



Yitro – Abundance Exodus 18:1-20:23

Haftarah – Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-9:6

B'rit Hadashah- Matthew 5:8-20

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Helping Hands For Leadership To Help Carry The Burden

Parshah Overview: ¹

Moses' father-in-law, **Jethro**, hears of the great **miracles** which G-d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of **magistrates and judges** to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The children of Israel camp opposite **Mount Sinai**, where they are told that G-d has **chosen** them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall **do**."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the **Exodus**, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. G-d **descends** on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the *shofar*, and summons Moses to **ascend**.

G-d proclaims the **Ten Commandments**, commanding the people of Israel to believe in **G-d**, not to worship **idols** or take G-d's **name** in vain, to keep the **Shabbat**, honor their **parents**, not to **murder**, not to commit **adultery**, not to **steal**, and not to bear false **witness** or **covet** another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the **Torah** from G-d and convey it to them.

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Wisdom From Yitro/Jethro

Exo 18:1 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.

Exo 18:2 Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home,

Exo 18:3 along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"),

Exo 18:4 and the name of the other, Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").

Exo 18:5 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.

Exo 18:6 And when he sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,"

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

Exo 18:8 Then 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 in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.

Exo 18:9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Exo 18:10 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 has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

Exo 18:11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people."

Exo 18:12 And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Exo 18:13 The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening.

Exo 18:14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till 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 dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws."

Exo 18:17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good.

Exo 18:18 You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.

Exo 18:19 Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,

Exo 18:20 and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

Exo 18:21 Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

Exo 18:22 And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

Exo 18:23 If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

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

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

Exo 18:26 And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves.

Exo 18:27 Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country. ESV

Jethro comes from Midian to see Moses accompanied by Moses wife and sons after hearing about the great miracles done by YHVH for Israel. When he comes he notices the burden that Moses is carrying in trying to counsel God's people and gives him wonderful advise which Moses was humble enough to listen to and implement. It is one thing to get good advice, but it takes a humble person to put that advise into action.

JETHRO [jĕth' rō] (Heb. *yitrō* "highness" or "eminence" [?]).† A priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses (Exod. 3:1; 4:18). At 2:18 he is called Reuel, which some scholars interpret as a clan name. In two passages Moses' father-in-law is called Hobab (Num. 10:29 [perhaps referring to Reuel]; Judg. 4:11, RSV); while some scholars identify Jethro with Hobab, others interpret Heb. *hōtēn* variously as "brother-in-law" (Judg. 4:11, NIV) or "son-in-law." Some view the variant names as reflecting different traditions.

When Moses fled Egypt he took refuge with Jethro in Midian. Having protected Jethro's daughters, Moses was welcomed into the priest's household, marrying his daughter Zipporah, and tending the flocks (Exod. 2:16–3:1). Later, when Jethro came to Moses at Mt. Sinai, he rejoiced at Israel's deliverance and Yahweh's revelation, offered thanksgiving sacrifices, and gave Moses counsel concerning the administration of justice (ch. 18). Jethro and his party did not go with Moses (v. 27).

Jethro was a Kenite, an itinerant smith related to the Midianites (Judg. 1:16).²

† Major revision

RSV Revised Standard Version

NIV New International Version

² Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (577). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

We can learn much as Congregations and Communities from these simple words of wisdom on how to help our leadership and Rabbis with the work load so they do not get burnt out.

Exo 18:19 Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,

Exo 18:20 and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

Exo 18:21 Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

Exo 18:22 And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

Jethro defines the ideal qualities of character required of judges. *Fear God, men of conscience (1:17 n.). Trustworthy men, or “men of truth.” Spurn illgotten gain, unsusceptible to bribes (23:8).* In recounting this event in Deut. 1:13, 15, Moses lists intellectual qualifications. Maimonides, in defining the qualifications for judges, holds that the qualities of both lists, character as well as intellect, are required (*Hilkhot Sanh. 2.7*). *Chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens:* These are military ranks, consistent with the fact that the Israelites are organized as an army (12:41 n.) and have just fought a battle (17:8–16). Military officers sometimes held judicial responsibilities in the ancient Near East. **22:** *Major*, according to v. 26, “difficult.” **23:** *And God so commands you*, i.e., authorizes you to follow this suggestion. **27:** According to Num. 10:29–32, from a different source, Moses sought to persuade Jethro to remain with the Israelites and share God’s bounty with them in the promised land, but he declined.³

We see this same pattern in the book of Acts;

Act 6:1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

Act 6:2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "**It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.**"

Act 6:3 **Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.**

Act 6:4 **But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."**

n. annotation(s)

Sanh. Sanhedrin (Talmudic Tractate)

n. annotation(s)

³ *The Jewish Study Bible*. 2004 (A. Berlin, M. Z. Brettler & M. Fishbane, Ed.) (144–145). New York: Oxford University Press.

Act 6:5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

Act 6:6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Act 6:7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Leadership burnout is very common in ministry, God never calls one person to carry the load by himself either financially or physically.

The Apostle Paul lays out how a Community should function

5 Fold Leadership

Eph 4:10 The One who came down is the same One who went up far above all the heavens, in order to fill all things.

Eph 4:11 He Himself gave some to be emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers—

Eph 4:12 to equip the kedoshim for the work of service, for building up the body of Messiah.

Eph 4:13 This will continue until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of Ben-Elohim—to mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of Messiah’s fullness.

Eph 4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be like children, tossed around by the waves and blown all over by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men with cunning in deceitful scheming.

Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all ways into Messiah, who is the Head.

Eph 4:16 From Him the whole body is fitted and held together by every supporting ligament. The proper working of each individual part produces the body’s growth, for building itself up in love.

11. These are Yeshua’s gifts to the Messianic Community. Because the Greek is ambiguous, some take the two terms “**shepherds**” (pastors) and “**teachers**” to be speaking of one office—“shepherd-teachers.” Pastoring and teaching are overlapping yet distinguishable skills. **Emissaries** (apostles) found congregations. **Prophets** speak God’s word. **Proclaimers of the Good News** (evangelists) communicate the Good News so that people turn from sin and accept God’s forgiveness through the Messiah. **Pastors** carry on from there, discipling and counseling new and old believers in living the Messianic life. **Teachers** communicate and apply biblical truth. None is to boast about his position but to “equip God’s people,” as explained in vv. 12–13.

13–16 The New Covenant states that “they will not teach [each other], saying, ‘Know *Adonai*, because they will all know me” (Jeremiah 31:33(34)). This has not happened yet, and although the process has begun, we still need teachers (v. 12). How long? **Until we all**

arrive at the unity (see vv. 2–6&N) **implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God**, and the other points of vv. 14–16 are fulfilled.⁴ Complete Jewish New Testament Commentary

Ministry of Helps

1Co 12:4 Now there are various kinds of gifts, but the same Ruach.

1Co 12:5 There are various kinds of service, but the same Lord.

1Co 12:6 There are various kinds of working, but the same God who works all things in all people.

1Co 12:7 But to each person is given the manifestation of the Ruach for the benefit of all.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given through the Ruach a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Ruach,

1Co 12:9 to another faith by the same Ruach, to another gifts of healings by the one Ruach,

1Co 12:10 to another workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1Co 12:11 But one and the same Ruach activates all these things, distributing to each person individually as He wills. TLV

Nine *charismata* (supernatural gifts; see v. 1) from the Holy Spirit are mentioned:

- (1) **Word of wisdom**, supernatural wisdom about how to solve a practical or spiritual problem. A homey example: my wife has what I playfully call the “gift of finding”; although she has plenty of *sekhel* (common sense) in knowing how to look for a lost item, not infrequently, in response to prayer, God reveals to her supernaturally where the missing item is located. (I provide her many opportunities to exercise her gift, since I seem to have the “gift” of losing.)
- (2) **Word of knowledge**, supernatural knowledge relevant to understanding a situation. Example: a pastor expelling demons from a woman was told by the Spirit that the demons were connected with “smell of mother”; it seems unlikely that hours of questioning the subject would have revealed that in times of stress she would smell the pillows her deceased mother once used.
- (3) **Faith** (or: “faithfulness”) beyond what believers “normally” have, even though all faith is a gift from God (Ep 2:8–9)—“the faith which produces not only miracles, but martyrs” (Robertson & Plummer’s *Commentary*).
- (4) **Gifts of healing**. Nearly everyone is acquainted with inexplicable healings (doctors more than most people). Some of these are from God, and of these some come in response to “ordinary” prayer (Ya 5:14–16), while others result from the ministry of those who have one or more of the “gifts” (plural) of healing. To complicate matters, there are healings and miracles that are not from God but from other spirits, even from Satan (Mt 24:24; Ac 16:16–19; 2C 11:14; 2 Th 2:9; Rv 13:1–4, 12–15), not to

⁴ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Eph 4:11–13). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

mention ordinary impostors who neither produce genuine healings nor draw on any spirit more supernatural than their own spirit of greed. Nevertheless, healing was one of the chief ministries of Yeshua the Messiah when he walked the earth (Mt 4:23–24), and he promised that we who believe in him would do “even greater works” (Yn 14:12).

(5) **The working of miracles.** In a sense the events of everyday life are miracles, but the concept here seems to refer to “unusual” miracles, not “usual” ones. Spectacular miracles are reported more frequently in areas where the Gospel is relatively new. For example, in the 1960’s reports came out of parts of Indonesia reached recently by the Gospel that water had been turned to wine and even that dead people had been raised to life. Verifying the truth of such reports is beyond the scope of a commentary, but the integrity of the Gospel demands avoiding credulity and applying evidential standards at least as high as for establishing other kinds of facts.

(6) **Prophecy** is speaking on behalf of God. The standard for judging a prophet is given in the *Torah*:

“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet shall die. And if you ask yourself, ‘How are we to know if the word spoken is not from *Adonai*?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of *Adonai*, if the thing predicted does not come to pass, then it has not been spoken by *Adonai*; rather, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, and you are not to be afraid of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:20–22)

Significantly, this passage follows on Moshe’s prediction that “a prophet like me” would arise, that prophet being Yeshua (see Ac 3:22&N).

Prophecy, then, is speaking on God’s behalf, like the prophets of the *Tanakh*. Some, but not all, of their writings are predictive; but all are intended to inspire fear and awe of God. Today’s prophets speak on God’s behalf, but their prophecies do not thereby become Holy Scripture (many prophecies mentioned in the Bible did not become Holy Scripture either), but they are to be paid serious attention; see, however, paragraph (7) following. (Also see Ac 11:27N.)

(7) **The ability to judge between spirits**, popularly called “discernment of spirits,” is the ability to tell whether a particular phenomenon is from the Spirit of God, from a person’s own spirit, or from some demonic spirit; one might call it the supernatural ability to avoid being deceived. See paragraph (4) above for scriptural references. This particular gift is often needed in order to discern whether healings, miracles and prophecies are truly from God; it is also an indispensable part of the spiritual equipment of anyone who undertakes to expel demons.

(8) **The ability to speak in different kinds of tongues.** “Speaking in tongues” has become known more widely in the twentieth century than in centuries past, since there has been an entire movement within Christianity identified with it, namely, Pentecostalism, or, more recently, the Charismatic Movement among mainline denominations. The term means speaking in a language one has not learned.

The New Testament seems to mention or imply at least four **different kinds of tongues**:⁵

- (9) **The ability to interpret tongues**, to give the meaning in ordinary language of what is spoken by the “gift of tongues” (see 8(c) above) in a public worship service. From 14:5, 13 one can infer the following charismatic equation:
Tongues + Interpretation = Prophecy.⁶

Rom 12:3 For through the grace given me, I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think—but to use sound judgment, as God has assigned to each person a measure of faith.

Rom 12:4 For just as we have many parts in one body—and all the parts do not have the same function—

Rom 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Messiah and everyone parts of one another.

Rom 12:6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace that was given to us—if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

Rom 12:7 if service, in our serving; or the one who teaches, in his teaching;

Rom 12:8 or the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who gives, in generosity; the one who leads, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

12:4–13:10 This passage carries on the thought introduced in v. 3. Compare 1 Corinthians 12–14, which covers much the same subject matter. God’s people are an organic unity, a body (vv. 4–5). Each member of the body is given gifts (vv. 6–8) meant to be used properly and not abused (vv. 6–21), within an overall framework of love (vv. 9–13, 13:8–10) in which evil is to be overcome with good (12:14–13:7).

Or, looking at it from a different perspective, Sha’ul is setting up general guidelines for Messianic communal life. The Jewish people already had such guidelines in the *Torah*; here transcultural elements (see Ga 1:17N) are extracted and applied. Even today the Church can learn much about communal consciousness, caring and belonging from the Jewish community’s way of functioning.

- 4–5** People often think of membership in a synagogue or church as a matter of personal choice. But biblically, membership is organic, comparable with the relationship which members (**parts**) of the natural body have with each other, each with its own **function** but needing for its well-being the services of parts having other functions, and all contributing to the good of the entire body, whose life-energy is supplied by God. Compare 1C 7:4, 12:12; Ep 4:11–16.

⁵ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (1 Co 12:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

⁶ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (1 Co 12:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

6–8 God gives **gifts** (Greek *charismata*; see 1 Corinthians 12:8–10&N) to all believers and **grace** (*charis*) suited to each gift. For example, the grace accompanying **leadership** is **diligence** and **zeal**. In the context of v. 3, it is clear that boasting about one’s gifts is altogether out of place (compare 3:27; 1C 1:29–31, 4:7). Boasting kills unity.

Prophecy, literally, “speaking on behalf of,” in this case on behalf of God: the *Ruach HaKodesh* either gives supernatural insight or makes use of one’s own natural talents. Prophecy may be, but need not be, predictive.

Counselor ... comfort and exhort. See on “*parakalô*,” v. 1. ⁷

Helping Hands When Leadership Get Weary

Exo 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men, go out, and fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

Exo 17:10 So Joshua did as Moses said, and fought the Amalekites, while Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

Exo 17:11 When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. But when he let down his hand, the Amalekites prevailed.

Exo 17:12 Moses’ hands grew heavy, so they took a stone, put it under him, and he sat down. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side. So his hands were steady until the sun went down. TLV

⁷ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ro 12:3–6). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.