from the cup."

Coming together and eating the offering as the Lord prescribed, is a very serious matter. It shows that we are in communion with the Lord and one another. Since we are in communion with Him by doing this, we ought to take care not to do it in a light manner.

In verse 13 we read about Moses sitting to judge the people. It is from this that we find the phrase: 'sitting in Moses' seat'. Matthew 23:2 saying, *"The Torah scholars and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses"*.

Verse 15: inquire of God. (לְדַרֵּשׁ) Lidrosh. In Israel, justice was considered as belonging to God YHWH. To inquire of God is to seek His will or judgment or legal decision on a matter and to settle disputes. Because Moses acted as a judge, he spoke on behalf of God, but as a servant of YHWH, Moses's words will be God's words. We read later in Psalm 82:6 *"I said: 'You are 'gods', and you are all sons of Elyon"*. We also read in John 10:34-35 *"Yeshua answered them, "Isn't it written in your Writings, 'I have said you are gods'?"*. If he called them 'gods,' to whom the Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), and also in

Psalm 8 – *"What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of [earthborn] man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than [b]God, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, Unjust Judgments Rebuked."* (AMP)

Psalm 82 - *"A Psalm of Asaph. God stands in the divine assembly; He judges among the gods (divine beings). How long will you judge unjustly. And show partiality to the wicked? Selah. Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice and maintain the rights of the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; Rescue them from the hand of the wicked. The rulers do not know nor do they understand; They walk on in the darkness [of complacent satisfaction]; All the foundations of the earth [the fundamental principles of the administration of justice] are shaken. I said, "You are [a]gods; Indeed, all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless, you will die like men and fall like any one of the princes." Arise, O God, judge the earth! For to You belong all the nations."* (AMP)

We can clearly see from the Scriptures above that what it means to be God's judge. YHWH expects from us to judge with all fairness and to be the voice of the oppressed and downtrodden. To speak out against unjust and wickedness and to fight for the cause of the needy. Judges can make the right decisions because they make it according to God's law. For this reason, there are statutes of God and His laws.

In ancient times when the teacher or judge would sit to judge/teach, the students or disciples would stand as a symbol of respect. This will be exhaustive for the students as well and in this case the people. Just imagine yourself standing in a very long row at a teller, etc.

Fatigue comes in two stages – one feels a bit weak but can still function, but then later one cannot perform your duties. Alternatively, fatigue will strike not only Moses but also everyone else.

In verse 18 we read 'wear away'. It is the same principle as in **Psalm 1:2-3** ***"Instead you thrill to God's Word, you chew on Scripture day and night. You're a tree replanted in Eden, bearing fresh fruit every month, never dropping a leaf, always in blossom"***. Also, in Psalm 18:45 it is speaking figuratively of foes fading away, failing in strength and in courage.

Verse 19: Moses was instructed to be *"thou for the people before God"* meaning that he must intercede, pray and appeal on their behalf of them. This is the job of the leader of the people. He alone was to be the mediator to guide them in the religious and moral instructions. We see Christ also coming from the Father to teach the people who the Father is, and the Scriptures. This is the job of a true leader. In **Deuteronomy 1** Moses reminded the nation of the decision made to appoint leaders:

Moses Preaches to Israel on the Plains of Moab

"He said: Back at Horeb, God, our God, spoke to us: "You've stayed long enough at this mountain. On your way now. Get moving. Head for the Amorite hills, wherever people are living in the Arabah, the mountains, the foothills, the Negev, the seashore—the Canaanite country and the Lebanon all the way to the big river, the Euphrates. Look, I've given you this land. Now go in and take it. It's the land God promised to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their children after them.

"At the time I told you, "I can't do this, can't carry you all by myself. God, your God, has multiplied your numbers. Why, look at you—you rival the stars in the sky! And may God, the God-of-Your-Fathers, keep it up and multiply you another thousand times, bless you just as he promised. But how can I carry, all by myself, your troubles and burdens and quarrels? So select some wise, understanding, and seasoned men from your tribes, and I will commission them as your leaders.

"You answered me, "Good! A good solution."

"So I went ahead and took the top men of your tribes, wise and seasoned, and made them your leaders—leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens, officials adequate for each of your tribes.

"At the same time I gave orders to your judges: "Listen carefully to complaints and accusations between your fellow Israelites. Judge fairly between each person and his fellow or foreigner. Don't play favorites; treat the little and the big alike; listen carefully to each. Don't be impressed by big names. This is God's judgment you're dealing with. Hard cases you can bring to me; I'll deal with them."

"I issued orders to you at that time regarding everything you would have to deal with. - (Message)

The word "provides" in verse 21 is in Hebrew an unusual word for "lookout, select and appoint". This is also an indication for prophetic insight which God has given thee according to Rashi.

The following verses deal with the appointment of leadership. I regard these Scriptures as very important since it echoes into the New Testament. We are taught the character of godly leadership. If we apply

these rules and advice that the Scripture gives us, we will spare ourselves and the congregation of YHWH a lot of problems. Not to say that some people start off good and end badly. Let’s dig into the Scripture and see what it says about leadership.

First is start with the 3 characteristics of godly leaders. They must be “able men”, that (1) **fear God**, (2) **men of truth** and (3) **hating unjust gain**.

Able Men:

Mighty men of valor. Dictionary.com defines valor as the following: *boldness or determination in facing great danger, especially in battle; heroic courage; bravery. 1350–1400; Middle English valo(u)r < Anglo-French; Middle French valeur < Late Latin valōr-, stem of valor worth, equivalent to Latin val(ēre) to be of worth.*

The synonyms for valor according to the thesaurus are:

Synonyms for valor

noun bravery

boldness courage derring-do determination fearlessness firmness fortitude gallantry grit heroism prowess tenacity backbone dash	defiance fight guts hardihood heart intrepidity invincibility mettle moxie nerve	pluck resolution sand spirit spunk starch stomach valiance valiancy indomitableness intestinal fortitude
--	---	--

This is quite a mouthful. This verse means men respected, looked up by the community as leaders and who have the need of the people in mind.

The Stone Edition renders it as follows: Men of accomplishment. In this context, Jethro referred to men of means, whose wealth enabled them to resist the pressure of those who would attempt to influence their judgment (Rashi). According to Sforno, these are able men, who possess good judgment, knowledge of the law, and the ability to recognize the truth in a conflict.

Fear God:

This means that they are devout, worshipful and obedient servants of God YHWH. To fear God is not to tremble before Him, although we will when standing before Him because of His majestic power, but it is to be in awe of Him. They should not be fearers of men. Those who genuinely fear God will not be afraid of people (Ibn Ezra). They will not be swayed by flattery, bribery or threats.

Men of Truth:

They must be seekers of the Truth in all cases. They must judge according to Truth. The word truth also includes the ideas of faithfulness and reliability. It will be men whose *word is reliable and true*.

Haters of Bribes:

It is translated also as unjust gain. These men is to reject and refuse it. Their decisions will not be based or swayed by greed. They must be incorruptible and above the suspicion of bribery. The judge/leader will not be swayed by financial considerations, even when he will suffer a personal loss. They will despise the very idea of accepting money from others (Onkelos). Nothing will be accepted that could be construed as an attempt to influence them. Today in our world it is sadly but true, that this is not always the case among God's leaders. They are bribed by tithes, offerings, luxury and gifts. Sometimes even church numbers. We sadly corrupted the Word of God by measuring everything against numbers. What a disgrace.

These leaders are appointed based on character and over 10's and more. You cannot trust everybody with a lot of responsibilities. Even the Lord God Himself gives us a little responsibility and when we excel in that, He gives us more. We read about this in

Luke 19:17

16 *"The first said, 'Master, I doubled your money.'*

17 *"He said, 'Good servant! Great work! Because you've been trustworthy in this small job, I'm making you governor of ten towns.'*

18 *"The second said, 'Master, I made a fifty percent profit on your money.'*

19 *"He said, 'I'm putting you in charge of five towns.'*

We read in the New Testament about God's leaders.

1 Timothy 1-13 (Amp)

Overseers and Deacons

"3 This is a faithful and trustworthy saying: if any man [eagerly] seeks the office of [a]overseer (bishop, superintendent), he desires an excellent task. 2 Now an overseer must be blameless and beyond reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine, not [b]a bully nor quick-tempered and hot-headed, but gentle and considerate, free from the love of money [not greedy for wealth and its inherent power—financially ethical]. 4 He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity [keeping them respectful and well-behaved] 5 (for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?). 6 and He must not be a new convert, so that he will not [behave stupidly and] become conceited [by appointment to this high office] and fall into the [same] condemnation incurred by the devil [for his arrogance and pride]. 7 And he must have a good reputation and be well thought of by those outside the church, so that he will not be discredited and fall into the devil's trap. 8 [c]Deacons likewise must be men worthy of respect [honorable, financially ethical, of good character], not double-tongued [speakers of half-truths], not addicted to wine, not greedy for dishonest gain, 9 but upholding and fully understanding the mystery [that is, the true doctrine] of the [Christian] faith with a clear conscience [resulting from behavior consistent with spiritual maturity]. 10 These men must first be tested; then if they are found to be blameless and beyond reproach [in their Christian lives], let them serve as deacons. 11 [d]Women must likewise be worthy of respect, not malicious gossips, but self-controlled, [thoroughly] trustworthy in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons gain a high standing [having a good reputation among the congregation], and great confidence in the faith which is [founded on and centered] in Christ Jesus."

All the points in Exodus 18 are mentioned here and a few are added. Why? So that the church of God YHWH is well managed and of good reputation. We are after all speaking of the body of Christ! Everything we do as leaders will point back to Christ. We must have a good reputation by the outside world. They must hate us for the Truth, but never see us as a useless, compromised Church who lost its power. We should therefore pray for our leaders even more, since we know now the responsibility upon their shoulders. They will be judge one day by the Enthroned Judge, who will weigh everything against His Word. May God YHWH help us!

There is always a test for leadership. You will be tested and tried in the small things and it is just here where many lose it. Before they can receive correction to help them to grow, they run away and again and again and again, and they never get to grow where God planted them. Nobody knows everything and all things. With growth, comes correction not to destroy but to build. May YHWH help us to get back to His leadership style and to develop a godly leader's character.

This chapter makes an excellent message on spiritual leadership of the people of God YHWH. Spiritually responsible people are to be selected to help in the work of the ministry (teaching, deciding cases, meeting needs), so that there will be peace, and so that leaders will not be exhausted. Probably capable people are readier to do that than leaders are ready to relinquish control. But leaders must be willing to take the risk, to entrust the task to others. Here Moses is the model of humility, receiving correction and counsel from Jethro. And Jethro is the ideal adviser, for he has no intention of remaining there to run the operation. (Constable's Notes)

As the Stone Edition of the Chumash puts it: **People can more easily cope with problems and poverty than with the feeling that more powerful or better-connected individuals are taking advantage of them!**

This is it for now.

Shalom to you

Venessa Holtzhausen

www.vhministry.net