

God's Plan for the Nations

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Chapter 18 in the 'Book of Exodus', serves as a link between the first half of this Book which was an action-packed narrative about tense confrontations, dramatic plagues, great rescues, etc., during which period of time the Israelites learned about God's character through the innumerable trials they underwent. This second half focuses on '*The giving of the Law*', which offers us a glimpse into the missionary heart of God and His plans for our world – it is the **crux of Exodus!**

Despite the abounding chaos and confusion in our world, resulting in us wondering who's in control and asking *God if he does have a bigger picture*, the Bible is crystal clear: God's purpose is unchanging, and as He reveals Himself to **all** nations and every ethnic group He created, every single person in the world is given the opportunity, and choice, to accept the saving Grace of Jesus Christ. Each time we become disillusioned by the events taking place in our world, let's remind ourselves that God's mission cannot be thwarted; **He will be triumphant!**

Cultural differences are challenging, but despite the fact that Moses, an Israelite, lived in a *foreign land* and had a cross-cultural marriage (like my wife and myself, and many other people in our world), he willingly and eagerly shared his testimony with Jethro, his father-in-law who was a priest of Midian, a *Gentile* religious leader. Moses gave Jethro comprehensive details about God's mercy and grace as He not only freed the Israelites from slavery under Pharaoh, but revealed His character to them, dealing patiently with their lack of trust and disobedience during their journey in the wilderness. As Moses recounted the good news about God's power and love for His people, Jethro praised and believed in the 'God' of Israel, and made sacrifices to God, bringing Jews and Gentiles together in fellowship as they shared a meal. Moses was an effective witness!

We can partner with God in fulfilling HIS vision, by sharing the Gospel with others through *personal testimonies* about what Jesus has done for us. This authentic witnessing draws people to Christ because we're not preaching, nor is it *religious propaganda!* Try some of these ideas, continually seeking wisdom and discernment from The Holy Spirit – you never know which doors will be opened for you: eat at an ethnic restaurant; check the tags to find out which country your clothes were made in, and pray for the people there; in your neighbourhood, befriend someone from another culture; go on a short-term mission trip; place a world-map in your home; encourage missionaries or cross-cultural workers; pray for the global workers we support as a Church; invite an international student to your home for a meal, etc. The possibilities are endless, and God always places you right where He wants you! We become world-class Christians, serving as God's has ordained, when we have a heart for the *whole world*, helping nations to realize and accept the surpassing love of Jesus Christ.

Globally, nations are worshipping false gods, deifying humans/creation, following false religions, pursuing idols and diversions, BUT the **One True God** deserves our worship and praise. Jesus died for the sins of **the whole world**, but He rose from the dead and is now the Lord of all nations. One day people from every tribe will kneel before the throne of God, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and they will acknowledge His greatness and worship Him forever! Praise God for His unconditional love and mercy!



EXODUS

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. How did you come by your name? Does it have a meaning to you or those who named you?
2. Name a cross-cultural experience you had (e.g. marriage, neighbor, travel, work). What benefits or what difficulties arose as a result?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Ex 18:1-12.

3. What prompted Jethro to visit Moses? How did the names of the sons of Moses give testimony to what God had done?
4. What is the central theme of Moses' story? In your own words describe Jethro's response to Moses' description of the Exodus?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Which person are you more like, Moses the teller or Jethro the hearer of the story? Explain your answer.
6. Pastor Ashwin spoke of being a 'World-Class Christian' and gave several examples of how one could walk that out. (See summary) Which of these or other ideas might the Holy Spirit be prompting you to do?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Where you live is not an accident. God has put you in a particular community for a purpose. What do you believe God's reasons are for putting you there? Ask God what more you can do. Then obey His promptings.

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 18:1-12

¹ Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

² After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her ³ and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land"; ⁴ and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

⁵ Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. ⁶ Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. ⁸ Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

⁹ Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for ¹² he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." ¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

This week's writers: Asha Phillips, Sandi Somers, Elsa Henderson, Gene & Karen Gibbs, David McMillin, Cheryl Smele

