

(4) Could the *hand* refer to the altar just built by Moses? The Hebrew word for hand (*yad*) also means *monument*. According to this view, the altar was a monument (or hand) to Jehovah's throne, or rule, which had been challenged by Amalek.

Another difficulty is in the word translated *throne* (Heb., *kes*). This is an unusual spelling for *throne*, which is usually *kise'*. Cassuto thinks that *kes* means a plan or reckoning, and thinks that it refers to the Lord's plan to blot out Amalek's memory. This interpretation makes the first part of the quotation difficult to understand.

Other interpreters propose altering the spelling of throne (*kes*) to the word for banner (*nes*), and thus making it refer back to the *banner* of the LORD mentioned in vs. 15. R.S.V. accepts this conjectural change, and translates the passage "A hand upon the banner of the LORD." We feel that the verse makes good sense without making changes in the Hebrew text that have no support in the ancient manuscripts.

Even the translators of the Greek O.T. seem to have had difficulty with Exodus 17:16. The Greek reads, "For with a *secret* hand the LORD wages war upon Amalek from generation to generation." There was surely nothing secret about the way the LORD fought with Amalek!

The general idea that the Lord was going to fight Amalek always is clear from the verse. The exact wording for a translation remains a problem.

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THE TEXT OF EXODUS  
TRANSLATION

**18** Now Je-thro, the priest of Mid-i-an, Mo-ses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Mo-ses, and for Is-ra-el his people, how that Je-ho-vah had brought Is-ra-el out of E-gypt.  
(2) And Je-thro, Mo-ses' father-in-law, took Zip-po-rah, Mo-ses'

wife, after he had sent her away, (3) and her two sons; of whom the name of the one was Ger-shom; for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land: (4) and the name of the other was E-li-e-zer; for *he said*, The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pha-raoh. (5) And Je-thro, Mo-ses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Mo-ses into the wilderness where he was encamped, at the mount of God: (6) and he said unto Mo-ses, I, thy father-in-law Je-thro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. (7) And Mo-ses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. (8) And Mo-ses told his father-in-law all that Je-ho-vah had done unto Pha-raoh and to the E-gyp-tians for Is-ra-el's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how Je-ho-vah delivered them. (9) And Je-thro rejoiced for all the goodness which Je-ho-vah had done to Is-ra-el, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the E-gyp- tians. (10) And Je-thro said, Blessed be Je-ho-vah, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the E-gyp-tians, and out of the hand of Pha-raoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the E-gyp-tians. (11) Now I know that Je-ho-vah is greater than all gods; yea, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly against them. (12) And Je-thro, Mo-ses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aar-on came and all the elders of Is-ra-el, to eat bread with Mo-ses father-in-law before God.

(13) And it came to pass on the morrow, that Mo-ses sat to judge the people: and the people stood about Mo-ses from the morning unto the evening. (14) And when Mo-ses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand about thee from morning unto even? (15) And Mo-ses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: (16) when they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. (17) And Mo-ses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest

is not good. (18) Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for the thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. (19) Harken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee: be thou for the people to Godward, and bring thou the causes unto God: (20) and thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. (21) Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: (22) and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. (23) If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. (24) So Mo-ses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. (25) And Mo-ses chose able men out of all Is-ra-el, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. (26) And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Mo-ses, but every small matter they judged themselves. (27) And Mo-ses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

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EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER EIGHTEEN  
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After careful reading propose a topic or theme for Ex. 18.
2. What had Jethro heard about? (18:1)
3. Whom did Jethro bring with him when he came to Moses? (18:2-3)

4. What did the names of Moses' two sons mean? (18:3-4)
5. What formalities began the meeting of Moses and Jethro? (18:5-7)
6. What did Moses tell Jethro about? (18:8)
7. What was Jethro's reaction to Moses' report? (18:9)
8. What did Jethro learn about the LORD from Moses' report? (18:11)
9. What priestly act did Jethro perform? (18:12)
10. How long did the people stand around Moses? Why? (18:13)
11. From whom did Moses get knowledge to make judgments? (18:15)
12. What did Jethro advise Moses to do? (18:20, 22)
13. Over what groups were judges and rulers to be appointed? (18:21, 25)
14. Did Moses hearken to the advice of his father-in-law? (18:24)
15. Who judged the small cases? (18:26)
16. Where did Jethro go after the visit? (18:27)

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#### EXODUS EIGHTEEN: JETHRO'S VISIT AND JUDGES APPOINTED

- I. Jethro's Visit; 18:1-12, 27.
  1. His coming; 18:1-6.
  2. His conversation with Moses; 18:7-11.
  3. His worship; 18:12.
- II. Judges Appointed; 18:13-26.
  1. Moses' labor; 18:13-16.
  2. Jethro's advice; 18:17-23.
  3. Moses' compliance; 18:24-26; Deut. 1:9-18.

#### EXODUS EIGHTEEN: JETHRO, A GOOD MAN

1. Kept informed about God and His people; 18:1.
2. Recognized Moses' just claims to his wife and sons; 18:2.
3. Courteous; 18:5-6.

4. Rejoiced in others' blessings; 18:9.
5. Praised the Lord; 18:10.
6. Worshipped; 18:12.
7. Gave good advice; 18:19-22.
8. Recognized God's final and supreme authority; 18:23.

#### GODLY FAMILIES (Ex. 18:1-12)

1. Keep informed about one another; 18:1.
2. Seek association with one another; 18:2-5.
3. Courteous; 18:6-7.
4. Converse on the things of God; 18:8.
5. Bring spiritual blessings to one another; 18:10-11.
6. Worship together; 18:12.

#### THE FOLLY OF ONE-MAN RULE (18:13-23)

1. Overburdens one individual; 18:18.
2. Delays justice; wears out the people; 18:18.
3. Interferes with the most important work; 18:19-20. Acts 6:2, 4.
  - a. Going "Godward" for the people; 18:19.
  - b. Teaching statutes and laws; 18:20.
4. Leaves many useful people unemployed; 18:21.

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#### EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

##### 1. *What is the subject matter of Exodus 18?*

It tells of the coming of Jethro with Moses' wife and sons to Moses (18:1-12). Then it tells of Jethro's suggestion to Moses that he appoint judges to help him govern the people. We entitle the chapter JETHRO AND THE JUDGES.

##### 2. *What spiritual implications can we observe in chapter eighteen?*

We can see one of the fulfillments of God's promise to Abraham: "I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse" (Gen. 12:3). Jethro blessed the

LORD and His people Israel. As a result Jethro and his descendants received rich blessings after that.

We can also see the fulfillment of another part of God's promise to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the *nations* of the earth *be blessed*" (Gen. 22:18). Jethro was a non-Israelite who was blessed because of his association with the "seed" (descendants) of Abraham.

Consider the *joy* which God brings to nations that are friendly to His people: "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people" (Deut. 32:43).

In the coming of Jethro to Moses there is a resemblance between Moses and the Lord Jesus. Many nations hated Moses and the Israelites (for example, the Amalekites). Many peoples hated Christ Jesus (Acts 4:26-27). But a few, like Jethro, came to Moses. Similarly a few people of other nations came to Jesus, "ill at ease in the old dispensation," seeking the things of God. See John 12:20-21; Matt. 2:1-2. Jethro was the first-fruits of many heathen who would later come seeking the living God.

### 3. *What had Jethro heard about?* (18:1)

He had heard about all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people. Jethro had kept informed of the progress and fortunes of Israel since they left Egypt. The news about Israel's deliverance from Egypt was widely known in all the nations around Egypt. See 15:14ff.

Regarding the name of Jethro and his office as priest, see the notes on 2:16-18; 3:1.

It is notable that Jethro had heard that the LORD (Jehovah) had brought Israel out. Even the word-of-mouth reports about Israel gave credit to Jehovah and not to Moses only. Apparently even Jehovah's name had become known.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Greek LXX translates both the Hebrew words *elohim* (God) and *Yahweh* (the LORD) in Ex. 18:1 as *kurios*, or Lord. This is an illustration of the frequent lack of consistency in the LXX renderings of the divine names. This creates problems for those who desire to divide up the Biblical text according to the "sources" they think they can detect on the basis of the use of different divine names.

The name *Jethro* and the title *father-in-law* give some interpreters a bit of trouble. There is only one Hebrew word (*hothen*) for both father-in-law and brother-in-law. This term is applied to Hobab in Judges 4:11, where it is translated *father-in-law* in King James and R.S.V., but *brother-in-law* in A.S.V. Since Hobab was the son of Reuel (or Jethro; Ex. 2:18; 3:1; Num. 10:29), we are sure that Hobab was Moses' wife's brother, Moses' brother-in-law.

4. *Whom did Jethro bring with him?* (18:2-4)

He brought Zipporah, Moses' wife, and her two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

We last read of these in 4:24-26. Moses had sent them back to Midian after the difficulty at the inn. Some have felt that Moses sent them back from Egypt during the conflict with Pharaoh. There is, however, no hint that they were with Moses when he met Aaron at the mount of God, or any time after that. See 4:27. We feel that Zipporah and the sons returned to Midian shortly after the inn experience.

We admire Moses' self-restraint and faith in getting along without dissatisfaction on his part because of his separation from them. This separation had lasted no less than six months, and probably longer. (Mark 10:29-30)

Regarding the meanings of the names *Gershom*<sup>2</sup> and *Eliezer*,<sup>3</sup> see notes on 2:22.

John Davis wisely cautions that it is precarious to attempt to analyze the whole character and disposition of some Old Testament person on the basis of the etymology of his name alone. That is true; but sometimes the names do have significance which we ought to notice clearly.

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<sup>2</sup>Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 187, suggests that Gershom's name is derived from the verb *garash*, meaning to drive or thrust away. This is possible, but we still prefer the usual explanation, "a stranger there."

<sup>3</sup>Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 187, argues that Moses' use of the name *Eliezer* (a name containing *El* as the divine name) supports the view that the name *Yahweh* was unknown until Moses' vision (sic!) at the burning bush at Sinai! To assert this is to deny the historical accuracy of all the uses of the name *Yahweh* (Jehovah) in Genesis (as in Gen. 22:14).

It appears to us that Gershom was probably much older than Eliezer, having been born near the start of Moses' stay in Midian and Elizer near its end. This would make Zipporah a rather elderly mother at Eliezer's birth, perhaps sixty years old. All this is rather uncertain, however.

5. *Where did Jethro meet Moses?* (18:5)

He met him at the mount of God, at Rephidim. See 19:2. This location appears to have been very close to Sinai, in the Wady esh-Sheikh, perhaps within ten miles of Sinai. Probably Moses' camp was somewhat in advance of most of the Israelites' tents. See 19:1; 18:5.

The events at Rephidim - the water from the rock, the war with Amalek, and Jethro's visit - all occupied only fifteen days. See 16:1 and 19:1.

6. *How did Jethro greet Moses?* (18:6-7)

With all the ceremony and exuberance of an Arab greeting!

First, Jethro, as he came near to Moses' dwelling, sent word ahead: "I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee. . . ." (The Greek and Samaritan Bibles render this, "Behold, thy father-in-law Jethro is come." This puts the announcement into the mouths of others, rather than from Jethro himself.)

Moses then went out to meet Jethro. Moses bowed before Jethro. (Compare Gen. 43:26, 28.) Then he kissed him (probably on both cheeks). (Compare Ex. 4:27.) They asked one another about their welfare. Arabs still make a big ceremony out of greetings. No business can be discussed until all the personal news has been inquired into. (We rather like this. People are more important than business anytime.) The word translated *welfare* ("they asked each other of their *welfare*") is the Hebrew *shalom*, or peace.

Moses respected Jethro for his wisdom as well as his age and for being his father-in-law. Such humility and respect for age is not popular in our times, but it is highly commended in the scriptures, and needs to be restored.

7. *What did Moses report to Jethro?* (18:8)

He reported all that JEHOVAH had done. He gave all the credit to Jehovah, which was surely the right thing to do. Notice that Moses used the divine name *Jehovah* (Yahweh) in reporting God's deeds for them. Note also that the text says God had done these things "for Israel's sake." Israel was God's son, His firstborn (4:23), His people (7:4). How gracious God had been to Israel on their journey in the face of Israel's almost-constant murmuring and disobedience! Moses also told Jethro of the travail and hardship they had endured on the way, and how Jehovah had delivered them from all of it. Compare Num. 20:14. Interestingly, the text does not suggest that Moses related to Jethro about the rebelliousness of the people,

8. *How did Jethro react to the news from Moses?* (18:9-10)

He rejoiced.<sup>4</sup> Then he blessed Jehovah for delivering the people. Compare I Kings 8:56.

Jethro was a good man. He could rejoice with them that rejoice. He had no jealousy or cynicism. He was a lover of good. He was glad to see how greatly his son-in-law had advanced from shepherding!

The R.S.V. reading of 18:10-11 is an example of the numerous arbitrary renderings in that version that so impair the usefulness of the R.S.V. Old Testament. The last phrase of verse ten ("who hath delivered . . . from . . . Egyptians") is removed and placed in the middle of verse eleven. The King James and A.S.V. follow the Hebrew reading. The Greek reading omits the last clause of vs. 10, and in this the R.S.V. follows the Greek. But the insertion of the last phrase of verse ten into the middle of eleven has neither the support of the Greek nor the Hebrew Bible.

Cassuto<sup>5</sup> helpfully says that the three-fold use of the word *deliverance* in vss. nine and ten is intended for emphasis, and

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<sup>4</sup>The Greek Bible here reads "He was amazed" (or "shuddered"). This is based on a Jewish interpretation, which is recorded in a *Midrash* written in later centuries. See Cassuto, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>5</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 216.

that the omission of the last clause in the LXX, although accepted by many scholars, is only due to lack of understanding! We agree.

9. *What testimony about Jehovah did Jethro make? (18:11)*

Jethro said, "Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods, yea (He is greater even) in the thing wherein they (the gods) acted haughtily against them" (against the Israelites).

Jehovah excelled the gods of Egypt in the very thing in which their gods (and their worshippers) haughtily claimed superiority (such as the power to preserve their people). Jethro rightly perceived that the struggles among nations were conflicts of principalities and powers, conflicts between spiritual powers in high places.<sup>6</sup> Compare Ephesians 6:12; 3:10.

Jethro's declaration that he now recognizes Jehovah's great superiority is in conflict with the so-called Kenite theory, namely that Moses first learned of Jehovah as a God from the Midianites, or Kenites, of whom Jethro was one. Jethro learned about Jehovah from Moses and not Moses from Jethro. The Bible clearly indicates that Israel's forefathers had known Jehovah since the very beginning.

On the other hand we do not assume that Jethro did not at least know the name of Jehovah and a little bit about Him. The use of the word *now* in 18:11 contrasts present knowledge with former knowledge, not present knowledge with former total ignorance of Jehovah.

10. *What religious ceremony did Jethro perform? (18:12)*

He offered a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. After this Aaron and the elders came and ate bread with Jethro.

The fact that Aaron and the elders came stresses the validity of Jethro's priesthood. He was a legitimate priest before God, like Melchizedek.

The act of eating together shows that a bond of community and harmony was established between them and Jethro.

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<sup>6</sup>Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Aaron had not actually met Jethro previously.

Jethro offered his sacrifices to *God (elohim)*. This is a very striking expression. In no other account of sacrifices in the book of the law (Gen. to Deut.) is a sacrifice offered to *God*; it is always to *Jehovah* (the LORD, Yahweh). Inasmuch as *Jehovah* is the covenant name which God used to designate Himself as the God of the chosen people, we suppose that the unique use of the term *God* here with reference to sacrifice was employed because Jethro was an alien. Despite his declaration about Jehovah's greatness, he had not yet attained to the covenant relationship with Yahweh that Israel had.

What were the sacrifices that Jethro offered like? We surely know very little about the sacrifices practiced before the time of the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. Details of how the offerings were made and what was offered are not preserved for us. We read of offerings by Abel, Noah, Abraham, and others. From archaeological sources we know that even the pagan Canaanites (at Ugarit) in the time of Moses made offerings which had names like those made by the Israelites - peace offerings, trespass (or guilt) offerings, burnt offerings, etc.<sup>7</sup>

We do know this much: since the very beginning God has required *blood* sacrifices from His worshippers. Without shedding of blood there is no release from sins (Heb. 9:22). In our times we cannot be right with God without accepting the blood of His son Jesus as our covering (or atonement) for sins.

The expression "before God" in 18:12 does not imply that the tabernacle had yet been built and that this visit of Jethro occurred later and is out of chronological position, as numerous interpreters assert. Any sacrifice offered in genuine worship of God or in an act of seeking God's favor will be "before God."

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<sup>7</sup>Millar Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), p. 234.

11. *What was the significance of Jethro's visit to Israel and Moses?*

Certainly it must have been very reassuring. Moses had had nothing but trouble and contention with Israel from the outset of their trip. There had been hunger, thirst, quarrelling, and attack by enemies. Jethro's friendly visit was surely a lift for their spirits.

Cassuto (a Jewish scholar) feels that the favor shown to Israel by Jethro was indicative of the wonderful destiny of the children of Israel, and of their election (God's choosing them) shortly to come up at Mt. Sinai. Cassuto entitles chapter eighteen "Israel welcomed as one of the nations of the world." To a degree he is correct in this. However, Israel's "welcome" was by NO means the unanimous sentiment of the surrounding nations!

12. *What did Jethro see Moses doing? (18:13-14)*

He saw him the next day spending all the day judging disputes between Israelites. The Israelites had said harsh things against Moses, but they sought him in times of disagreement among themselves.

It has been supposed that the division of the spoil of the Amalekites created numerous disagreement which demanded impartial decisions on the part of Moses. This may have been true, but we do not know for certain.

Note that the people *stood* before Moses, but he *sat*. These were customary positions for litigants and judges.

Probably the expression "from morning unto evening" should not be taken to mean every second of all that time.

13. *What did Moses make known to the people? (18:15-16)*

He made known unto them the will of God in cases of dispute. He taught them the statutes (ordinances) of God and His laws.

Moses was unique among prophets in that God spoke to him face to face (mouth to mouth). Num.12:7. The Lord knew Moses face to face (Deut. 34:10). If Moses did not know God's judgment on a matter, he would pray and then listen to what the Lord commanded about it. See Num. 9:6, 8.

The people seemed to accept Moses' judgments as God's, at least in their cooler moments.

At the foundation of this passage is the profound truth that all justice issues from God! Every judge, lawyer, and citizen needs to recognize this. Without God there is no real justice.

Of course, the statutes of God had not yet been issued in written form in the manner that they were soon written thereafter at Sinai (Ex. 21:1ff).

14. *Why was Moses' work as judge not good?* (18:17-18)

It was not good because he could not handle it all alone as he was trying to do. He was wearing himself out, and wearing the people out too, because they had to stand in line for long hours in the desert sunshine waiting for their cases to be heard.

Like many a Christian leader, Moses was wearing himself out by unnecessarily trying to do everything single-handedly. This is not always the sign of overambition. Sometimes it is the mark of the overconscientious and the overanxious.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it was wearing out the people, a problem often overlooked. Delay in administering justice was one of the causes of Absalom's revolt against David (II Sam. 15:1-6).

We feel that Jethro's warning and his advice to Moses were good. Moses himself acknowledged that he could not "carry" all the people "because it is too burdensome for me" (Num. 11:14). Another time he asked, "How can I bear the load and burden of you?" (Deut. 1:12) Even our Lord once told His apostles to "Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest" (Mark 6:31).

15. *What responsibility was Moses to keep for himself?* (18:19-20, 22)

(1) He would be the representative of the people before God. No one else could do that job as Moses could. (2) He would bring their causes unto God by prayer. (3) He would teach them statutes and laws. (4) He would judge

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<sup>8</sup>Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

only the hardest cases that other judges could not decide. Moses, like the apostles later (Acts 6:2, 4), dared not neglect the most important jobs of prayer and of teaching.

Jethro recognized Moses' unique relationship with God. By this relationship Moses could come "before God," or "Godward."

Jethro's words "And God be with you" seem to be a polite way of urging Moses to do as Jethro proposed. But it also carries the idea of submission to God's will, if God would not confirm his advice. See 18:23.

For Moses to show them "the way" was quite literal in Israel's case. But metaphorically it meant the way of life. Compare Gen. 6:12.

16. *What were the qualifications for Israel's judges?* (18:21-22)

(1) *Able* men. The word here translated "able" often means strength, usually physical. The Greek O.T. translates it *dunatos*, meaning strong, mighty, powerful. We suppose that the strength was more strength of character than of body. A judge must be tough-minded (but sometimes physically tough too!).

(2) *God-fearing*. (3) *Men of truth*. (4) Those *hating bribes*, unjust gain, or filthy lucre.

After the judges were selected, Moses gave them a marvelous charge. Read Deut. 1:16-17! Compare II Chron. 19:5-7.

17. *How many people did each judge handle?* (18:22, 25)

Some were over thousands, some hundreds, some fifties, some tens. Dividing these totals into Israel's population (600,000 men), we get about 78,600 judges!<sup>9</sup> This averaged out to about one judge in every family. Everyone in Israel was either involved as judge or was related to someone who was.

"At all seasons" (18:22) means "at all ordinary times."

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<sup>9</sup>Keil and Delitzsch and others argue that we need not assume the existence of many thousands of judges, because the judges were taken out of the heads of the tribes (Deut. 1:15), and these can hardly have amounted to many hundreds, to say nothing of many thousands. To this we can only ask, How can there have been judges over *tens* without using one-tenth of the total population?

Moses handled the most difficult cases.

18. *What would be the results of Moses' taking Jethro's advice?* (18:23)

(1) Moses would be able to endure his work load.

(2) The people of Israel would go to their place in peace. "Their place" was Canaan, of course. Jethro recognized this as the appointed and true home of Israel.

19. *When did Moses appoint all these judges?* (18:24-25)

Moses appointed them later, at Mt. Sinai. See Deut. 1:9-18. One gets the impression here in Ex. 18 that Moses at once appointed the judges. However, the text does not actually say that he did it that day. And upon a moment's reflection we realize that setting up a system of over 70,000 judges was not the work of a few minutes or even of a few days! We are not surprised therefore to find in Deut. 1:9-18 that the judges were appointed much later, near the end of their stay at Mt. Sinai of nearly a year.<sup>10</sup> We also learn that the people themselves selected their judges after Moses laid down the qualifications for them, an example later followed by the apostles (Acts 6:3). Moses probably did not even personally know very many of these judges.

This type of historical record, wherein related incidents are all fully presented in an unbroken section, even though that may mean getting ahead of the overall progress of a narrative, is not unusual in the Old Testament. One other example of this is the story of Caleb's inheriting Hebron. Compare Joshua 15:13-19 and Judges 1:1, 8-15.

Ex. 18:24 says "Moses hearkened" to Jethro. Meekness was a notable quality in Moses (Num. 12:3). Moses' willingness to obey God and to take good advice was part of his great strength of character.

20. *How did Jethro's visit end?* (18:27)

Moses let Jethro depart unto his own land, Midian. (See notes on Ex. 2:15 regarding the location of Midian.) We

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<sup>10</sup>The account in Numbers 11:10-16, 24-25 of Moses' appointing seventy elders to help him govern Israel has no connection with the event here.

suppose that Zipporah and the two sons stayed with Moses, though we read nothing more about their being with Moses. In the land of Canaan years later, we read of Moses' grandson (Gershom's son) Jonathan becoming an idolatrous priest. See Judges 18:30.

When Israel left Mt. Sinai, Moses requested Hobab, the son of Reuel (Jethro), to accompany them. See Num. 10: 29-32. The family of Hobab grew into the Kenite tribe dwelling among the Israelites. See Judges 1:16; 4:11, 17; I Sam. 15:6.

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THE TEXT OF EXODUS  
TRANSLATION

**19** In the third month after the children of Is-ra-el were gone forth out of the land of E-gypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Si-nai. (2) And when they were departed from Reph-i-dim, and were come to the wilderness of Si-nai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Is-ra-el encamped before the mount. (3) And Mo-ses went up unto God, and Je-ho-vah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Is-ra-el: (4) Ye have seen what I did unto the E-gyp-tians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (5) Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: (6) and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Is-ra-el.

(7) And Mo-ses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Je-ho-vah commanded him. (8) And all the people answered together, and said, All that Je-ho-vah hath spoken we will do. And Mo-ses reported the words of the people unto Je-ho-vah. (9) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people