

April 18-20, 2022

## Exodus 18-20

“ALL THAT THE LORD HATH SPOKEN WE WILL DO”

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**Summary:** *Exodus 18. Jethro comes to Moses bringing Moses' wife and sons and offers sacrifices to the Lord—Moses sits in the judgment seat and hears all cases—Jethro counsels Moses to teach the law, to appoint lesser judges, and to delegate power to them.*

*Exodus 19. The Lord covenants to make Israel a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation—The people sanctify themselves—The Lord appears on Sinai amid fire, smoke, and earthquakes.*

*Exodus 20. The Lord reveals the Ten Commandments—Israel is to bear witness that the Lord has spoken from heaven—The children of Israel are forbidden to make gods of silver or gold—They are to make altars of unburnt stones and sacrifice to the Lord thereon.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### Who is Jethro and of what people is he, and who are his descendants?

Through modern day revelation we learn that Moses received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Jethro. He taught and ordained Moses. “And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro;” (**Doctrine & Covenants 84:6-7**) In that light, we can presume what “a Priest of Midian” might have meant. He is mentioned three times in the *Torah* (first five Bible books), once in the *Neviim* (the Prophets) then by the Jews in numerous rabbinic writings. After serving in Jethro's house and marrying one of his daughters (Zipporah) Moses was taught by Jethro to implement a judicial system so that he wouldn't have to address all the nation's needs on his own. (**Exodus 18:13-27**) Jethro is spoken of again in the book of Judges, when his descendants lived in the land of Israel. (**Judges 1:16**) Later, we'll review a famous story of a judge in Israel, Deborah, conquering the Canaanites. Her military leader, Barak ('lightning' in Hebrew), the military leader of Israel, was hesitant to follow her prophetic instruction to engage

the enemy. He acquiesced after she agreed to accompany him (There may be fewer wars if presidents and prime ministers would accompany their young soldiers to battle). The key to the battle was a likely descendant of Jethro. There were other peoples who were aware of and agreeable to Israel's God-given inheritance in the land. The Kenites seemed to have been one of those peoples. Modern archaeology has discovered Kenite temples that are identical to Israelite temples. Heber, whose wife was Jael, was of the Kenite people, apparently a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. “Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, slew the Canaanite general Sisera in the war of Deborah and Barak against the Canaanite king Jabin of Hazor (**Judges 4-5**). Sisera had fled to Jael's tent after the rout of his army by the Israelites; she offered him comfort and hospitality but killed him while he slept, using a hammer and a tent pin rather than a sword, in accordance with the biblical command prohibiting the use of weapons by women (**Deuteronomy 22:5**). The murder thus fulfilled Deborah's prophecy to Barak that God would “sell Sisera into the hand of a woman” (**Judges 4:9**). Heber was descended from Jethro,

the father-in-law of Moses; his wife's slaying of Sisera apparently signified a switch of loyalties back to Israel on the part of his clan, which had previously been allied to Israel's enemy Jabin."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How can I sanctify myself?**

The famous Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994) taught that is the duty of the Children of Israel to sanctify and transform their way of life, making it into a realm for the presence of the Lord. The first step in this process was the biblical command which reveals to us the power to sanctify "time." That includes Sabbaths, Holy convocations (Holy Days). This was the prelude to the Exodus, which would lead to the conquest of the Holy Land, expressing the sanctification of "place." That would include our homes, meeting places, temples, holy cities (Jerusalem). This expresses the full role of the Jewish people: to bring holiness and light to the world in all its aspects, including both space and time. ([See Lubavitcher Rebbe's Likkutei Sichot vol. 26 p.59](#)) The early Apostles taught, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification . . ." ([1 Thessalonians 4:1-3](#)) Samuel the prophet had Jesse's family sanctify themselves before a sacrificial offering and in preparation to ordain a new King of Israel. ([1 Samuel 16:5](#))

### **How did the ten commandments turn out to be a compromise?**

One of my boys as a youngster suggested that "Moses might have been the most wicked man in the Bible, after all, he broke all the commandments at once!" What he broke was the "Higher Law" determined by the spirit, instead he had to

compromise and present a set of "do's and don'ts," the "letter of the law" in response to the Children of Israel saying in effect, "Just tell us what to do." Some poetry came to mind as the boys and I "rewrote the Ten Commandments:"

### **THE SERMONS ON THE MOUNTS** (Daniel Rona)

The law was given, the standard set.  
But best was not accepted yet.  
We compromised with Heaven's voice,  
Just ten commandments was our choice.  
Tooth for tooth and eye for eye,  
Retribution was the cry.

#### **The Lesser Law**

1. No other God -
2. Or image graven -
3. Not in vain, the name of Heaven -
4. Remember Sabbath,
5. Father, Mother –
6. Thou shalt not kill -
7. Nor defile another -
8. Do not steal -
9. Or false word belabor –
10. Do not covet the wealth of neighbor –

But then was promised a covenant new,  
Inwardly, God would speak to you.  
With sins forgiven and God revealed,  
A higher law on us was sealed.

#### **The Higher Law**

10. Bless your neighbor -
9. Share a kindly word -
8. Give to others –
7. And clean thoughts preferred –
6. No need for anger to hide your smile -
5. Parents, children walk the second mile -
4. Use the Sabbath, blessings to bestow -
3. The name of God in your good deeds show -
2. Your life will God's true image mirror,
1. As you and He become much nearer.

The secret of God's law is known  
When action by intent is shown  
In Heaven's highest throne to stay,  
Use thought and reason to guide the way.  
The highest law is now defined -  
In thought, in spirit and in the mind.

### **Where does it state that there are different laws for different people?**

A previous lesson discussion compares the modern Jewish concept that the Law of Moses is for the Jews and the Law of Noah (Noachide Laws) are for the

Gentiles. The Apostle Paul explains the proper perception of the same law for everyone as he spoke to King Agrippa at Caesarea. “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:22-23) This statement helps us understand Moses’ teaching us that the Messiah must first be a “suffering servant,” that there really is life after death, a literal resurrection, and that the “law” is for everyone – same commandments for everyone.

### **Must it be gold – to glitter?**

Some thoughts on gold and the golden calf may also be interesting. “According to the *midrash* (Jewish scriptural commentary), God created gold specifically for use in the Temple . . . On account of the idolatrous worship of the Golden Calf, gold became a symbol of sin and was not to be used to sheath the *shofar* mouthpiece. On the Day of Atonement there was no gold on the vestments of the high priest; he officiated in robes of pure white linen. International treaties were inscribed on bronze tablets. Corinthian bronze, famous for its luster and quality, was used for the Nicanor Gates of the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)