

Jethro's Advice - Exodus 18

Purpose: to show the importance of Godly leadership, especially during our “wilderness” experiences

At this time in the history of the UK, we are going through a very difficult political crisis that is now famously called “Brexit”, which is a quick way of describing Britain’s exit from the European Union.

Virtually every news broadcast is talking about this subject, and most political parties are accusing the others of a “lack of leadership”.

As we look at the advice that was given to Moses by his father-in-law, we are going to talk about the importance of godly leadership, especially during our “wilderness” experiences.

The wilderness is where leadership is organised and set up.

Exodus 18 can be divided into two parts:

- The family reunion (vs. 1-12)
- The Father-in-law’s advise (vs. 13-27)

Part 1, read verses 1-12

Who is Jethro?

Exo 18:1 *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.*

- He was a priest/prince – a religious man, highly respected and God fearing
- Of Midian – in Arabia, where Moses had lived for 40 years
- He took Moses in when he fled from Egypt
- He gave Moses his daughter’s hand in marriage
- He took care of Moses’ wife and children while he was away and returned them to Moses
- He testified to the greatness of the LORD (vs. 11)
- He offered a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God (vs. 12)

The second part is verses 13-27

What was the problem that Jethro saw?

Exo 18:13 *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.*

Exo 18:14 *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?"*

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

Exo 18:16 *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."*

Moses was judging the people **by himself** from morning until evening

- They inquired of God through him
- He made known to them God's statutes and laws
- Moses did all of this "for the people" - he was serving them, not lording over them.

What was not good about it?

- This would wear out Moses
- This would wear out the people
- It was too much for Moses to do by himself

What was Jethro's advice?

Exo 18:17 *So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good.*

Exo 18:18 *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.*

Exo 18:19 *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.*

Exo 18:20 *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.*

Exo 18:21 *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.*

Exo 18:22 *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.*

Here is what Moses was instructed to do:

- Stand before God for the people
 - Pray and enquire of God on their behalf
- Teach them:
 - Statutes – prescribed tasks, boundaries, the areas in which they must do
 - Laws – instructions, directions, rules
 - Way they must walk – how they function (Psalm 32:8)
 - Work they must do – tasks to be performed
 - Moses was still responsible for this
- Select leaders:
 - They must be able (have the ability for the task)
 - They must fear God
 - They must be men of truth
 - They must hate covetousness (greed)
- Put them in ranks (thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens)
 - He had to put them in order, based on their abilities
- Let them judge the people
 - Great matters come to Moses
 - Small matters they judge

In the wilderness, leadership is essential

- Leaders must be chosen carefully (see 1 Timothy 3:1-13)
- Leaders must lead wisely (2 Timothy 2:23-26)
- Leaders must be imitated (Hebrews 13:7)
- Leaders must be obeyed (Hebrews 13:17)

What was the result of Jethro's advice?

Exo 18:23 *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."*

Exo 18:24 *So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.*

Exo 18:25 *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.*

Exo 18:26 *So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.*

Exo 18:27 *Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.*

- It will be easier for Moses
- They will bear the burden with Moses
- Moses will be able to endure
- They will go to their place in peace (go home satisfied; go home with their disputes settled)

Jethro's advice to Moses was to appoint godly leadership to bear the burden of responsibility

Godly leadership is extremely important, especially during our "wilderness" experiences

Pro 29:18 *Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.*

Pro 11:14 *Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*

Pro 15:22 *Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.*

Pro 24:6 *For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors there is safety.*

One of the main ways in which God speaks to us and confirms His will is through His leaders
In the next part of the book, we will see how important Godly leadership is, and what happens when it is absent