

## Moses – part 17

*Israel prepares to meet the Lord*

by Victor Torres

We have learned that it is good to help each other in everything that we do. Moses listened to his father-in-law Jethro's wise advice to appoint leaders to help him judge matters within the camp of Israel. This way he was able to serve the people much better than when he was doing the judging alone.

Exo 18:14 (CEV) Jethro saw how much Moses had to do for the people, and he asked, "Why are you the only judge? Why do you let these people crowd around you from morning till evening?"

Exo 18:15 Moses answered, "Because they come here to find out what God wants them to do.

Exo 18:16 They bring their complaints to me, and I make decisions on the basis of God's laws."

Exo 18:17 Jethro replied: **That isn't the best way to do it.**

Exo 18:18 You and the people who come to you will soon be worn out. **The job is too much for one person; you can't do it alone.**

In a godly household, we should see everyone helping in whatever task is at hand. Children who help in household chores are a great blessing to their parents.

In the house of God, the Lord has appointed elders to oversee His flock and He has taught these elders to appoint other leaders to set things in good order.

Here's our Lord Himself appointing men to spread His message:

Mar 6:7 (CEV) Then he called **together his twelve apostles and sent them out two by two** with power over evil spirits.

Luk 10:1 (CEV) Later the Lord chose **seventy-two other followers and sent them out two by two** to every town and village where he was about to go.

Luk 10:2 He said to them: A large crop is in the fields, but there are only a few workers. Ask the Lord in charge of the harvest to send out workers to bring it in.

Here's the apostle Paul following our Lord's example by charging Titus to appoint church leaders.

Tit 1:4 (CEV) Titus, because of our faith, you are like a son to me. I pray that God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior will be kind to you and will bless you with peace!

Tit 1:5 I left you in Crete to do what had been left undone **and to appoint leaders for the churches in each town.** As I told you,

Tit 1:6 **they must have a good reputation** and be faithful in marriage. Their children must be followers of the Lord and not have a reputation for being wild and disobedient.

Tit 1:7 **Church officials are in charge of God's work,** and so they must also have a good reputation. They must not be bossy, quick-tempered, heavy drinkers, bullies, or dishonest in business.

Besides having a good reputation themselves, why must a church leader have children with good behavior? Because it means that this leader is able to manage his own household. If a person is not able to manage his own household, he cannot be expected to manage the household of God.

Jethro included in his advice what kind of leaders Moses should appoint:

Exo 18:21 (CEV) **You will need to appoint some competent [capable/skillful] leaders who respect God and are trustworthy and honest.** Then put them over groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand.

Exo 18:22 These judges can handle the ordinary cases and bring the more difficult ones to you. Having them to share the load will make your work easier.

Exo 18:23 This is the way God wants it done. You won't be under nearly as much stress, and everyone else will return home feeling satisfied.

This advice will not only benefit Moses, but it will be good for everyone seeking godly advice.

Exo 18:24 (CEV) Moses followed Jethro's advice.

Exo 18:25 He chose some competent leaders from every tribe in Israel and put them over groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand.

Exo 18:26 They served as judges, deciding the easy cases themselves, but bringing the more difficult ones to Moses.

Moses followed his father-in-law's wise advice and its benefit to him is huge. We should be like Moses and listen to our parents' advice. They have a wealth of experience and wisdom that they will be so happy to share with you if you only ask them.

When we think that we are too old or too wise to ask for advice, it is our pride talking. If we are too proud to listen to advice, we will definitely fail.

Pro 15:22 (KJV) Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Pro 15:22 (ESV) Without counsel plans fail, **but with many advisers they succeed.**

If we follow our parents' advice, we will benefit like Moses did.

Let's continue the story:

Exo 19:1 – 2 (CEV) The Israelites left Rephidim. Then two months after leaving Egypt, they arrived at the desert near Mount Sinai, where they set up camp at the foot of the mountain.

Exo 19:3 Moses went up the mountain to meet with the LORD God, who told him to say to the people:

Exo 19:4 You saw what I did in Egypt, and you know how I brought you here to me, just as a mighty eagle carries its young.

Exo 19:5 **Now if you will faithfully obey me**, you will be my very own people. **The whole world is mine,**

Exo 19:6 **but you will be my holy nation and serve me as priests.** Moses, that is what you must tell the Israelites.

The Lord always demands obedience from His people. He does not want just occasional obedience, but consistent and faithful obedience. Your parents would not be happy with you if you obey them only sometimes and disobey them most of the time.

As we learned before, whatever happened to Israel thousands of years ago, is actually pointing to what will happen to God's elect today. Today, God has chosen a group of people to serve as His holy nation, as His priests or teachers of His words.

Exo 19:7 (CEV) After Moses went back, he reported to the leaders what the LORD had said,

Exo 19:8 and they promised, "We will do everything the LORD has commanded." So Moses told the LORD about this.

Exo 19:9 The LORD said to Moses, "I will come to you in a thick cloud and let the people hear me speak to you. Then they will always trust you." Again Moses reported to the people what the LORD had told him.

The Lord comes in a thick cloud which we have learned is a symbol of God's elect.

Exo 19:10 (GNB) and the LORD said to him, "Go to the people and tell them to spend today and tomorrow purifying themselves for worship. They must wash their clothes

Exo 19:11 and be ready the day after tomorrow. On that day I will come down on Mount Sinai, where all the people can see me.

Why did the Lord tell Israel to wash their clothes as part of getting themselves ready to see Him? Because clean clothes means clean living in the Bible. We have seen this symbol when we studied the story of Jacob. Here's what Jacob told his household when he told them to get rid of their foreign gods:

Gen 35:2 (CEV) Jacob said to his family and to everyone else who was traveling with him: Get rid of your foreign gods! **Then make yourselves acceptable to worship God and put on clean clothes.**

The Lord also told Israel that He will come on the third day. We learned that the number three is a symbol of a process. Our change from the old man into the new man is a long, painful process. It doesn't happen instantly. Think of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. It takes time for this change to happen.

Exo 19:12 (CEV) Warn the people that they are forbidden to touch any part of the mountain. Anyone who does will be put to death,

Exo 19:13 either with stones or arrows, and no one must touch the body of a person killed in this way. Even an animal that touches this mountain must be put to death. **You may go up the mountain only after a signal is given on the trumpet.**

Why is Israel forbidden to go up or touch the mountain before the signal of the trumpet comes? We see a new symbol here. When we go down further in the history of Israel, we will notice that it is only a certain group of people who can use the trumpets.

Num 10:1 (CEV) The LORD told Moses:

Num 10:2 Have someone make two trumpets out of hammered silver. These will be used to call the people together and to give the signal for moving your camp.

Num 10:3 If both trumpets are blown, everyone is to meet with you at the entrance to the sacred tent.

Num 10:4 But if just one is blown, only the twelve tribal leaders need to come together.

Num 10:5 – 6 Give a signal on a trumpet when it is time to break camp. The first blast will be the signal for the tribes camped on the east side, and the second blast will be the signal for those on the south.

Num 10:7 But when you want everyone to come together, sound a different signal on the trumpet.

**Num 10:8 The priests of Aaron's family will be the ones to blow the trumpets, and this law will never change.**

Only the priests from Aaron's family can blow the trumpets. Why do these priests blow the trumpets? To give people directions on what to do. They sound the trumpets to call the people together. They sound the trumpets when it is time to break camp. They sound the trumpets when they are going into battle.

If we tie this in with the story of Moses, the people needs guidance from the priests in order to climb God's holy mountain. How do we apply this to our life today? We seek guidance from the priests of God, the people who consists the body of Christ.

Here are the different terms that we have seen refer to the elect:

Priests

Cloud

Holy Nation

Angels (remember Jacob's vision of a ladder that reaches to the heavens and angels are going up and down on it)

Let's read what happened next, and Lord willing, we will discuss these verses in our next study:

Exo 19:14 (ESV) So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments.

Exo 19:15 And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman."

Exo 19:16 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Exo 19:17 Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

Exo 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

Exo 19:19 And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

Exo 19:20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Exo 19:21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish.

Exo 19:22 Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."

Exo 19:23 And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, 'Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.'"

Exo 19:24 And the LORD said to him, "Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them."

Exo 19:25 So Moses went down to the people and told them.