

Day 95 - WEDNESDAY: February 8th

Exodus 18

Exodus 18:1-27 NKJV

And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people—that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land") and the name of the other was Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her." So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about their well-being, and they went into the tent. And 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 come upon them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 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." Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws." So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you

will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace." So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves. Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – By way of reminder, the Hebrew word translated “father-in-law” simply means “in-law” and can apply to a number of relationships. We discussed this in more depth earlier in our study of Exodus.

Let’s now go to the UCG reading plan: “It's possible that Zipporah returned to her father in Midian after the confrontation with Moses over the matter of circumcising the son she bore Moses. It is recorded that Moses sent them back, but the timing of that event is not clear. There is no account of the entire family coming out of Egypt. We do find here that Jethro now brings Moses' wife and children back to him.

Jethro also gives Moses some advice in carrying out the responsibilities of a leader among a civil nation. Just as Moses had grown tired in holding God's staff up on his own in the previous chapter, so was he wearing himself out by single-handedly dealing with all the problems of the people himself. Jethro, witnessing this, recommends that an organized leadership be put into place to handle the day-to-day issues of millions of people and animals. Remember that Jethro, a leader among the Midianites, had years of experience in leading people.

Some people have argued that such a hierarchy was against God's will. However, notice that Jethro said to institute such a captain system only if God so commanded Moses (verse 23). And it is inconceivable that Moses, who talked with God every day, would have taken such far-reaching steps without consulting with Him. Furthermore, that God sanctioned this system is clear, for He *later* commands that 70 elders be chosen from among those who are already "officers" over the people (Numbers 11:16)—i.e., having been declared so through the captain system.

Like chapters 15 and 16, chapter 18 also reveals that God's laws and statutes were being taught and expounded even

before their formal declaration at Mount Sinai (verse 16).”
[END]

Verse 11 – Adam Clarke’s commentary speculates: “Some think that Jethro was now converted to the true God; but it is very probable that he enjoyed this blessing before he knew anything of Moses, for it is not likely that Moses would have entered into an alliance with this family had they been heathens. Jethro no doubt had the true patriarchal religion.” [END]

Verse 23 – This was brought out in the commentary above but is worth repeating, notice here Jethro states “and God *so* commands you”. We all have ideas that we propose and think about, but then we take those things to God and pray about them to see if God is directing and leading us in that direction. Additionally, this teaches us the importance of learning from others with experience and being willing to receive help from others.