

Parashat Yitro

פרשת יתרו

Exodus 18-20

# Topics

- Exodus 18 – Jethro's wisdom
- Exodus 19 – Holy People, Holy Nation
- Exodus 20 – “Commandments”

# Exodus 18:8

- 8 Then Moses told his father-in-law all that Adonai 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 Adonai had delivered them.

# Exodus 18:10-11

<sup>10</sup> Jethro said, “Blessed be Adonai, 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.

<sup>11</sup> Now I know that Adonai is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.”

# What has God done up to this point?

- Egypt's gods fell
- Pharaoh's army devastated
- Name of God revealed
- Food provided
- Meribah
- Amalekites

## Jethro – Priest of ?

Ex 3:1 - Now Moses was pasturing the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

- Jethro – priest of Yah?
- priest near the mountain of Adonai
- Led by Yah?
- Acknowledges Yah as supreme
- Anyone can be used – Saul, Judas, David

# Exodus 18:16

- <sup>16</sup> 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 instructions.”

# How does he know the instructions?

Matthew 16:18-19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

- Heaven influences humans
- Moses – representative of God
- Spirit-led
- Understands God's will



# Exodus 18:17-19

- 17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good.
- 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.
- 19 Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you!

## Exodus 18:19-20

- <sup>19</sup> You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,
- <sup>20</sup> and you shall warn them about the statutes and the instructions, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

# Moses' two roles

Represent the people  
Before God

Tell them  
the instructions



Priest

Leader or King



Messiah



Figure

# Exodus 18:21

<sup>21</sup> 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.

# Exodus 18:27

- <sup>27</sup> Then Moses let his father-in-law depart,  
and he went away to his own country.

# Exodus 19:1

In the third month after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

# Tracking time – Exodus 13

“On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go out from here.

# Tracking time – Exodus 16

1 Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. 2 But the whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 The sons of Israel said to them, “If only we had died by the YHWH’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread until we were full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this entire assembly with hunger!”



## Tracking time – Exodus 19

In the third month after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

v. 8 “All that the YHWH has spoken we will do!”

## Exodus 19:3-4

- 3 while Moses went up to God. Adonai called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.

They have seen for themselves (1) what he “did to the Egyptians,” a summary of the entire proof-of-the Presence narrative from the first of the mighty acts through the deliverance at the sea; (2) that he “lifted them on eagles’ wings,” a summary of the proof of his Presence through the variety of guidance and provision in the wilderness; and (3) that he has brought them to himself, to the mountain of his special Presence, to Sinai..., the image is one of the utter dependency of Israel and of the tender and protective care of YHWH. The double emphasis of v 4 is that YHWH has done what has been done for Israel and that the people have themselves seen and experienced his mighty work on their behalf

*John I. Durham, Exodus, vol. 3, Word Biblical Commentary 262.*

Who else can save but God?

Who else can save but God?

Isaiah 45:21-22

there is no other God besides Me,

A righteous God and a Savior; There is none  
except Me. “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends  
of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.

# Matthew 19:23-26

Matthew 19:23-Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Yeshua looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

# Exodus 19:5-6

- 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;
- 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

# Yah's Covenant Opportunity with Israel

- not forcing anyone to serve him
- expectation of a voluntary response
- Why?
- He saved them
- Response to salvation:, “Choose for yourselves this day...”



# Yah's Covenant Opportunity with Us

- not forcing anyone to serve him
- Saved us
- Expected response: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” – Acts 2:38-39

# 1 Peter 2:5-9

5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Messiah Yeshua.

6 For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever trusts in Him will not be put to shame.”

# 1 Peter 2:5-9

7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

8 and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the *very* word that they were appointed for

# 1 Peter 2:5-10

9 But you are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

# Isaiah 61:1-6

5 Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;

6 and you all shall be called the priests of Adonai; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast.

# Zechariah 8:20-23

This is what Adonai of Armies says: “Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat Adonai and seek Adonai of Armies. I myself am going.’

# Light shines in the darkness - Zechariah 8:20-23

And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek Adonai of Armies and to entreat him.” This is what the Adonai of Armies says: “In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of a Jewish man by the corner of his garment and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’ ”

# Exodus 19:8

- 8 All the people answered together and said,  
“All that Adonai has spoken we will do.”

And Moses reported the words of the people  
to Adonai.



# Exodus 19:9

9 And Adonai said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also put their trust in you forever"



# Exodus 19:11

- <sup>11</sup> and be ready for the third day. For on the third day Adonai will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

# “Third Day Theme” - Abraham

- “Take your son, your only son, whom you love...Isaac”
- Gen 22:3-4 “he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place”
- “Adonai will provide”
- Reaffirmation of the covenant

# “Third Day Theme” - Jonah

- Failure & a test
- “Death”
- “Revived” after 3 days
- Jonah 2 - a metaphorical message for all believers- Baptism

## Jonah 2

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to Adonai his God. He said: “In my distress I called to Adonai, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

## Jonah 2

I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Adonai my God, brought my life up from the pit.

## Jonah 2

“When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Adonai , and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from Adonai.’ ”

# “Third Day Theme” – Yeshua

- A testing for all
- Acts 10 - but God raised Yeshua on the third day and made him to appear...To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who trusts in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”



# Shavuot – God Gives

- Mattan Torah
  - Giving of the Torah
- After Yeshua, Mattan Ruach
  - Giving of the Spirit







Pesach and Shavuot - Season of  
Giving and Receiving

The Father descends

– Exodus 19

Yeshua raised up from the grave

– Matthew 28

Yeshua ascended to the Father

– Luke 24 & Acts 1

Holy Spirit descended  
upon the disciples

– Acts 2



# Decalogue

“The Ten Commandments”

Exodus 20:1-3 Before me - עַל-פָּנַי

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am Adonai your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.  
"You shall have no other gods before me.

Before me - עַל-פָּנַי

“the point is that everywhere is “al panay”, before God’s face, so that the commandment means that one simply cannot have any other gods. Monotheism has become so successful...that it is difficult now for us to recapture the original force of this commandment.”

Greek LXX πλὴν ἐμοῦ - “*except me*”

## Exodus 20:4

- “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

What kind of image could one make of God?

Paul to Timothy: “eternal, immortal, invisible”

Colossians 1:15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

All humans are God's image – his representatives –  
his priests

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation, God's special possession, that you  
may declare the praises of him who called you  
out of darkness into his wonderful light.



# Exodus 20:5

- 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them...

“Like most Jews of his day, Saul of Tarsus had long believed that the nations of the world had been enslaved by their own idols. They worshiped nongods, and in Jewish thought, rooted in the scriptures, those who worshiped idols became enslaved to them, trapped in a downward spiral of dehumanization.

And Paul believed that in his crucifixion, Yeshua of Nazareth had overcome the power of darkness. Something happened when Yeshua died as a result of which "the satan"-and any dark forces that might be loosely lumped together under such a label-no longer had any actual authority.

Paul's mission was not, then, simply about persuading people to believe in Yeshua, as though starting from a blank slate. It was about declaring to the non-Jewish nations that the door to their prison stood open and that they were free to leave. They had to turn around, away from the enslaving idols, to worship and serve the living God.”

*Paul: A Biography – NT Wright*

# Paul on the Areopagus – Acts 17

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

## Paul on the Areopagus – Acts 17

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

# Paul on the Areopagus – Acts 17

26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

## Paul on the Areopagus – Acts 17

29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising Yeshua from the dead.”

## Exodus 20:5-6

for I, Adonai your God, am a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

## Exodus 20:5-6

- ...visiting the *iniquities* of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but *showing* loyal love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.



“Jealous God”

• אֵל קַנָּא

- always in contexts where the promised loyalty of YHWH's people is questioned

The basis for this jealousy of YHWH is the expectation of undiluted loyalty specified by the first commandment. This reference to it in the explanatory expansion of the second commandment underscores both YHWH's demand to be worshiped...that any compromise of such worship leads inevitably to a divided or even a redirected loyalty...It is justified by the fact that it comes only upon those who, having promised to have no God but him, have gone back on that promise. Those who do so show that they "hate" him, that they hold him in contempt: upon them in result must come a deserved judgment, across four generations. The language of the covenantal threat may be present in these words; but even more, the insight that indifference to commitment is contagious, in a family or in a society.

*John I. Durham, Exodus, vol. 3, Word Biblical Commentary 287.*

Exodus 34:6-7 – How the Lord describes himself

“Adonai, Adonai, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, 7 keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”



# Exodus 20:7

- 7 “You shall not bear/carry the name of **Yahweh** your God in vain, for **Yahweh** will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

## Comparing Exodus 20:7 to 23:1

“You shall not carry the name of Adonai your God  
for misrepresentation”

לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁוְא

“You shall not carry a misrepresented report.”

לֹא תִשָּׂא שְׁמֵעַ שָׁוְא



“As his treasured possession, Israel’s vocation—the thing they were born to do—is to represent their God to the rest of humanity. They function in priestly ways, mediating between YHWH and everyone else. They are set apart for his service. We can see how this connects to the high priest. He is a visual model of the vocation of the entire nation. Just as the high priest represents YHWH to them, so they represent YHWH to the nations.

By looking at Aaron, every Israelite is reminded of their calling as a nation. Just as he is set apart for service (“holy”), so are they (“a holy nation”). At Sinai, YHWH claims this nation as his very own and releases them to live out their calling. That calling is to bear YHWH’s name among the nations, that is, to represent him well.”

*Carmen Imes – Bearing God’s Name: Why Sinai Still Matters*



# Exodus 28:29 – The High Priest

So Aaron shall bear/carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the Holy Place, as a memorial before Adonai continually.







## Exodus 28:36 – The High Priest's head gear

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“You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engravings of a signet, ‘Holy, belong to Yahweh.’



“The third commandment is directed not toward YHWH’s protection, but toward Israel’s. YHWH’s name, specifically the tetragrammaton but in principle all YHWH’s names and titles, must be honored, blessed, praised, celebrated, invoked, pronounced, and so shared. To treat YHWH’s name with disrespect is to treat his gift lightly, to underestimate his power, to scorn his Presence, and to misrepresent to the family of humankind his very nature as “The One Who Always Is.” So serious was such an abuse, and apparently also so widespread, that the third commandment was expanded at some point in its history by a warning. Any member of the covenant community who dishonors YHWH’s name, and so YHWH’s Presence, will not be left unpunished by YHWH.”

*John I. Durham, Exodus, vol. 3, Word Biblical Commentary 288.*

# Exodus 20:8

**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Adonai your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or **your** immigrant who is within your gates. For in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Adonai blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

# Exodus 20:12

- <sup>12</sup> Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that Adonai your God is giving you.

## Leviticus 20:9

- If there is anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall certainly be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and has brought his own death upon himself.

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

# Matthew 5

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with covetness/lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna.

“Because of the importance of obeying God’s standard of righteousness, radical action should be taken to avoid the cause of the temptation. The discipleship of the kingdom sometimes requires drastic measures. The literal plucking out of an eye or cutting off of a hand, however, will not at all necessarily rid one of the problem. The culprit lies elsewhere, in the heart, the inner person. This is the language of hyperbole used to make a significant point”

*Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1–13, vol. 33A, Word Biblical Commentary 121.*



# How far are you willing to go for the Kingdom?

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself  
and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever  
would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his  
life for my sake will find it.

Exodus 20:15

You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:16

You shall not testify as a lying witness against  
your neighbor.

## Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

# Exodus 20:18-21

Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” 20 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Are you willing to hear the  
voice of God?

Read his Word, pray, earnestly seek him

Jeremiah 29: 13 – “You will seek me and find me  
when you seek me with all your heart.”