

Exodus Chapters 17 & 18 -- John Karmelich

1. When you come back from a vacation, and someone says, "how was the trip?", do you give that person a moment-by-moment description or "just the highlights"?
 - a) The answer of course, is the highlights.
 - b) That is what we have in Exodus Chapters 15 through 18.
 - c) This is a big "camping" trip for the Israelites.
 - d) Moses does not record every detail. We don't get all the details of this adventure, just the things God wants us to learn during this time.
 - e) The focus is on five specific events (not including the praise song) between the Parting of the Red Sea and reaching Mt. Sinai where they receive the 10 commandments
2. Before we get into all the details about the events in Chapters 17 & 18, I wanted to step back and look at the big picture. What one sees, more than anything else is *preservation*. Five significant lessons take place to teach Moses, the people *and us* how God preserves them and us through good and bad times, as we walk through our lives.
 - a) First in Chapter 15 had the "Wilderness of Sur", where the people were running out of Water. There was water, but it was bitter. God *persevered* the Israelites by sticking a tree in the water to make it sweet. This sounds strange to us and is obviously a miracle. It is a "typology" of the Cross being applied to our life for preservation.
 - b) Second, the people were getting hungry. God sent down the "manna" from heaven to *preserve* their hunger. Jesus refers to himself as the "true bread" from heaven sent down for *our* preservation.
 - c) Tonight we have the people *persevered* from thirst again. This time Moses strikes a rock and water comes out! Obviously, this is a miracle, but it was also designed to teach the Israelites (and us) additional lessons about God.
 - d) Fourth, we will see the people *persevered* from defeat. The Israelites get their first "battle" today. Instead of Moses leading the charge, he sends an assistant named Joshua to lead the battle. Moses, along with his brother Aaron and a guy named Hur go up to pray during the battle. The *outcome*, as recorded is determined by their prayer.
 - e) Finally, (this lesson) we have the people *preserved* from "chaos". Moses is re-united with his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro, who is not an Israelite comes back with Moses' wife and hears about all these adventures. Jethro then gives Moses a lesson in delegating authority so that he is not overworked.
 - f) Last week, we talked about a lot of the details of the first two *preservations*. Tonight we are going to cover the last three.
 - g) If you get *nothing* else out of this lesson, know for certain that if you have put your trust in Jesus, God will *preserve* you through all situations.
 - i) There is no desert hot enough, dry enough or tough enough that God won't take care of you *through* that situation.
 - ii) These are the lessons God is trying to get across to you & me!
3. Reading through these 4 chapters, I kept thinking about the whole experience from the point of view of "your average Israelite" wandering through the desert.
 - a) What occurred to me is that you were watching a bunch of "visual miracles".
 - i) It's kind of like the joke "Why should I read the book when I can see the movie and be done in two hours". The same thing is happening to the Israelites.
 - a) They *see* Moses putting a tree in the water to make it good.
 - b) They *see* the manna coming down from heaven today.
 - c) Tonight they will *see* Moses striking a rock making water come out!

- d) Tonight they will *see* Moses praying toward heaven while the young men fight a battle against the Amalakites (and the winner is determined by Moses ability to pray).
 - e) And finally, at a camp sight, they will *see* a long line of people waiting to ask Moses a question, and the *see* Jethro teach Moses to delegate authority to responsible men.
- ii) Now, the Israelites may not have gotten all the prophetic implications of Jesus in these pictures, but they did get the idea that God was preserving them!
 - a) He or she was seeing “visual messages” designed to teach them.
- 4. OK, time for tonight’s text...Exodus, Chapter 17, Verse 1: The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.
 - a) We last left the Israelites leaving the Wilderness (or Desert) of “Sin”. This is where the manna fell. The word “sin” is a pun here. There was a literal place called Sin and a “pun” to the fact the Israelites sin.
 - b) Second notice the reference of “traveling from place to place”. This verifies that we don’t get every pit-stop recorded in the text. Just the ones God wants us to see.
 - c) Notice that the Israelites were going from place to place as the LORD commanded.
 - i) Was God aware there was going to be no water in this place? Of course.
 - ii) Does that mean God leads us to difficult places in order to test us? Of course.
- 5. Verse 2: So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" 17:3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"
 - a) Just like the last time, the Israelites were suffering, they looked to the nearest scapegoat to complain – Moses. God specifically sent the people here to *test* them, to see if they would turn to God *first*.
 - b) “When we have a problem, instead of thinking "I'm in a desert; it's not surprising there isn't much water here. I need to look to God to meet this need," we do what Israel did: we look for someone to blame. But that solved nothing!” David Guzik
- 6. 17:4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." 17:5 The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.
 - a) The *moment* Moses turns to God, God has an answer.
 - b) God commands Moses to take some elders with him & the “ol’-Nile-separating-plague-inducing-staff”.
 - i) This lesson is specifically *for* the Israelite people. God wanted to show *them* who God appointed the leader *and* the fact that God is in control.
 - a) By taking the “elders” the word would be passed through the camp of Moses’ up-coming miracle. They would see how God picked Moses.
 - b) By taking “the staff” was a visual reminder to Moses” of the authority *given* to Moses to lead the people.
 - c) The application to us, of course, is that we complain and grumble like the Israelites simply because we are looking *out* at our problems and not *up* to God.
- 7. Verse 6: 17:6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.
 - a) What a strange thing. Not “I will pray to God and make it rain in buckets”. Not “lets move on, there is water around the bend”, but I will strike this rock and water will come out.

- b) Couldn't God have turned something else in water & still be considered an acceptable miracle from God? Why the Rock?
 - c) Well, Paul has that answer for us: "They were all baptized into Moses (meaning identified with Moses) in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food (the manna) and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:2-4 NIV)
 - i) Paul himself states that "The Rock" is a type of Jesus Christ.
 - ii) If you have a Bible Concordance (a book with all the words in alphabetical order and a list of every place that word exists) or a Bible-software program, do a study sometime of the word "Rock" in the Old Testament. The "typology" of Jesus as a rock is consistent throughout the book. There are even Jewish teachers who will agree that the "rock" is a type of the Messiah.
 - d) The really neat thing of course is the fact the rock had to be struck (or smitten depending upon your translation). Jesus had to be struck, i.e. crucified in order for him to be "any good" for us!
 - i) I can't pass this verse without bringing up one of my favorite topics:
 - a) In Numbers, Chap. 20, the Israelites were thirsty again. Again, the people were grumbling. God instructs Moses in Verse 8 to *speak* to the rock, as opposed to striking it, and it will bring forth water. Moses disobeys and strikes the rock (Verse 11). As punishment, Moses was personally prevented from entering the Promised Land. So why was God so harsh on Moses for this one incident?
 - b) The answer is Moses blew the model. Jesus is to be struck once and only once for our sins. He didn't have to die on the cross over & over again. Once stricken, God just wants us to *speak* to our Rock, Jesus Christ with our petitions, not strike it/him again. (Isn't that neat?!)
 - e) I have to pass on a great quote on this topic about "striking the rock: "You can test it and analyze it, but you cannot drink it. Jesus is a Rock, but His beautiful life & durability will not save you. His teachings will not redeem your soul. ...The application of the principles taught by the Lord Jesus may polish you a little, but He is still the Rock against which you can dash your foot. Only when the rock was smitten did it bring forth life-giving waters." J. Vernon McGee.
8. Exodus 17:7 And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"
- a) "Massah" means "burden". "Meribah" means "quarreling"
 - b) "What made this incident so important to God? Because they tempted the Lord, saying "Is the Lord among us or not? In a time of difficulty, they doubted the living presence and care of God among them." David Guzik.
9. Now we jump into a whole new adventure, at the same location. 17:8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.
- a) Here we get introduced to a race/tribe of people called the Amalekites
 - b) The Amalekites were a "distant" cousin of the Israelites. Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau. Therefore, the Amalekites were the tribe whose founder was Amalek.
 - i) Remember Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Issac. The first was born through a concubine and the 2nd through his wife Sarah. One of Issac's sons was Esau. The Israelites all came from the descendants of Esau's brother Jacob.
 - ii) Jacob and Esau lived roughly 400 years prior to these events in Chapter 17. The point is the descendants of Jacob (Israelites) and the descendants of Esau's son Amalek (the Amalekites) were distant cousins.

- iii) The reason I bring this up is that although the Amalekites was a literal tribe, in “typology” they represent, the old “flesh” or old “sinful” life. This will become clearer as we read further.
 - c) Why did the Amalekites attack the Israelites?
 - i) Well, from a practical sense, they were wandering through the desert with millions of dollars worth of gold & silver, they were getting free food daily (manna), and now God was providing them water by striking the rock.
 - a) As thieves go, they had good motivation! ☺
 - ii) In a spiritual sense, the “attack” on our new Christian life never begins until after we are born-again. This is the “war” in our lives between our new-nature in Christ, and our old sinful nature.
 - iii) When we become a Christian, God does not take away our old nature all at once. It would be too much for us to change *that much* at once.
 - iv) Could you imagine if God told you *all* the things in your life that he wants you to change? If you’ve been a Christian a long time, look back at all your changes. Do you think you could have done that all at once? God changes us at a rate *we can handle*. But our old nature does not want to die off. It fights back. That is what is represented here.
 - v) Paul puts it this way (from the Living Bible): “For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has his way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures. (Galatians 5:17)
 - d) Before we move on, there is another mention of this same battle in Deuteronomy 25: This is near the end of Moses’ life where is recalling the same event:
 - i) Moses speaking: “Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God.” (Deut. 25:17-18 NIV)
 - a) Notice it says The Amalekites “cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God” “cut off” means killed”
 - b) The flesh wins the battle when you are not focusing on God.
10. Back to Exodus 17:9: Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."
- a) This is the first mention of Joshua. Joshua (whose name means God is Salvation) became the next-appointed leader after Moses. The name Jesus is a Greek derivative of the name Joshua.
 - i) Why didn't Moses go in the battle himself? The answer is the *real* battle did not take place in the valley with the Amalekites, but up on the hill. Moses lead the people by prayer as we shall see further.
11. 17:10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. 17:11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. 17:12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up--one on one side, one on the other--so that his hands remained steady till sunset. 17:13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.
- a) The battle was won. Not by Joshua's clever battle tactics. Not by Israelites superior military technology, not even by superior physical strength. Notice Verse 11 again: “As long as Moses held up his hands the Israelites were winning.”

- i) The battle against the flesh is never won by self-discipline. You can't overcome a drinking problem, an anger problem, or another sin by *trying harder*. If you do, you're just making a "little god" out of self-discipline. The battle belongs to God. We win the war against our old sinful nature by prayer. It is only by having the Spirit of God work *through* us that we can live the Christian life.
- ii) I know what a lot of you are thinking. "I've prayed and prayed and prayed about it, but it's still there. I just can't this problem go away".
 - a) I don't have all the answers for these types of problems. The first thing to remember is that *God* is in charge, not you. It is God who decides when it is time to end the problem.
 - b) A key prayer is one of "surrender". Something like this. "God, I need help in this situation, and I can't make it go away on my own. Help me to change, and to accept the problem and know that you are working on the problem and have a great plan for my life.
 - (1) For difficult problems, consider an accountability/support group. Find others who can pray with you & for you. People you can meet with on a regular basis.
 - c) The last thing of course is not to sit around, mope about your problem and accept it. You can't get away with "Well, this is just the way I am, I can't help it". Yes, you can. Remember this is warfare! Keep praying about it. Keep asking God to enlighten you. God wants to *lead* you to a solution. He can't lead you if you are just sitting there!
 - d) OK, off my soapbox, back to the text...☺
- b) OK, we understand Moses. He led the prayer. Why are Aaron and Hur mentioned?
 - i) These guys were sent to "support" Moses.
 - a) Sometimes prayer is an individual effort. Sometimes God wants group support. Remember Jesus' words:
 - (1) "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20 NIV)
 - (2) This is why I mentioned the accountability/support group. It is amazing the difference it makes overcoming sin when others, as well as yourself, is praying for something.
 - ii) There is also an interesting "typology" laid out here.
 - a) Aaron, later becomes the first high priest
 - (1) However, prayer alone may not be enough. One also needs the Holy Spirit for enlightenment of a situation.
 - (2) "Hur" means "light". Many see this as a type of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) With this prayer-team in place, how were the Amalekites defeated?
 - (1) By the "sword" of Joshua. Paul tells us what the sword means: "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17b NIV).
 - (a) The "sword" in the Bible refers to the Word of God.
 - (2) Also remember Jesus' words in Revelation: "Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. 2:16 NIV *emphasis added*.)

12. Back to the text: 17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 17:15 Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. 17:16 He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."
- a) It sounds like there is a contradiction between verse 14 & verse 16:
 - i) Verse 14 say "I (God) will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven
 - ii) Verse 16 says, "The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."
 - iii) How can God be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation and at the same time "wipe them out"? Isn't he God? Can't God just wipe out Amalek with one big swoosh?
 - a) The answer for both is true. When God says he will blot out the memory of Amalek, he is saying:
 - (1) In the literal sense, their race will be blotted out. How many Amalekites have you met today?
 - (2) God is leaving it up to the Israelites to wipe them out (although God knew they ultimately would, thus the prediction).
 - b) In these verses, it becomes clearer that God is not just speaking of the literal Amalekites. It is a reference to our old sinful nature.
 - c) God is declaring war on our old sinful nature. He first did this in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:14-15).
 - (1) It is not until we die, that our old sinful nature dies, and our new nature stands alone with Christ Jesus. This is what God meant "spiritually" by the ultimate destruction of the Amalekites.
 - (2) The Bible teaches that one day the whole earth will be destroyed and God will create a new one (Isaiah 66:22, 2 Peter 3:13, Rev. 21:1) Why? Because this one is *permanently* cursed by sin. God *has* to destroy it to elevate sin.
 - b) So why does God say he will have war with Amalek from "generation to generation"?
 - i) It is for the same reason the Bible never says it will "fix" our heart. It says many times God will give us a "new" heart. Our old nature still exists.
 - a) Until we get to heaven, we still have to wrestle with our old sinful nature. God designed us this way as to keep our focus on Him. Our old sinful nature is God's way of reminding us how much we have to depend upon him daily to preserve our lives.
 - c) Remember earlier I quoted from Deuteronomy 25, when Moses was recalling the battle of the Amalekites (how the weak were killed). Moses had one more verse on this topic:
 - i) When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget! (Deut. 25:19 NIV)
 - a) Moses is reminding them and us that the war against the flesh is a life-long war. Even after we have our new life as Christians ("enter the land"), our battle is against the flesh. Our "weapons" is not our own flesh (i.e. self-discipline), but prayer, Christian support (remember Aaron and Hur), the Holy Spirit, the "Sword of Joshua" which is the word of God.

13. On to the next adventure: 18:1 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 18:2 After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her 18:3 and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become an alien in a foreign land"; 18:4 and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh." 18:5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God.
- a) This story focuses on Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses.
 - b) We haven't read of Jethro since Chapter 4. For those of you who haven't been in the study since the beginning here's a quick recap: When Moses was Pharaoh-to-be he killed an Egyptian due to his loyalty to the Hebrew people. Moses fled in the desert and was taken in by a man named Jethro. Jethro became his employer and friend for 40 years. Jethro had 7 daughters, the oldest of which became Moses' wife. We also read in Chapter 4 that Moses' wife objected to circumcising Moses' son. Speculation is that Moses' wife didn't want the boy to be circumcised and fought it until God put them under pressure. Now, post-Exodus, its time for a family reunion.
 - c) This story also focuses on a family reunion. God did not have Moses' wife and two sons go through the whole plague ordeal with them.
 - i) Since the reason is not stated why she didn't tag along, again, it's only speculation. I lean toward the opinion that Moses' wife was not part of the direct descendants of Jacob (i.e. the 12 tribes), and therefore could not be a part of it.
 - ii) Remember as we read, Exodus, we are now "after-the-Exodus". Once we become saved, God begins working on our lives. God is busy clearing up our past. Moses "past" is his wife and their/her family.
14. 18:6 Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."
- a) As you read this text, you'll notice the constant repetition of "father-in-law". It is used 13 times in this chapter.
 - i) After reading a lot of commentaries, no one really directly commented on this.
 - ii) I suspect the reason is that God wanted to show the focus on Jethro being an "outsider", a gentile, and not part of the 12 tribes of Israel as Moses was.
 - iii) After careful study, I am also of the opinion the heavy emphasis on "father-in-law" is because Jethro was not intimidated by Moses' leadership.
 - a) Think of being the president of a large corporation. Your employees are too nervous to say anything to your face. Sometimes it takes an outside consultant, or a relative to be able to tell you the honest-truth on a topic. This is a reason why God brought Jethro back in Moses' life.
15. 18:7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. 18:8 Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them. 18:9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians.
- a) I find it strange that the focus is on Moses and Jethro. No comments on Moses & his wife. Not a touch of romance in this passage of the great reunion. Nada. It makes me wonder (again speculation) how much Moses really cared for her, as opposed for Moses' love for his people.

- i) Remember that Moses sent his wife back to Jethro prior to going back to Egypt.
 - a) Moses' two sons are mentioned in 1st Chronicles 24, but not much is said about them.
 - b) The focus of the story is on Jethro and Moses. I can't add or take away from what is in the text or the rest of the Bible. Since nothing more is said of Moses' relationship with his wife, I am just speculating.
 - (1) The "hints" given back in Chapter 4 is that Moses' wife objected to the kids being circumcised. They may have had a difficult relationship because she objected to his religion.
 - b) The positive part of this text is that Moses became a *witness* to Jethro. Moses told of all the great things God did to his life and to his people.
 - i) One of the greatest things you can do as a Christian is simply tell people how God *changed* your life. People can argue all day about the Bible, but they can't deny your own testimony.
 - a) Many a testimony as lead people to God, as we read on further....
- 16. Jethro speaking: 18:10 He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. 18:11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." 18:12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.
 - a) At this point, I believe Jethro was a saved man. He acknowledged the LORD as the God. From this point forward, Jethro went through life having faith in God.
 - b) Notice two more things about Jethro:
 - i) First, Jethro made a burnt offering & sacrifices to God (Verse 12)
 - a) I've always been a believer that if you have faith in God, you *show* it. Christianity is "putting your money where your mouth is". Becoming a Christian isn't just saying you believe in God, it is taking *action*. Walking forward in faith and letting God change your life.
 - b) The "burnt" offering, as we'll read later, is a reference to giving ones *all* to God. The entire sacrifice is burned in the fire.
 - ii) Second, Verse 12 it says the elders ate bread with Jethro in the presence of God.
 - a) This is a reference to "fellowship", or communion.
 - b) We as 20th century people, picture eating with napkins, plates, forks & knives. Back then, eating together, meant dipping your bread in the same bowls & sharing germs. You "became one" with someone by eating with them. (This puts a new light on the ritual of communion!)
- 17. 18:13 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. 18:14 When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" 18:15 Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. 18:16 Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws." 18:17 Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. 18:18 You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.
 - a) Before I go further, the commentators are very divided on this passage. Some of the people I quote regularly say this was good advice, others say it was bad advice. After praying hard about this, & consulting some mentors, I decided to lay out both arguments, and let you make your own conclusions.

- b) First, I'll lay out the whole argument why this was Godly advice. I'll give the "bad advice" opinion later. The next section is all the "positive aspect's of Jethro's advice.
- c) In the business world, there is an expression that sometimes it takes an outside consultant to see what is wrong with the business.
 - i) Often, the president of the company is the last to know of the problems.
 - ii) Outside consultants are often used in this business, not necessarily because they are smarter, but sometimes one needs a fresh perspective on a problem. As the creative types say today "Think outside the box".
 - iii) As I mentioned earlier, there may also have been the "intimidation" factor. Remember when Moses struck the rock to bring out water, God led the elders along with Moses to show the people that Moses was the chosen leader.
 - a) The problem of "long-lines to see Moses" may have been an obvious problem, but nobody dared question Moses on his leadership style.
 - b) Moses was accustomed to leading alone, or the most, have his brother Aaron as his spokesman.
 - c) Moses took care of sheep for the last 40 years. Not a lot of delegation!
 - d) He personally interceded with God.
 - e) Moses did have Joshua lead the battle in the last chapter. However, Moses himself took the lead role in intercessory prayer.
 - iv) Jethro was the ideal person to give Moses advice. Moses worked for the man for 40 years. They probably had a good working relationship. Jethro was a Median priest. Jethro *mentored* him. This was a person Moses was willing to listen to for advice.
 - a) God will do that for us to. When he wants to get a message through to us, he will often bring in *just the right person* to deliver that message.

18. Back to Jethro: 18:19 Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 18:20 Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. 18:21 But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 18:22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 18:23 If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

- a) In the opening of this lesson, we talked about the lessons God had for his people as they wandered through the desert. The one summary I see from all these lessons is about *preservation*, and keeping our focus on God.
- b) I've read where many people title this section "God's preservation through chaos"
 - i) Moses led 2-3 million people. Can you imagine the daily line up of people waiting to ask Moses a question or solve a dispute?
 - ii) And what was God trying to teach Moses (and us)?
 - a) Delegation!
 - b) The Christian life is not meant to be fought alone. This is why we are refereed to as "the body of Christ". We were designed to work as a unit.
 - c) "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Romans 12:5 NIV)

- c) Probably the best line of the whole Jethro-speech is his specific instructions for raising Godly leaders:
 - i) 1. Teach them God's decrees and laws (verse 20). As a leader, it is important to show those under *what* it is for them to learn
 - ii) 2. Show them the way to live (verse 20). Lead by example. People won't take you seriously if you don't practice what you preach.
 - iii) 3. Select men who fear God.
 - iv) 4. Trustworthy. Men of good reputation.
 - v) 5. Those who hate dishonest gain.
 - a) Not only those who are honest, but have a *passion* for honesty! They must *hate* dishonest gain.
- d) For all you Bible students, there are similar passages in the New Testament.
 - i) In Acts Chapter 6, the apostles appoint deacons over the church so they could focus their ministry on prayer and preaching the word.
 - ii) 1st Timothy Chapter 3 is another list of qualifications when one wants to serve in a church.
 - iii) Remember that there are no great roles nor small roles in a church. In God's eye, the role of the lowest servant is as high as the greatest pastor or evangelist. In no place is any part of the "body of Christ" considered superior to another. God calls each to a different role. The important thing is that we are *faithful* in what God calls us to do!
- e) When the text says "officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens", this means a chain of command. Similar to a military or our judicial system. This way one has the right to appeal.
- f) I promised you earlier "the anti-Jethro arguments". Commentators such as Arthur Pink, & J. Vernon McGee (and some Jewish commentaries I read) argue that this was bad advice. Here are the reasons.
 - i) The main reason is that Moses did not consult God for advice, just Jethro.
 - ii) The emphasis that Jethro was Moses father-in-law (again mentioned 12 times in one chapter) is God indicating that Jethro was a "gentile", an outsider.
 - iii) Jethro's advice is practical, but it may not have been what God wanted Moses to do. If God wanted Moses to "ease his burden", God would have directly provided the means to do so.
 - iv) The Jewish commentators focus on the fact that this advice prevented people direct access to the greatest man ever raised by God, Moses. It prevented giving people a chance to directly ask someone like Moses a question. The Christian "equivalent" is that Moses is a type of intercessor between God & Man, just as Jesus was. God wants us to come directly to Him, not through a chain of command of lower priests and judges.
- g) In conclusion, I find the *majority* of commentators take Jethro's advice as positive. Both sides have some good arguments. Both Christian and Jewish commentators have majority and minority opinions. As always, read the text for yourself and let the Spirit guide you to your own conclusion!

19. Back to the text. 18:24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 18:25 He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 18:26 They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. 18:27 Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.
- a) It is one thing to hear good advice. It is another to act it out. When you read the Bible, you will often see passages that seem repetitive. There will be a verse of God giving a commandment, and later, a similar verse of the people obeying that commandment.
 - i) God loves when we *act* on his Word. Not just reading it. This is what God is trying to teach us from the “repetition of thought” passages.
20. Last thing. (I just passed my self-imposed 10-page limit so I’ll make it brief.)
- a) Some people see a “typology progression” in these sets of miracles.
 - i) The “manna” represents Jesus giving his body for us, as in the Last Supper and his discussion of “I am the bread from heaven.
 - ii) Next comes the rock being “smitten”. This is Jesus dying for us on the cross.
 - iii) Next comes Jethro with Moses wife & kids. Some see this as a typology of Jews and Gentiles, being brought in “as one” in the millennium. Some commentators go into great details on this last one.
 - b) As much as I am a typology “nut”, this one may be stretching it. Many “typologies” are confirmed in the New Testament as Jesus or one of the apostles confirms it. One should be leery of typologies not confirmed in the New Testament. Some fit the big picture better than others. For further reading on specific topic, I recommend Arthur Pink’s book “Gleanings in Exodus”.
21. Let’s Pray. Father, we thank you for these lessons about spiritual warfare, our life-long battles against the flesh, and Godly council. Illuminate our minds and our hearts over these passages. Thank you for the lessons over the past few weeks on preservation. We know father, that you never leave us nor forsake us, no matter what our present situation is. Although we don’t always understand what we are going through, we know that you are there, guiding us. Keep us focused on you, and not our situation. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.