

Sheepfold Gleanings

YITRO / JETHRO

Exodus 18:1 to 20:23 (26)

Isaiah 6:1-13

Matthew 5:1-48

Acts 6:1-7

Hebrews 12:18-29

1 Peter 2:9-10

Exodus 18:1-12 Yitro/Jethro

This parsha opens with the mention of Yitro/Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses who cared for Moses' family and kept them safe while Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Scripture emphasizes the fact that Jethro was Moses' father-*in-law* twelve times in this chapter alone. Could it be that by this repetition YHVH wanted us to understand "in-law" to mean that Jethro was "in-covenant" and that he put His faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, meaning he followed and obeyed YHVH's commandments? This would have been a huge transformation for the former Midianite priest.

Jethro came out into the desert to meet Moses in Rephidim where the Israelites were camped. This was about a day's journey from the Mountain of YHVH. Upon seeing each other they embraced and went into the tent. Entering into or dwelling in a tent is a reference to being in or studying Torah and meeting in YHVH's presence. While in the tent, Moses shared all about how YHVH had miraculously delivered Israel and defeated Pharaoh and the Egyptians. This delighted Jethro. Hearing the news greatly confirmed Jethro's belief in YHVH and he declared, "Now I know that YHVH is greater than all the other gods." Then "Jethro brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to YHVH." How was Jethro given the understanding and insight to do this unless he had studied Torah? After the sacrifice for his past innocent sins, Aaron and the elders of Israel came and *broke bread* with Jethro in the presence of YHVH, sealing and confirming that Jethro had indeed come into a covenant relationship with YHVH.

Exodus 18:13-27 A Father-In-Law's Advice

It looks as if Jethro and Moses celebrated the Sabbath together as this next section in Scripture opens with Moses going back to work. **Exodus 18:13** "The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people."

When Jethro observed Moses, he asked, "Why do you alone sit as judge?" Moses answered, "Because the people *come to me* to seek God's will." We are given a major key here, especially for those who teach YHVH's Word to the people. Moses *was not teaching* the people. Moses was actually making the people *dependent on him* for everything and making them seek *his counsel*, instead of teaching the people how to seek after YHVH themselves for His guidance in their lives.

The way Moses was leading the people would weaken him as a leader and impede the raising up of a strong army for YHVH. The people needed to be shown *how to be led by YHVH and lean on Him for their own lives*. Jethro was given great insight and wisdom by the Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit that Moses should teach the people to discern the way of holiness by obeying YHVH's teaching, distinguishing between holy and unholy, clean and unclean and observing His Sabbath/feast days. This order of teaching the people would lighten the load of "government" and would bring more effective leadership (Ezekiel 44: 23-24). The people would not have to depend on Moses and would be better able to govern and encourage themselves, because they would personally understand what brought glory to the God of Israel.

Jethro also shared with Moses that he should raise up men who had a heart after YHVH, "men who [feared] YHVH, trustworthy men who [hated] dishonest gain" to act as judges for the people at all times. This would allow Moses to focus on handling the more difficult cases. "If you do this and YHVH so confirms this, you will be able to stand the strain." After Jethro had helped Moses set the camp in order, he returned back to his own country (Exodus 18:20-21; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3: 1-14).

Jeremiah 31:34 " 'No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know YHVH," for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' says YHVH. 'For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.' "

Hebrews 8:11 "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."

Exodus 19 Mount Sinai

"In the third month after Egypt – on the very day [the 15th day] – they came to the Desert of Sinai." Arriving at Mount Sinai was the fulfillment of the word YHVH gave to Moses. "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship YHVH at this mountain" (Exodus 3:12; 12:17).

When they arrived at the mountain, Moses went up to see YHVH. This was the same place where he had witnessed the burning bush earlier (Exodus 3:1-2).

Exodus 19:4-6 "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now **IF** you obey me fully and keep my covenant, **then** out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, *you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

1 Peter 2:9 "Speak These Words To The Israelites"

After the death and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah, Peter obeyed the above commandment and shared these exact words from Exodus to the Israelites who were standing before him. They were a remnant from the twelve tribes returning to YHVH

during the Feast of Shavuot (Acts 3:11-26). Peter shared with them that they were the people who stood at Mount Sinai with Moses. He addressed them as YHVH had commanded, showing them their identity as the people of Israel. Because of their forefathers' disobedience to the Message given at Mt. Sinai, the twelve tribes had become a scattered people living among the nations. That day with Peter they experienced a heart change and were then ready to obey the original message given at Mount Sinai, their marriage covenant. With his exhortation the returning "lost sheep of the House of Israel" were ready to embrace the giver of the Message, Yeshua, with all their hearts. Yeshua was the message and the fulfillment of Torah. Torah pointed to Him. Yeshua is the *goal* of Torah. (Romans 10:4) Peter informed "God's elect, strangers scattered throughout [the world]" that they were a people being restored by walking in a redeemed lifestyle, when he later wrote, "*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to YHVH, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light* (1 Peter 2:9)."

Exodus 19:4-8 When Moses went back to see the people, he summoned the elders and set before them all the words YHVH gave him to speak. The people all responded together, "*We will do everything YHVH has said,*" we will fully obey and keep His Covenant. The very words spoken were clearly a *betrothal response* in a covenant set between the people of God and their Maker. As believers, we have been given a legal marriage document called in Hebrew a *Ketubah*. This acts as a legal, binding, covenantal agreement given by YHVH to His Bride.

You Are A Royal Priesthood and A Holy Nation

At the time the Israelites left Egypt, the consecration for the royal priesthood began. The seven-day period after the feast of Passover called Unleavened Bread was a reference to a set-apart consecration time for the people. They had left Egypt, an unclean place (realm of death), and were separating themselves *that they might worship YHVH* and return to the Promised Land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Israelites had a change of status when they crossed the Red Sea, leaving the realm of death behind. Now the redemption stage in their lives began, beginning with the seven-day period of eating unleavened bread, which is still celebrated today through the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23).

They had been delivered from Egypt physically, now they were learning to be restored, and needed to be separated from any contamination left from an Egyptian influence such as a worldly mindset or slave mentality that could bind them spiritually, mentally and/or emotionally. The redemption stage transformed their hearts. This is called heart circumcision or redemption of the soul. Their bodies were physically out of Egypt, but now their souls and minds needed restoration. Four hundred years was a long time to be away from home (outside the land of Israel). Impurities and iniquities inherited from their forefathers, along with the abuse they endured as slaves for so long in Egypt, may have been affecting their lives. It was imperative this all be cleansed from them.

The feast of the counting the Omer was the next phase of purification. A cleansing period of seven weeks or fifty days, it is another feast we still observe today. This feast has a

prophetic significance of preparation for the nation of Israel that especially focuses on how His people were not only a royal priesthood but also a holy nation set apart for YHVH (Exodus 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9).

Passover was the call of the Bride (the priesthood of Yeshua); the seven-day feast of Unleavened Bread was a consecration time for the *royal priesthood*; and the counting of the Omer, seven week feast, was the consecration time for *the holy nation* of Israel (Leviticus 23; Exodus 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9).

An omer was a measurement (about two quarts), in this case of unleavened bread called *manna*. This is what YHVH delivered to the Israelites each morning, like dew, all the days they traveled through the wilderness. During this feast of Omer, they were to count an omer of manna a day for fifty days or seven weeks. This was also a time the Israelites were to examine their ways and their hearts, so that by the time they reached the Mountain of YHVH where they would enter into betrothal, the first stage of the wedding, they would be prepared to meet Him in body, soul and spirit. YHVH had chosen the Children of Israel, all twelve tribes, to enter into a covenant relationship with Him to be His Bride. He had promised this to Abraham and his descendants after him. The Israelites were the children of Abraham that were coming out of Egypt to worship Him and were now being prepared to enter the next phase of their redemption called the betrothal.

The three stages of a Biblical marriage are: *betrothal, marriage and celebration*. The Feasts or moedim of YHVH follow this pattern. The feasts we enter into each year are called rehearsals for the bride that she might prepare for the wedding day. Passover is the choosing of the bride; Shavuot/Pentecost is the betrothal of the Bride; and Yom Kippur is the wedding day, with the Feast of Tabernacles being the celebration of the wedding, called the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

All God's feasts point the bride to her identity in Israel. They show her how to walk in the realms of YHVH's Kingdom. Why is it important to keep YHVH's feasts? They are symbols and signs for the bride. Like a road map, they point the way to her wedding day. The fifty-day counting of the Omer will bring the bride to the Feast of Shavuot, which epitomizes the receiving of the covenant by the bride from her Bridegroom (Yeshua), the betrothal stage of the wedding. The bride becomes legally married at this time but does not live with her husband until the wedding day. By keeping these feasts, called divine appointments, the bride will not miss her betrothal and will be well on her way in her preparations for her wedding (Matthew 25:1-13; 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24).

The importance of Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus is that it represents the betrothal stage of the wedding. All who are in Yeshua are being drawn by the Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit to come and participate in the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and Shavuot/Pentecost each year, appointments called rehearsals that bring the bride to her Bridegroom. YHVH asks us to rehearse these days so we will never forget our vows but continue to prepare for His return. The vows spoken at the Betrothal were kept for us as a reminder. Our Bibles, specifically the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, are our Ketubah. Without the

understanding of the marriage Covenant (Ketubah), how can a bride keep her vows and prepare to meet her Bridegroom? As believers and part of Israel we need to have our walk match our confession, and celebrate the feasts at their appointed times.

Exodus 19:10-11 Consecration

YHVH stipulated a three-day consecration time for the bride before she came to meet her Betrothed at the Mountain of YHVH. As in a wedding, the bride makes herself ready. She changes her clothes and washes herself before putting on clean clothes. This is called a *mikvah* and is for a change of status. On the third day a very long blast was heard and a cloud covered the mountain. The cloud covering became the *chuppah* or covering under which YHVH came out to meet His bride.

Lightning and thunder followed and a long, loud ram's horn blast was heard. Fear struck the people as they watched. Then YHVH uttered His ten famous words to the people that later came to traditionally be known as the Ten Commandments. In Hebrew they were called the *Aseret HaDibrot*, which translated means Ten Statements (Exodus 20:1-17).

Acts 2:1-4 “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

As in a wedding there was an exchange of meaningful words before YHVH and His Bride entered into a covenant relationship for life. What was *unsaid* at the altar was all the other information it takes to make a marriage work. These ten spoken words by YHVH to His people at Mount Sinai were an *outline* for the marriage, or *family mission statement* if you will. Following the exchange of vows at Mount Sinai, the Ten Statements were given, plus the fuller understanding right after. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19 to 24) contains the fuller meaning of the Ten Statements. The rabbis say that all 613 laws can be found in the Ten Statements, as if classified in ten categories. Understanding YHVH's teaching and instruction for marriage and obeying them consecrates the Bride and enters her into a walk of redemption, bringing her to holiness, ready, without spot or wrinkle, for her wedding to a holy Bridegroom.

*I AM YHVH YOUR ELOHIM
Thou shall have no other gods before Me.
Thou shall not take the name of YHVH your Elohim in vain.
Remember to keep the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Honor thy father and thy mother.
Thou shall not kill.
Thou shall not commit adultery.
Thou shall not steal.
Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
Thou shall not covet.*

YHVH's feast days, which sanctify time like Shabbat (the Sabbath), belong in the fourth commandment about observing Shabbat. Dealing honestly in business falls under not bearing false testimony. Paying the tithe to YHVH falls under not stealing. A commandment that does not have an apparent logical reason falls under number one, which constitutes a basic belief in YHVH and the call to heed His commandments whether or not they make sense to us.

On Shavuot, YHVH gave the Ten Statements. Within the Ten Statements is the entire Torah. Therefore it is quite sensible to continue in the tradition that has been for the last 3300 years and call Shavuot the Day of *the Giving of the Torah*.

It was Moses who led the Bride to her Betrothal at Mount Sinai in the Tanakh, and *it is still Moses* who leads the Bride of Yeshua to her Betrothal in the Brit Chadasha/New Testament today (Acts 2). *Same Word/Yeshua, same message, same feast (Shavuot), same Bride, same Bridegroom! One book, one message, one bride and one bridegroom!*

The words spoken at Mount Sinai are the same words Yeshua shared with the people in Matthew 5. The Beatitudes outline the whole message of the Ten Statements or categories given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, but in a deeper heart level. Yeshua is the *personification* of the words spoken at Mount Sinai. The words spoken are flesh and live among us today. As part of Messiah, may we embrace all these words and learn to implement them in our lives to enjoy the fullness of what our Bridegroom has for us today as we prepare for our wedding day yet to come.

Hebrews 4:1-2 “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His *rest* [Sabbath / holiness], let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed *the gospel was preached to us as well as to them [at Mount Sinai]*; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith/*emunah* in those who heard it.”

Yeshua summarized the Ten Statements and the whole Torah in this one sentence: “*And thou shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Mark 12:28-31 “Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He [Yeshua] had answered them well, asked Him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’ Yeshua answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: “Hear [Shema], O Israel, YHVH our Elohim, YHVH is one. And you shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these’ ” (Leviticus 19:18; Zechariah 8:17; Matthew 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8).

Hebrews 12:18-29 “You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them,

because they could not bear what was commanded: 'If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.' The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, 'I am trembling with fear.' But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the assembly of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to YHVH, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Yeshua the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

“See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens (Haggai 2:6).’ The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken-- that is, created things-- so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship YHVH acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire’ (Deuteronomy 4:24).”

Shabbat Shalom
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