

## ~JETHRO (328)

(Jeth'ro) [from a root meaning more than enough, overflow]

- **Moses father-in-law, a Kenite.**
- And Moses became a shepherd of the flock of **Jethro**, the priest of Midian, whose son-in-law he was. While he was driving the flock to the west side of the wilderness, he came at length to the mountain of the true God, to Horeb. (**Exodus 3:1**)
- And the sons of the Kenite, whose son-in-law Moses was, came up out of the city of palm trees with the sons of Judah to the wilderness of Judah, which is to the south of Arad. Then they went and took up dwelling with the people. (**Judges 1:16**)
- **Jethro** is also called **Reuel**.
- Then Moses said to Hobab the son of **Reuel** the **Midianite**, the father-in-law of Moses; We are pulling away for the place about which Yehowah said; I shall give it to you. Do come with us, and we shall certainly do good to you, because Yehowah has spoken good concerning Israel. (**Numbers 10:29**)
- **Jethro** may have been a title, whereas **Reuel** was a personal name. However, it was not uncommon for an Arabian chief to have two or even more names, as is attested to by many inscriptions. **Jethro** is spelled, **Jether**, in the **Masoretic** text at;
- Accordingly Moses went and returned to **Jethro** his father-in-law and said to him; I want to go, please, and return to my brothers who are in Egypt that I may see whether they are still alive. So **Jethro** said to Moses; Go in peace. (**Exodus 4:18**)
- **Jethro** was the priest of Midian. Being head of a large family of at least seven daughters and one named son.
- Subsequently Pharaoh got to hear of this thing, and he attempted to kill Moses, but Moses ran away from Pharaoh that he might dwell in the land of Midian, and he took a seat by a well. (**Exodus 2:15**)
- Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and as usual they

came and drew water and filled the gutters to water their fathers flock. (**Exodus 2:16**)

- Then Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, the father-in-Law of Moses; We are pulling away for the place about which Yehowah said; I shall give it to you. Do come with us, and we shall certainly do good to you, because Yehowah has spoken good concerning Israel. (**Numbers 10:29**)
- And having the responsibility not only to provide for his family materially but also to lead them in worship, he is appropriately called the priest, or chieftain, of Midian.
- This of itself does not necessarily indicate worship of Yehowah God, but **Jethro's** ancestors may have had true worship inculcated in them, and some of this perhaps continued in the family. His conduct suggests at least a deep respect for the God of Moses and Israel.
- Consequently **Jethro** said; Blessed be Yehowah, who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of Egypt. (**Exodus 18:10**)
- Now I do know that Yehowah is greater than all the **other** gods by reason of this affair in which they acted presumptuously against them. (**Exodus 18:11**)
- Then **Jethro**, Moses father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and all the older men of Israel came to eat bread with Moses father-in-law, before the true God. (**Exodus 18:12**)
- **Jethro's** association with his future son-in-law began shortly after Moses fled from Egypt in **1553 B.C.E.** Moses assisted **Jethro's** daughters in watering their father's flocks, and this they reported to their father, who, in turn, extended hospitality to Moses.
- Moses then took up living in Jethro's household and eventually married his daughter Zipporah. After some 40 years of caring for **Jethro's** flocks in the vicinity of Mount Horeb or Sinai, Moses was summoned by Yehowah back to Egypt, and he returned with his father-in-laws good wishes.
- Subsequently Pharaoh got to hear of this thing, and he

- attempted to kill Moses, but Moses ran away from Pharaoh that he might dwell in the land of Midian, and he took a seat by a well. (**Exodus 2:15**)
- Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and as usual they came and drew water and filled the gutters to water their fathers flock. (**Exodus 2:16**)
  - And as usual the shepherds came and drove them away. At this Moses got up and helped the women out and watered their flock. (**Exodus 2:17**)
  - So when they came home to Reuel their father he exclaimed; How is it you have come home so quickly today? (**Exodus 2:18**)
  - To this they said; A certain Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and, besides, he actually drew water for us that he might water the flock. (**Exodus 2:19**)
  - Then he said to his daughters; But where is he? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Call him, that he may eat bread. (**Exodus 2:20**)
  - After that Moses showed willingness to dwell with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. (**Exodus 2:21**)
  - Later she bore a son and he called his name Gershom, because, he said; An alien resident I have come to be in a foreign land. (**Exodus 2:22**)
  - And Moses became a shepherd of the flock of **Jethro**, the priest of Midian, whose son-in-law he was. While he was driving the flock to the west side of the wilderness, he came at length to the mountain of the true God, to Horeb. (**Exodus 3:1**)
  - Accordingly Moses went and returned to **Jethro** his father-in-law and said to him; I want to go, please, and return to my brothers who are in Egypt that I may see whether they are still alive. So **Jethro** said to Moses; Go in peace. (**Exodus 4:18**)
  - At this speech Moses took to flight and became an alien resident in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. (**Acts of Apostles 7:29**)

- And when forty years were fulfilled, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel in the fiery flame of a thornbush. ([Acts of Apostles 7:30](#))
- Later **Jethro** received report of Yehowah's great victory over the Egyptians, and at once he came to Moses at Horeb, bringing along Zipporah and Moses two sons, it was indeed a very warm reunion.
- **Jethro** responded to Moses review of Yehowah's mighty saving acts by blessing God and confessing; Now I do know that Yehowah is greater than all the other gods. He then offered up sacrifices to the true God.
- Now **Jethro** the priest of Midian, Moses father-in-law, got to hear about all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how Yehowah had brought Israel out of Egypt. ([Exodus 18:1](#))
- So **Jethro**, Moses father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses wife, after the sending of her away. ([Exodus 18:2](#))
- And her two sons, the name of one of whom was Gershom, because, he said; An alien resident I have come to be in a foreign land. ([Exodus 18:3](#))
- And the name of the other was Eliezer, because, to quote him, the God of my father is my helper in that he delivered me from Pharaoh's sword. ([Exodus 18:4](#))
- So **Jethro**, Moses father-in-law, and his sons and his wife came to Moses into the wilderness where he was camping, at the mountain of the true God. ([Exodus 18:5](#))
- Then he sent word to Moses; I, your father-in-law, **Jethro**, am come to you, and also your wife and her two sons with her. ([Exodus 18:6](#))
- At once Moses went on out to meet his father-in-law, and he proceeded to prostrate himself and to kiss him, and they each one began asking how the other was getting along. After that they went into the tent. ([Exodus 18:7](#))
- And Moses went to relating to his father-in-law all that Yehowah had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on account of Israel, and all the hardship that had befallen them in the way, and yet Yehowah

was delivering them. (**Exodus 18:8**)

- Then **Jethro** felt glad over all the good that Yehowah had done for Israel in that he had delivered them from the hand of Egypt. (**Exodus 18:9**)
- Consequently **Jethro** said; Blessed be Yehowah, who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of Egypt. (**Exodus 18:10**)
- Now I do know that Yehowah is greater than all the **other** gods by reason of this affair in which they acted presumptuously against them. (**Exodus 18:11**)
- Then **Jethro**, Moses father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and all the older men of Israel came to eat bread with Moses father-in-law, before the true God. (**Exodus 18:12**)
- The next day, **Jethro** observed Moses listening to the problems of the Israelites from the morning till the evening. Perceiving how exhausting this was for both Moses and the people, **Jethro** suggested a system of delegating authority.
- Train other capable and worthy men as chiefs over tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands to decide cases, so that you will hear only what they cannot handle. Moses agreed, and later **Jethro** returned to his own land.
- And it came about on the next day that Moses sat down as usual to serve as judge for the people, and the people kept standing before Moses from the morning till the evening. (**Exodus 18:13**)
- And Moses father-in-law got to see all that he was doing for the people. So he said; What kind of business is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone continue sitting and all the people continue taking their stand before you from morning till evening? (**Exodus 18:14**)
- Then Moses said to his father-in-Law; Because the people keep coming to me to inquire of God. (**Exodus 18:15**)
- In the event that they have a case arise, it must come to me and

**I must judge between the one party and the other, and I must make known the decisions of the true God and his Laws. (Exodus 18:16)**

- **At this Moses father-in-law said to him; It is not good the way you are doing. (Exodus 18:17)**
- **You will surely wear out, both you and this people who are with you, because this business is too big a load for you. You are unable to do it by yourself. (Exodus 18:18)**
- **Now listen to my voice. I shall advise you, and God will prove to be with you. You yourself serve as representative for the people before the true God, and you yourself must bring the cases to the true God. (Exodus 18:19)**
- **And you must warn them of what the regulations and the laws are, and you must make known to them the way in which they should walk and the work that they should do. (Exodus 18:20)**
- **But you yourself should select out of all the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit, and you must set these over them as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties and chiefs over tens. (Exodus 18:21)**
- **And they must judge the people on every proper occasion, and it must occur that every big case they will bring to you, but every small case they themselves will handle as judges. So make it lighter for yourself, and they must carry the load with you. (Exodus 18:22)**
- **If you do this very thing, and God has commanded you, you will then certainly be able to stand it and, besides, this people will all come to their own place in peace. (Exodus 18:23)**
- **Immediately Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. (Exodus 18:24)**
- **And Moses proceeded to choose capable men out of all Israel and to give them positions as heads over the people, as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens. (Exodus 18:25)**
- **And they judged the people on every proper occasion. A hard**

case they would bring to Moses, but every small case they themselves would handle as judges. ([Exodus 18:26](#))

- After that Moses saw his father-in-law off, and he went his way to his land. ([Exodus 18:27](#))
- **Jethro's** son Hobab was requested by Moses to be a scout. Apparently with some persuasion, he responded, and some of his people entered the Promised Land with Israel.
- Then Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, the father-in-Law of Moses; We are pulling away for the place about which Yehowah said; I shall give it to you. Do come with us, and we shall certainly do good to you, because Yehowah has spoken good concerning Israel. ([Numbers 10:29](#))
- But he said to him; I shall not go along, but I shall go to my own country and to my relatives. ([Numbers 10:30](#))
- At this he said; Please, do not leave us, because, for the reason that you well know where we may encamp in the wilderness, you must serve as eyes for us. ([Numbers 10:31](#))
- And it must occur that in case you should come with us, yes, it must occur that with what goodness Yehowah will do good with us, we, in turn, will do good to you. ([Numbers 10:32](#))
- So they went marching from the mountain of Yehowah for a journey of three days, and the ark of Yehowah's covenant was marching before them for a journey of three days to search out a resting-place for them. ([Numbers 10:33](#))
- Incidentally Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the sons of Hobab, whose son-in-law Moses was, and he had his tent pitched near the big tree in Zaanannim, which is at Kedesh. ([Judges 4:11](#))
- Calls Hobab the father-in-Law of Moses rather than his brother-in-law, and this has caused difficulty in understanding. However, the Hebrew expression normally rendered father-in-law can in a broader sense denote any male relative by marriage and so could also be understood as brother-in-law.

- To say that Hobab instead of **Jethro** was Moses father-in-law would disagree with other texts. If Hobab were another name for **Jethro**, as some suggest, it would also mean that two men, father and son, bore the name Hobab.
- On the other hand, Hobab, as a leading member of the next generation of Kenites, might be used in this text as a representative of his father.

**See Also HOBAB**