

Moses' Father-in-law Jethro Visits the Camp (late May 1446 BC)

Exodus 18

Jethro Brings Moses' Family

1 Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.
2 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife Zipporah after he had sent her back,
3 and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom (for Moses had said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land"),
4 and the other Eliezer (for Moses had said, "The God of my father has been my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").
5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and his wife, came to Moses in the desert where he was camping by the mountain of God.
6 He said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons with her."
7 Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him; they each asked about the other's welfare, and then they went into the tent.

Jethro Believes in Yahweh

8 Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt for Israel's sake, and all the hardship that had come on them along the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.
9 Jethro rejoiced because of all the good that the LORD had done for Israel, whom he had delivered from the hand of Egypt.
10 Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from the Egyptians' control!
11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, for in the thing in which they dealt proudly against them he has destroyed them."
12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat food with the father-in-law of Moses before God.

Moses Judges the People

13 On the next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening.
14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"
15 Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God.
16 When they have a dispute, it comes to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the decrees of God and his laws."

Jethro's Advice

17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good!
18 You will surely wear out, both you and these people who are with you, for this is too heavy a burden for you; you are not able to do it by yourself.
19 Now listen to me, I will give you advice, and may God be with you: You be a representative for the people to God, and you bring their disputes to God;
20 warn them of the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.
21 But you choose from the people capable men, God-fearing, men of truth, those who hate bribes, and put them over the people as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.
22 They will judge the people under normal circumstances, and every difficult case they will bring to you, but every small case they themselves will judge, so that you may make it easier for yourself, and they will bear the burden with you.
23 If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will be able to go home satisfied."
24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he had said.
25 Moses chose capable men from all Israel, and he made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.
26 They judged the people under normal circumstances; the difficult cases they would bring to Moses, but every small case they would judge themselves.
27 Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and so Jethro went to his own land.

Arrival at Mount Sinai (1 Sivan [May/June] 1446 BC)

Exodus 19:1–2	Numbers 33:15
<p>1 In the third month after the Israelites went out from the land of Egypt, on the very day, they came to the Desert of Sinai.</p> <p>2 After they journeyed from Rephidim, they came to the Desert of Sinai, and they camped in the desert; Israel camped there in front of the mountain.</p>	<p>15 They traveled from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.</p>

Preparations for Receiving Yahweh's Covenant (1–2 Sivan [May/June] 1446 BC)

Exodus 19:3–15

Yahweh's Opening Statement to Moses With Conditions

3 Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, "Thus you will tell the house of Jacob, and declare to the people of Israel:

4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I lifted you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

5 And now, if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then you will be my special possession out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine,

6 and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you will speak to the Israelites." [cf. [1 Pet 2:9](#)]

Israel's Acceptance of Yahweh's Conditional Statement

7 So Moses came and summoned the elders of Israel. He set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him,

8 and all the people answered together, "All that the LORD has commanded we will do!" So Moses brought the words of the people back to the LORD.

Preparations for the Meeting Between Yahweh and Israel

9 The LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and so that they will always believe in you." And Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10 The LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and make them wash their clothes

11 and be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

12 You must set boundaries for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves not to go up on the mountain nor touch its edge. Whoever touches the mountain will surely be put to death! [[Heb 12:20](#)]

13 No hand will touch him—but he will surely be stoned or shot through, whether a beast or a human being; he must not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast they may go up on the mountain."

14 Then Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes.

15 He said to the people, "Be ready for the third day. Do not go near your wives."

Yahweh Descends on Mount Sinai (3 Sivan [May/June] 1446 BC)

Exodus 19:16–25

16 On the third day in the morning there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn; all the people who were in the camp trembled.

17 Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their place at the foot of the mountain.

18 Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently.

19 When the sound of the horn grew louder and louder, Moses was speaking and God was answering him with a voice.

20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

21 The LORD said to Moses, "Go down and solemnly warn the people, lest they force their way through to the LORD to look, and many of them perish.

22 Let the priests also, who approach the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break through against them."

23 Moses said to the LORD, "The people are not able to come up to Mount Sinai, because you solemnly warned us, 'Set boundaries for the mountain and set it apart.'"

24 The LORD said to him, "Go, get down, and come up, and Aaron with you, but do not let the priests and the people force their way through to come up to the LORD, lest he break through against them."

25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

The Ten Words (3 Sivan [May/June] 1446 BC)

Exodus 20:1–17

Deuteronomy 5:4–21

Preamble

1 God spoke all these words:

2 “I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.

The Ten Commandments

3 “You shall have no other gods before me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below.

5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me,

6 and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold guiltless anyone who takes his name in vain.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy.

9 For six days you may labor and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the resident foreigner who is in your gates.

11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy. [cf. [Acts 4:24; 14:15](#)]

12 “Honor your father and your mother, [[Matt 15:4; Eph 6:2](#)]

that you may live a long time

in the land the LORD your God is giving to you.

13 “You shall not murder. [[Matt 5:21; James 2:11](#)]

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.” [[Rom 7:7; 13:9](#)]

4 The LORD spoke face to face with you at the mountain, from the middle of the fire.

5 (I was standing between the LORD and you at that time to reveal to you the message of the LORD, because you were afraid of the fire and would not go up the mountain.)

He said:

6 “I am the LORD your God, he who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the place of slavery.

7 You must not have any other gods besides me.

8 You must not make for yourself an image of anything in heaven above, on earth below, or in the waters beneath.

9 You must not worship or serve them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. I punish the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons for the sin of the fathers who reject me,

10 but I show covenant faithfulness to the thousands who choose me and keep my commandments.

11 You must not make use of the name of the LORD your God for worthless purposes, for the LORD will not exonerate anyone who abuses his name that way.

12 Be careful to observe the Sabbath day just as the LORD your God has commanded you.

13 You are to work and do all your tasks in six days,

14 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.

On that day you must not do any work, you, your son, your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, your ox, your donkey, any other animal, or the foreigner who lives with you,

so that your male and female slaves, like yourself, may have rest.

15 Recall that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there by strength and power. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

16 Honor your father and your mother

just as the LORD your God has commanded you to do, so that your days may be extended and that it may go well with you in the land that he is about to give you.

17 You must not murder.

18 You must not commit adultery.

19 You must not steal.

20 You must not offer false testimony against another.

21 You must not desire another man’s wife, nor should you crave his house, his field, his male and female servants, his ox, his donkey, or anything else he owns.” [[Matt 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20](#)]

Israel Asks Moses to Act as Intermediary (3 Sivan [May/June] 1446 BC)

Exodus 20:18–21

18 All the people were seeing the thundering and the lightning, and heard the sound of the horn, and saw the mountain smoking—and when the people saw it they trembled with fear and kept their distance.

19 They said to Moses,

“You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us, lest we die.” [\[Heb 12:19\]](#)

20 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you so that you do not sin.”

21 The people kept their distance, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

Deuteronomy 5:22a–33

22a The LORD said these things to your entire assembly at the mountain from the middle of the fire, the cloud, and the darkness with a loud voice, and that was all he said.

23 Then, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness while the mountain was ablaze, all your tribal leaders and elders approached me.

24 You said, “The LORD our God has shown us his great glory and we have heard him speak from the middle of the fire. It is now clear to us that God can speak to human beings and they can keep on living.

25 But now, why should we die, because this intense fire will consume us! If we keep hearing the voice of the LORD our God we will die!

26 Who is there from the entire human race who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the middle of the fire as we have, and has lived?

27 You go near so that you can hear everything the LORD our God is saying

and then you can tell us whatever he says to you; then we will pay attention and do it.”

28 When the LORD heard you speaking to me, he said to me, “I have heard what these people have said to you—they have spoken well.

29 If only it would really be their desire to fear me and obey all my commandments in the future, so that it may go well with them and their descendants forever.

30 Go and tell them, ‘Return to your tents!’

31 But as for you, remain here with me so I can declare to you all the commandments, statutes, and ordinances that you are to teach them, so that they can carry them out in the land I am about to give them.”

32 Be careful, therefore, to do exactly what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn right or left!

33 Walk just as he has commanded you so that you may live, that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land you are going to possess.

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