



Exodus 16-18

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to the book of Exodus, beginning with chapter 16. God has delivered the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. Having watched the Pharaoh and his armies drown in the Red Sea, chapter 15, they sing the glorious song of God's deliverance, God's power, God's destruction of their enemies. But how quickly we forget the work and the hand of God. They come to the water at Marah, they find it bitter, they complain against Moses, and the Lord shows Moses a bush that He throws into the water; it becomes sweet.

They journey from Marah to Elim, an oasis where there are twelve wells of water and several palm trees. And in chapter 16 now, they move on from Elim,

And all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and the Sinai, and on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt, the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

So, they've been one month now out of Egypt. They left there on the fifteenth, actually, they've watched the Pharaoh destroyed, and now a month down the road, a month into the wilderness experience, and listen to them, as they said to Moses and Aaron,

Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, and when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with starvation.

Now, they begin to complain to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "It would have been better off had we died when God killed the first born in Egypt. At least theirs was a sudden death, the stroke of God; in one night, they were gone. But instead, you brought us out here to starve us to death; the slow, painful death by starvation." Now it was not possible that they were starving yet, for they had brought great flocks and herds out of Egypt, but they had now begun to experience a little bit of the barrenness of the desert. They could probably foresee that there wasn't enough grazing for the cattle, and they could foresee that it could get pretty tough living out here. It would have been better to have died suddenly in Egypt rather than to die by starvation here in the wilderness.

And the LORD said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law, or not.

Now, it is interesting to me that God does not indicate at all any anger or even being upset with the people murmuring. The Bible tells us concerning the people at this point, that God knew their frame, that they were but dust, and so God tolerated a lot, knowing that they were just weak, and God promises that He's going to provide for them bread from heaven. However, in so doing, He was going to test them to see if they would walk in His law or not.

And so, with this bread from heaven, the manna that was to come, there were two laws involved. The first is that they were not to try to store any overnight; only take what you can eat, but don't try to store it overnight. The second was; don't expect to find any on the seventh day. On the sixth day, you will gather enough for the sixth and the seventh day, and there won't be any of this manna on the ground on the seventh day, so don't go out to find it on the seventh day. So, two laws; God's going to test them. Will they keep

my law or not?

It shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, At evening, you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning, you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your murmurings against the LORD; but what are we, that you should murmur against us?

So they let the people know that your murmuring really isn't against us as your leaders, you're murmuring is against God, whose direction we are following. Now, in time, their murmuring got them into trouble. In the beginning, God tolerated the murmuring, but in time, it really became an issue for which they were punished by God.

Interesting to note that the murmuring was recognized to be against God, and any time we murmur concerning our lot in life, we are, in essence, murmuring against God, because we have committed our lives to God, and He is in control of those circumstances of our lives. And so, for me to murmur against my circumstances is to murmur against God. He's the one who has created the circumstances. He is the one who has brought me to this place. He is the one who has brought me into this trial, perhaps. And though I may direct my murmuring at an individual, in reality, it is God who is in control.

The Lord one day said to Jeremiah the prophet, *"I want you to go down to the potter's house, and watch him as he works a work on his wheel."* So Jeremiah said, *"I went down to the potter's house, and I watched him as he was working with his wheel, and he took this bit of clay, and he began to shape the clay. And then, he wasn't satisfied with the way it was coming out, and he took it, and he just destroyed the shaped. Took it back in just a lump of clay again, and he started all over, and he formed a second vessel."* And the Lord spoke to Jeremiah from this figure of the potter; and God declared that in this case, the nation of Israel was like the clay, and God was the potter, and God was able to shape it as He desired, and even though they didn't fit His first intention, He's able to remake them. He's able to make of them a vessel that would please Him.

Isaiah the prophet also saw the figure of God as the potter and man as the clay; and who are you, oh man, to respond to God, asking Him, *"Why, God, did you allow this to happen? Why, God, did you make me thus?"* Recognizing that the Potter has absolute power over the clay to do with it whatever He wishes.

But as Jeremiah was in the potter's house, we see there are three aspects to it; there is the clay, there is the wheel upon which the potter works, and then there is the potter himself. Man is the clay, God is the potter, the wheel are the circumstances of our lives that God uses to shape us and to mold us. Our characters are being shaped by God, molded by God through the circumstances of our lives. God allows trials, God allows testings, God allows painful experiences, that through these, He might develop character, trust.

And so, my life is being developed by the circumstances in which I find myself; and unfortunately, many times I resist the circumstances. I don't like it, I stiffen up. And the moment I stiffen up, as with Jeremiah, the vessel becomes marred in the hands of the potter. God wasn't able to shape me as He desired. I'd stiffened against the work of God, hardened myself to the work of God. So God has to start over.

I wonder how many times He's had to start over with me; back to zero, back to the blob. Here I start, all over again. The wheel starts turning, the circumstances start coming, and God begins now to mold and shape again; but the wheel is the instrument through which the potter does his work, shapes and molds the clay. And so, the circumstances of our lives, by which we are shaped and molded.

Now, I notice that the wheel is under the continual control of the potter. He is able to speed it up, He's able to slow it down, He's able to stop it. The wheel is under His control. So that, God is in control of the circumstances of my life. God is the one who has allowed these things to happen to me. Now, according to the Scripture as I understand it, God has allowed them to happen for my good. God is only interested in my best welfare. Thus, for me to complain of the circumstances of my life, or to murmur about the things that are happening to me is, in reality, to murmur against God.

They came to Moses and Aaron murmuring about being led out here in the wilderness to die of starvation. It would have been better off to die in Egypt. And God comes back and says, "*They're going to see my glory; I'm going to test them to see if they'll obey my law or not,*" and He says, "tomorrow morning, you'll see the power of God, the glory of God; but *you've murmured not really against us, you've murmured against the LORD.*"

And Moses said, This shall be seen, when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning, bread till you're full; for the LORD hears your murmurings which you make against him;

That's sort of heavy, that God actually hears every time you murmur against Him. And again,

Who are we?

'Why are you murmuring to us? We're only the instruments of God. We're only God's appointed leaders. You're really murmuring against Him, not against us.'

Then Moses spoke to Aaron; he said, Say to the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD; for He has heard your murmurings. Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak to them, saying, At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God. So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there was on the surface of the wilderness a small, round substance as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.

So they complained. They said, "Oh, if we were only back by the flesh pots in Egypt. There we had all the bread we could eat. You brought us out here to starve us to death." So, the Lord said, "I'll show you that I can feed you in the wilderness," and in the evening, He brought quail into the camp.

Now, this is a phenomenon that often takes place in the spring time as the quail are migrating northward from Africa. As they fly across the Red Sea, after flying that distance non-stop, often as they get to the northern side, they fall by exhaustion on the ground. And so it was that the quail fell in the camp of the Israelites. The ground was covered with these quail as they migrated northward. That happens even to the present day. Doesn't take away from the miraculous aspect that God told Moses He was going to do it that evening.

Then, the next day, on the ground, sort of like coriander seed, when the dew lifted, there was this little, round seed-like that they gathered. Now, there was an interesting thing. They were to gather each of them an omer per person, and there's a divergence of opinion of what constitutes an omer, or how much an omer is. And the estimates of an omer by the scholars is anything from a pint and a half to seven pints, and there

are scholars that take different positions translating the word different ways. And so, it's anywhere from a pint and a half to seven pints.

Now, it would appear from the text in the Hebrew, and this is the interesting thing, that when they gathered it and brought it into the tent to measure it, if they gathered more than an omer, all they could measure out was just an omer. And if they gathered less, they poured it in to measure it, and it turned out to be an omer. So, if they would lack, it was made up, and if they would gather more, it was taken away, so that when they measured it, it would always measure out to be an omer; and then, on the sixth day, when they would measure it, no matter what they had gathered, it measured two omers. Gathered the same amount, but you'd go to measure it, and you've got twice. So it would seem that there was a miracle involved even in the amount gathered, that it was something that God was creating for them.

Now when they saw it, they didn't know what it was; they said, What is this? And Moses said to them, This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, Every man gather according to each one's need, one omer per each person, according to the number of persons in your family; let every man take for those who are in his tent. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, and some less. Some gathered more than others, some less than others. But when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing over, he who gathered little had not lack; God leveled it off; every man had gathered according to each one's need. And Moses said, Let no one leave any of it until the morning.

Now this was one of the commands. 'See if they followed it or not. Don't leave any of it over till tomorrow. Don't try and save it until tomorrow.'

Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses; but some of them left part of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank; and Moses was angry with them.

So they tried to keep some; "Ah, I won't have to go out in the morning, I'll just keep it tonight." And the thing got wormy and smelled. The interesting thing is that on the sixth day, they could keep it overnight, and it kept; God's provision. Why would God make it so, that they would have to gather every day? Because God wanted to teach them to live by faith in Him day by day, and faith is a daily lesson, even as Jesus in the prayer said, "Give us this day our daily bread." So they gathered for each day; and tomorrow, we're going to have to trust God to put it on the ground for our needs tomorrow; that God takes care of us day by day.

Now, this is the way God wants us really to live; day by day, trusting in Him to take care of us. We don't like to live that way, do we? We like to have a little security here. I like to be able to store up enough so that if there isn't any there tomorrow, well, I don't have to worry, I can still get by. We don't like living daily by faith. It's something that we find objectionable; as I have often said, the life of faith is something we really don't care for.

It's so much better when I finally understand, when I finally see what God was doing. Then I say, "Ah, isn't that wonderful. I see now what God is doing. Alright! That's great!" But when I can't see what God is doing, when I don't understand what's going on, I don't like that. I don't like to be in that position where you just have to wait on God day by day; but that's exactly what God wants.

And so, not going to let it stay overnight. But, they failed. Some of them failed in the first test. God says, "I'm going to test you, see if you're going to keep my law or not." Some of them failed.

So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need; and when the sun became

hot, it would melt. And so it was on the sixth day that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses; and he said to them, This is what the LORD has said, Tomorrow is a sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains to be kept until morning.

So, they would bake it, they would beat it into sort of a flour, and bake little cakes; or they would boil it, probably into a cereal form. Interesting that this started one month after they left the land of Egypt, and God provided this for over forty years until the day that they came into the promised land, then this supply ceased. But for their whole forty years of wandering in the wilderness, every day, six days a week, they could go out and gather, and on the sixth day, gather twice the amount; baking it, boiling it.

And so they laid it up until morning, as Moses commanded; it did not stink, nor did the worms come in it. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is the sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you'll gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, there will be none. Now it happened, that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for the LORD has given you the sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days; let every man remain in his place, or in his tent, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.

Out of his place, or out of the camp, actually.

And the house of Israel called it's name Manna;

Now, there are some Hebrew scholars that say that that means “what is it?”. Manna; what is it? Others, and the preponderance of Hebrew scholars I should say, say that the word in Hebrew is, literally, “a gift”. And so they called this a gift of God. The manna; it's a gift of God, rather than “what is it?” So, those are the views of the Hebrew scholars, and the preponderance, though, seem to feel that the idea of “what is it?” is a mistake made by the Septuagint translators, and that in reality, it should be, “it is a gift of God”.

It was like white coriander seed, and the taste was like little wafers that you would make with honey.

So there is a sort of a sweet taste to it.

Then Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, Fill an omer with it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt. And Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot, and put in an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.

Which, as I said, is about one-and-a-half pints to seven pints, according to which scholar you are reading.

Now, the command here is to take an omer of it and put it in a jar. Later on, when God gave to Moses the command to build the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, there was to be what was called the Ark of the Covenant; a box made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, covered by a lid, which was called

a mercy seat. And upon the lid there were carved two cherubim. But in this box; later when the tabernacle was constructed, and this box was constructed, the Ark of the Covenant to be placed in the Holy of Holies; they took the two tables of stone, upon which God inscribed the law, they took this jar of Manna that Aaron was told to preserve, and they took the rod of Aaron that budded to prove that the priesthood was to be with Aaron, and they put these three artifacts in the Ark of the Covenant.

That is why, to me, one of the most exciting archeological discoveries that could ever be made, would be for someone to find the Ark of the Covenant. I don't know if I would want to be the one to open the lid to look in, but if someone else would open it, I would probably take a look. David's men got in trouble for touching it; but to think that God set these to preserve them as a testimony of His faithfulness to His people. A witness; God's witness, "I was faithful, I provided them every day with their bread." And what I would really love to see are those two tables of stone that God, with His finger, wrote the Law on. That'd be dynamite; powerful.

Now, let's turn to Psalm 78 to see how deeply this was then imbedded into their minds and into their culture. We find the psalmist making reference to this. Let's start with, maybe verse 38. *"God was full of compassion, He forgave their iniquity, He did not destroy them; --"* That was when they murmured, and so forth. *"Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, He did not stir up His wrath, because He remembered that they were but flesh;"* or dust. *"A breath that passes the wind, and does not come again. How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, and grieved Him in the desert! Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power they day when He redeemed them from the enemy, when He worked His sign in Egypt, His wonders in the field of Zoan, turned their river to blood; and their streams, so they could not drink. And He brings,"* you know, he talks about all of the plagues. And then he said, verse 52, *"He made His own people go forth like sheep, He guided them in the wilderness like a flock. He led them safely, so they did not fear; the sea overwhelmed their enemies. He brought them to this holy border, the mountain which His right hand acquired. He also drove out the nations before them, allotted them the inheritance,"* and so forth. *"But they tested and provoked the most high God; did not keep His covenant."* And so forth.

Let's go back in the same chapter; verse 17. *"They sinned even more against Him by rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness. They tested God in their heart by asking for food in of their fancy. Yes, they spoke against God; they said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, and streams overflowed; can He give bread also? can He provide meat for His people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was furious, so a fire was kindled against Jacob, the anger also came up against Israel; because they did not believe in God, nor trust in His salvation; yet He commanded the clouds above, He opened the doors of heaven, rained down manna on them to eat. He gave them of the bread of heaven. Men ate angels' food; and He sent them food to the full."*

And so, he talks then about raining the meat like dust, the feathered fowl like the sand of the seas, when God brought the quail.

Psalm 105, Psalm 106, the Psalmist again makes mention of God's provision of the Manna, the bread from heaven.

Jesus, in the New Testament, declares that He is the bread come down from heaven, of which the manna was a type. *"And he that eats of Me,"* He said, *"will never hunger, and will never die."*

CHAPTER 17

Now in chapter 17,

All of the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and they camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said to them, Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Why is it that you have brought us out of the land of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?

'First you're going to starve us to death, now you're going to kill us with thirst.'

So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, What shall I do with these people? They're ready to stone me. And the LORD said to Moses, Go on before the people,

'Get out of there. Go ahead of them.'

and take with you some of the elders of Israel;

So, it could be that they were really ready to stone Moses. God says, "Get out in front of them. Go out away from them."

take some of the elders with you; and take in your hand the rod with which you struck the river, and go. And behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, and the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So he called the name of the place Massah, which means "tempted", and Meribah, which means "contention or strife", because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us or not?

And so, no sooner does God provide the bread daily, now they're thinking that God's going to let them die of thirst. Isn't it interesting how quickly we forget what God has done? How quickly we can despair and imagine the worst? "Now we're going to die of thirst; better off to have died in Egypt than to bring us out here to die of thirst. Horrible way to die." And as Moses cries to the Lord, the Lord instructs them to go before the people with some of the elders so that they can witness the miracle of God. Take the rod, strike the rock, water would come out.

Now, in the New Testament, Paul the Apostle, in I Corinthians 10, tells us that rock that was with them in the wilderness was Jesus. *"That rock was Christ."* The rock smitten brought forth water of life to the people. And so, the beautiful figure of Jesus smitten on the cross brings forth life to us. Jesus said, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."* Again, one of the last invitations of the Bible is to he that thirsteth, let him come and drink of the water of life freely; that water of life provided for us through Jesus Christ, having been smitten on the cross for our sins.

Now, this is down near Egypt in Rephidim. Forty years later, when they're near Kadesh, they're going to come to Moses again, and they're going to say, "Moses, why did you ever lead us out of Egypt? That we might die of thirst in this wilderness? You haven't brought us into the land. Now we're going to die." And Moses was angry, and he went in before God and he said, "God, I can't take it anymore, I've had it up to here with these people. I'm through. Can't stand it. For forty years this constant complaining and murmuring. I've had it." And God said, "Moses, go out and speak to the rock, that it might bring forth water for the people; they are indeed thirsty."

And Moses went out angry. This time it was before all of the congregation of Israel. Before, it was just before the elders that he smote the rock. This time, before all of the congregation of Israel; angry with them, yelling at them, calling them a bunch of hypocrites. "HOW LONG AM I GOING TO HAVE TO PUT UP WITH YOU, YOU COMPLAINERS, HYPOCRITES. MUST I SMITE THIS ROCK AGAIN AND GIVE YOU WATER?" And he took his rod and he smote the rock, and the water came pouring forth, and the people drank.

And God said, "Moses, come here, son. Did I tell you to smite the rock? Didn't I tell you just speak to the rock? Do you realize, Moses, what you've done? You've failed to represent Me before the people. You were a poor representation. In fact, you didn't represent Me. You represented Me wrong. You represented Me as angry and upset with all of those people. I'm not angry and upset with them, by they think I am, because that's the way you represented Me. You failed to represent Me, Moses, before the people, and therefore; I've got some bad news, Moses. I can't let you lead them into the promised land.

Moses said, "God, You've got to be kidding. Man, I've taken all this stuff for forty years, and I can't lead them in?" God said, "No, Moses." "Lord, now that isn't fair. You ought to let me lead..." God says, "Don't talk to me about it anymore, it's settled. You can't do it, because you failed to represent me."

Oh, what is an awesome thing here, that God holds us responsible to properly represent Him. You see, many people are getting their entire concept of God and of Christianity from what they see in your lives. You, in reality, are living epistles, known and read of all men. There are many, many people who never pick up a Bible to read it to understand about God, but they'll read you like a book. They're watching your reaction. They're watching you especially; not when things are going well, they're watching you when things are tough, when the chips are down. They want to see how you respond and how you react then, because you are God's representative. I wonder how many times, as Moses, we fail to properly represent God.

Now, there was a double evil here in the smiting of the rock. Because of the typology, and that rock is Jesus; once the rock was smitten, once Jesus was crucified, he never need to be smitten again in order to bring life, salvation. He died once and for all, and all that is necessary now is to speak to the rock, and the water of life will flow freely to you. You don't have to smite the rock, He has been smitten once. That's all that's necessary. Now by faith, just ask, and the water of life will flow freely to each of you. And Moses destroyed this whole beautiful symbolism that God was creating with the rock and the water flowing forth. By smiting the rock the second time, he destroyed the beautiful symbology that God was creating.

Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Amalek was one of the descendants of Esau, they were part of the Edomites. And Amalek, in Scripture, interestingly enough, as we move along, will become a type of your flesh. And, notice that God says you're going to have problems with this from generation to generation. It's a battle that never is over; the battle with flesh. And Amalek becomes a type of the flesh. And we find that the flesh is something that we must contend with.

And God, you remember in the time of Saul, ordered the complete, absolute destruction of the Amalekites. 'Utterly destroy them, don't let anyone remain.' But Saul was disobedient. He kept King Agag alive, some of the finer animals and all. And later in history, one of the descendants of Agag, an Amalekite, was the one who talked King Ahasuerus into signing the decree for the extermination of all of the Jews within the kingdom of Persia. God ordered the absolute destruction of the flesh; didn't happen, and the flesh almost destroyed the Israelites later on. God has only one sentence for your flesh, and that's, "crucify it." Mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit. Give no place to the flesh to live after it. Reckon the old man to

be dead, crucified with Christ. That's God's order for the flesh. We'll get to that as we move on, and we see Amalek coming up again and again.

Now, the Amalekites began by attacking in the rear of the camp; the older people who were having a hard time keeping up with everybody, the stragglers and all, and that's where the Amalekites first began their attack, in the rear of the camp. And, they had an initial victory. They destroyed some of these older people, the stragglers, those that weren't able to keep up; and they began to attack the camp of Israel from the rear.

And Moses said to Joshua, Choose us some men to go out and fight with Amalek;

And so, Joshua, who was later to take over, first comes into the scene.

tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, he fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was that when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

He was probably holding up his hands and praying. As long as his hands were held, and he was praying, Israel would prevail. When he would get weak and tired and his hands would droop, then the Amalekites would start to prevail.

So, Moses was getting weak, and his hands were drooping, and the Amalekites were coming on, and so, they got a rock, and he sat down on a rock, and Aaron stood on one side and Hur on the other, and they held his hands up, supported him until the going down of the sun. And so, Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of his sword. And the LORD said to Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

The flesh is ultimately to be blotted out from remembrance.

And Moses built an altar, and he called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi; Jehovah is my banner; for he said, Because the LORD has sworn the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

God will never make peace with your flesh. No peace treaties with the flesh. God wants our flesh to be reckoned dead. He doesn't want us living after the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh.

CHAPTER 18

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, with her two sons; of whom the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been a stranger in a foreign land; and the name of the other was Eliezer; for he said, the Lord of my father was my help.

Eliezer means "God is my help."

Now, you remember when Moses was heading back to Egypt at the command of God to go to the Pharaoh to demand the release of the people, and the LORD smote Moses and he was dying, and his wife

then circumcised the one child, and said, "You're a bloody man to me," and was upset; evidently at that point, Moses said, "Go home, woman. Go back to your father." And he did not take her to Egypt with him during the time of the plagues and all, but he sent her at that time back to her father with the two boys.

So now, word has come to Jethro that Moses has brought the people out of Egypt. And so, Jethro comes to see Moses, bringing with him Moses' wife, Zipporah, and the two sons, which, of course, Moses has not seen for a period of time since he went down to Egypt to make his demands upon the Pharaoh; and probably about a year of time has lapsed since Moses sent her back to her father.

And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where they were encamped near Sinai, the mountain of God. Now he had said to Moses, I your father-in-law Jethro am coming to you with your wife, and your two sons with her.

So, he sent messengers on ahead to let Moses know that he was coming.

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other about their well-being; and they went into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all of the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered.

So, Moses was just sharing all of the wonderful things that the LORD had done for them.

And Jethro rejoiced for all of the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, out of the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly He was above them.

The Egyptians, proud of their crops, and these are the things that God destroyed. And so, God showed Himself more powerful than the gods of the Egyptians. Now I know that JEHOVAH is above all of the gods.

It is possible that Jethro, as so many of the pagans, was a polytheistic person, that they believed in many gods. But, when Moses recounted all that God had done, he became convinced that JEHOVAH was above all the gods.

Nebuchadnezzar came to the same realization; the Babylonian king, who, in Babylon, they had so many Babylonian gods. But when Daniel was able to interpret the dream, and all of the wise men and all were unable to do so, he said, "There is no god like the God of Daniel, who is able to interpret dreams," and so forth; made a proclamation. Later on, when God delivered the three Hebrew children out of the fiery furnace, he said, "There's no god like the God of the three Hebrew children, who is able to deliver out of fiery furnaces." Later on, when he went insane for seven seasons, when he regained his sanity again, he said, "There is no god at all like the God of heaven, who is able to raise up those whom He will, and bring down those whom He will; and I testify that He is the only true God," and he became converted. He believed that JEHOVAH is the only true God.

Darius the king, when Daniel was delivered from the mouths of the lions, again, declared, "No God like the God of Daniel."

So, even pagans brought to the realization that there is only one really true God, living God, powerful

God, who is able to hear and to answer prayer. Oh, there have always been false gods, people have always enthroned objects or things or philosophies or concepts in their lives, and made them their gods, but they've all failed in the time of need. They've none been able to deliver them.

You remember when Elijah had the contest with the priests of Baal. Let the god who answers by fire, let him be god. How they prayed all day, and about lunch time, Elijah began to tease him a bit. He said, "Hey, I'll bet your God has taken a vacation. You better cry louder. Or maybe he's asleep." And then he became a little naughty; he says, "Maybe he's locked up in the potty," he said, "he's relieving himself; so you better work a little harder, fellows." And they began to leap on the altar and cut themselves with knives, and dance around, and the whole thing, until the evening hour, the time of the evening prayer; and Elijah said, "OK, guys, that's enough. You've had your day. You've had your time. Now dig a trench around my altar, and take and pour some water. Pour more water. Pour more water." Soaked down the altar, and the trench around it was filled with water, and Elijah says, "Now, Lord, show them who the true and the living God is." Fire came from heaven and destroyed the altar and the sacrifice, licked up the water in the trenches. The people acknowledged. They fell on their faces, they said, "JEHOVAH is God, JEHOVAH is God." Acknowledgment.

Now here, Jethro, when he hears of all that God has done, made the acknowledgment, "JEHOVAH is above of the gods. I know that JEHOVAH is greater.

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came, with the elders of Israel, to eat the bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

So, it was a time of worship, feasting together with God; the bread, the meal offering, and the peace offering, fellowship offering.

And so it was on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, What in the world are you doing? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening? And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to inquire of God.

They want to find out what God's ruling, or God's law is.

And when they have a difficulty, they come to me; and I judge between one and another, and I make known to them the statutes of God, and his laws. So Moses' father-in-law said to him, Hey, that's not good. You're going to kill yourself, man. Both you, and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. It's too much for you; you're not able to perform it by yourself.

You've got to delegate some responsibilities to others.

Listen now to my advice, I'm going to give you some counsel, and God will be with you. Now, stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God; and you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, to show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover, select from all of the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be the rulers of the thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens;

So, get men, and let them be over tens, let them be over fifties, let them be over a hundreds, and let them be over thousands.

And let them handle the matters of judgment; and if something becomes too difficult, and they cant' handle it at that level, then let it work it's way up to you.

But, otherwise, you're going to kill yourself, man, trying to do this every day; arbitrating the differences of all these people. It's just more than you or they can handle.

Now, the qualifications for the judges to me is interesting. First of all, they were to be men who feared God; God-fearing men, men of truth, men who hate covetousness. These were the qualifications, the three qualifications.

If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all of the people also will go to their place in peace. So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of Israel, made them the heads over the people, rulers over thousands, rulers over hundreds, rulers over fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves. And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way to his own land.

So, Moses is reunited with his wife, his father-in-law goes home, and Moses has an easier time because of the advice that his father-in-law gave him as he spreads out his responsibilities of judging in the issues of the people over these qualified men.

Next week, probably some of the most important lessons of the Old Testament as we get into the ten commandments, and God giving to Moses the Ten Commandments, and as we deal with them and our relationship to them today.

May the Lord be with you now, and watch over, and help you through the next couple of days; protect you in the traffic and in the mall, keep you from getting mauled. Looking forward to the relaxation of Tuesday evening when it's all over--if you don't have it by then, forget it; next year--and we'll gather together and quiet our hearts before God, and we'll just give thanks to God for His glorious gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, as we worship the Lord together, and as we celebrate the coming of Jesus into the world. So, may the Lord be with you, and strengthen and keep you in His love, and enrich you in your walk with Him, in Jesus' name.