



## *Compilation of the Priestly Kingdom*

### *Parashat Yitro (17) – Jethro*

**Torah:** *Shemoth* 18:1 to 20:26

**Haftarah:** *Yeshayahu* 6:1 to 7:14; *Yeshayahu* 9:6-7

**Apostolic Writings:** *Mattithyahu* 5:8-20

Very few people appreciate advice, unsolicited input, from other people. Few people bother to follow such advice, however good it may be. All the same, it is standard practise that most people enrol for post-secondary qualifications such as universities and technikons. It is quite normal that these institutions teach students information based upon the experience of others, as well as personal advice. Irrespective of the field of study, there will also be advice and information passed on from colleagues and leaders, apart from good reference material.

Many people consider it one their main aim to attain a position of leadership, to such an extent that they appoint themselves experts in their profession. This is a very serious situation, as it could lead a novice in the wrong direction. A student doctor doesn't perform a heart transplant in his first year, neither does a first-year civil student design a bridge for a national highway. *Sha'ul* provides a list of qualifications for people who teach others, those who would like to become elders or attendants and for other people who aim to become leaders. *Timotiyos* was a young teacher and trained by *Sha'ul*. He hailed from the city of *Ephesos*, north west of the island of *Cyprus* and currently part of Greece. He was extremely eager, but lacked experience, a combination which created many problems in his congregation; during his last few years on earth *Sha'ul* parted with wisdom and experience to prevent further problems. The first epistle to *Timotiyos* is one of the most comprehensive manuals in Scripture for managing a congregation correctly and we see two of the most remarkable features to take note of, especially for those who are new on the Way of Truth:

*Timotiyos Aleph 3* <sup>6</sup>Not a new convert, lest he become puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment of the devil. <sup>7</sup>And he should even have a good witness from those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

A new convert, *talmid*, *Sha'ul* refers to here is the first-year doctor attempting a heart transplant, or the engineering student building the bridge over a national highway. The rules given to us by *YAH* is not something that can be achieved or learnt in a day or two; it is difficult to learn during one year and may not even be achieved in a lifetime! We must study Scripture intensely, because even experienced teachers sometimes still have problems with certain concepts and beliefs. Two good examples would be the fallacies of the trinity and the rapture. This is why, year after year, we work throughout the entire *Torah*, with additional passages from the prophets, Poetic Writings and the Apostolic Writings. Even *Mosheh*, with all

his knowledge from the university of *Egypt*, had to receive instruction from *YAH* over a period of many years to make it part of his being, enabling him to pass it on to others. Despite of this knowledge, he managed to exclude himself from entering the promised land because of disobedience! We will soon learn how his father-in-law taught him other skills, similar to *YAH* allowing different people entering our life, using them to teach us about our shortcomings. We should always display a teachable spirit and thereby gain more insight into Scripture.

*Sha'ul* briefly also addresses women in this letter to *Timothy* and although we learn from Scripture that women are not allowed to be teachers, they are sometimes very good leaders. There are some eleven women in Scripture referred to as prophetesses. Last week we learnt about *Miryam*, the sister of *Mosheh*; then there is the wife of *Yeshayahu* (cf. *Yeshayahu* 8:3), the four daughters of *Philippos* (cf. *Ma'asei* 21:8-9) and others. Scripture also makes mention of two false prophetesses, namely *No'adyah* (cf. *Neḥemyah* 6:14) and *Izebel* (cf. *Hazon* 2:20). Last week we met one of the women who did excellent work as a judge, named *D'vorah*. She ruled the people for a fair amount of time and was a woman who received her orders directly from *YAH*.

The common denominator we notice here points to leadership, just as we learn from the vision of *Yeshayahu*. We have a short summary on how to help protect leaders at [addendum A](#), written and forwarded by a convener of a Hebrew congregation. This prophet, *Yeshayahu*, one of the four more important or greater prophets, is chosen by *YAH* to warn an apostate people of their impending exile. However, before he can fulfil his task, he needs to be officially sanctified for service in the Kingdom of *YAH*. He experiences a vision where he sees *YAH* sitting on a throne with *seraphim* serving Him, describing the set-apartness of *YAH*. Most people during that period were aware that a vision from *YAH* usually predicted death and *Yeshayahu* is extremely alarmed. We learn how he describes it himself:

*Yeshayahu* 6 <sup>5</sup>And I said, "Woe to me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips – for my eyes have seen the Sovereign, יהוה of hosts."

<sup>6</sup>And one of the *seraphim* flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the slaughter-place. <sup>7</sup>And he touched my mouth with it, and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your crookedness is taken away, and your sin is covered." <sup>8</sup>And I heard the voice of יהוה, saying, "Whom do I send, and who would go for Us?" And I said, "Here am I! Send me."

People are empowered in many ways to preach the Word of *YAH*, whether to an individual, a group of people or even an entire nation. *Yeshayahu* considers himself unworthy, a man of unclean lips, but he is *YAH*'s choice and gets equipped to start his mission. Although the entire nation of *Yisra'el* broke up many years prior into the northern and southern tribes, *Yehuḏah* and *Yisra'el* (*Ephrayim*) respectively, *YAH* makes use of different people to make them aware of their disobedience. This is one of the few times that *Yeshayahu* puts a time stamp on any of his works. It is possible that it is specifically done to indicate the death of the most loved king since the time of *Shelomoh*. The people are at a spiritual ebb with this loss, because they are uncertain who the heir to the throne will be; at the same time *Ashshur* is stronger and more ambitious than ever to possess extra territory. This is where *Yeshayahu* receives the vision of *Yehuḏah*'s true King, *YAH*, who is more than enough to take care of the people.

*Aḥaz* has just been made king of *Yehuḏah*; he is the son of *Uzziyahu* and someone who doesn't really follow the ways of *YAH*, and consequently doesn't rule the nation according to those rules. One commentator, *Jerome*, makes an interesting observation: the year in which king *Uzziyahu* died is the same year that *Romulus*, one of the founders of Rome, was born. According to the chronology of *Varro*, Rome was founded around 754 BY. The national pride of *Yisra'el* died with *Uzziyahu* and has never been restored to this day.

The history of *Yeshayahu*'s calling, as well as our observation in the *B'rit Chadasha*, the Apostolic Writings, form a link with what we are now going to learn from *Torah*: it's all about leadership and how *YAH* calls people to fulfil His commands, His will, as well as to pass these on to His chosen people and correct their

iniquities. This chapter we start with is outside the timeline of events, something that is quite normal in Scripture. However, it teaches us that we should not read Scripture from beginning to end like a novel, but find the context in everything by means of a decent annual study plan. Gradually our knowledge is supplemented and therefore it is necessary that *Torah* is the foundation, to support and understand the rest of Scripture.

Shortly after *Mosheh* left *Midyan*, his wife *Tsipporah* returned to her father, *Yithro*, with their two sons. This is where *YAH* wants to teach us another lesson, because we see the words:

*Shemoth* 18 <sup>3</sup>and her two sons, of whom the name of one was *Gěreshom*, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land,” <sup>4</sup>and the name of the other was *Eli’ezer*, for he said, “The *Elohim* of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

When *Torah* expresses something in an extraordinary way, it is important that we pay attention to it. Unfortunately this translation, like most, is not error-free, because where we read in v. 3 “name of one” we see in the original text שֵׁם הָאֶחָד (shem ha-`e-*Chad*). The next verse in our translation reads “the name of the other”, but the original text renders it the same as the previous verse: שֵׁם הָאֶחָד. The correct way to read this would therefore be “... the name of one was *Gěreshom* ... and the name of one was *Eli’ezer*.” However, no available translation renders it correctly. Here we find that the relationship between *Mosheh* and his sons are exactly equal; the firstborn is not considered higher than the second son – both are equally important and fully equated with each other. In this way we learn that *YAH* never sets one person above another – everyone is equal in His eyes. People are sometimes treated differently because of their attitude or characteristics, but each one is one of a kind.

One of the most difficult things in life is to admit that we have acted incorrectly or inappropriately. However, this is exactly what *Yithro* does when he hears of all the miracles that *YAH* had performed for the people. There was not one idol that he did not worship, especially while in the service of Pharaoh. When he realises that the miracles *Yisra’el* had experienced, also those he heard of later, he bids his previous life farewell and comes to fully trust in the only Creator-*El*. This should set an example for each of us: conviction, followed by commitment, something that so many people have only heard about but don’t know how to apply.

*Yithro* had previously been an advisor in Pharaoh’s court. His name was apparently *Re’u’el* (cf. 2:18) and was possibly changed to *Yether*, which translates as ‘added’ because he inspected the laws of Pharaoh, checked them for loopholes and also added some of his own. The alternative is that *Yether* is a title and is later changed to *Yithro* when he comes to the realisation of The Way of *YAH*. This is also the reason why *YAH* sends him out to *Mosheh* to meet with him, apart from returning his wife and children to him. It seems possible that they celebrate *Shabbat* together, but we can’t help to notice a mutual respect for each other. Although *Mosheh* received brilliant training in *Egypt*, there are still a few things he needs to learn and this is where *YAH* makes use of another priest, someone of a different order, to provide the necessary training for *Mosheh* to become a full-fledged leader, but also someone who is well-educated in the field *Mosheh* needs to be trained in.

While *Yithro* is there, he finds that *Mosheh* places a great burden on himself by daily hearing the people’s complaints all by himself. *Mosheh* learns to master various administrative tasks and *Yithro* also teaches him the finer arts to establish the rules of *YAH* to the nation. With the help of *Yithro*, *Mosheh* develops a leadership like never before. It also enables him to better control the campsite, while being available for more difficult legal cases that may arise. Instead of just one person, a large part of the nation now gets involved; responsibility is shared and everyone has a greater sense of belonging:

*Shemoth* 18 <sup>21</sup>“But you yourself, seek out from all the people able men, who fear *Elohim*, men of truth, hating unfair gain. And place *these* over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Everything possible is done to unite the nation, to create a people with the same thoughts, the same beliefs and finally they will be part of the heavenly hierarchy! *Mosheh* appoints men over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. According to the *Targum of Jonathan* there were 600 rulers over a thousand, 6 000 rulers over a hundred, 12 000 rulers over 50, and 60 000 rulers over ten people, in total about 78 600 rulers. One or two sages differ, but they never come up with different numbers, leaving us to accept the numbers of *Jonathan*. These rulers were fully trained and judged in smaller matters, while *Mosheh* himself handled the more difficult cases. He realises that *YAH* works through *Yithro* to teach him the necessary insight and leadership skills, as we may be taught by other people, even strangers, what the will of *YAH* would be in our lives. Sometimes it may be necessary to leave certain responsibilities to other people and not always try to handle everything ourselves. From the pen of Dwight L Moody<sup>1</sup>:

It is better to put a hundred men to work, than to do the work of a hundred men. You do a service to a man when you evoke his latent faculty. It is no kindness to others or service to God to do more than your share in the sacred duties of Church life.

Every person has a good and an evil tendency, a *yetzer hatov* and *yetzer hara*. The evil tendency is selfishness or self-interest and strives only for what may be important for the individual. The result of this is conflict, discord and ultimately hatred that arises, to such an extent that war breaks out between nations. Therefore, it is essential that there should be judges, where even parents have to act as judges over their children. A sound system of judges is important in every society to handle conflict between people where they cannot do it themselves. A just verdict must be delivered at all times and these judges must be people who have a respectful fear of *YAH*, something we discussed right at the beginning of this study from the epistle of *Sha'ul* to *Timotiyos*.

When *Yeshua* teaches his *talmidim* not to judge others, he is speaking from a personal point of view. In our relationship with our fellow man, it is wrong to judge others, except when we rebuke them for their failure to uphold *Torah*; however, this must always be done in an orderly and disciplined manner, without making any assumptions. We may therefore judge their actions, but not the person. What our fellow human beings do in secret will be revealed by *YAH*, Who will judge them as He knows everything.

The people who are appointed as rulers do not have a higher status than those not appointed, but they are empowered to be able to judge matters. They may therefore never judge the person, but they should only judge the case at hand. This means that every person in *YAH*'s eyes still has the same value, but the status is changed. For this reason, it is also important that we respect those who have been appointed by *YAH* for such positions, whether rulers, judges, teachers, leaders or other forms of status; we should also regularly intercede for them, that they perform their duties correctly and apply it to the honour of *YAH*.

After this exercise in appointing judges and rulers, the task of *Yithro* is complete and *Mosheh* gives him leave to return to his own people. According to *Targum Jonathan* he made proselytes of all the people in his own country. According to *Jarchi*, the *Qëynite* (cf. *Berëshith* 15:19 et al) and *Repha'ites* (cf. *D'varim* 2:11; *Yehoshua* 12:4 et al) were descendants of *Yithro* and eventually also adopted the lifestyle of *Yisra'ël*.

Once again we learn of dates, therefore the true believer will not be confused in the future regarding the period being mentioned here. As believers, we have no excuses not to celebrate or attend the festivals of *YAH*. In the third month after the people had departed from *Egypt*, they arrive at the wilderness of *Sinai* – about a day's journey from *Rephidim* where they had previously camped. *Mosheh* is called by *YAH* to go up to the mountain, where he receives various instructions regarding the way the people should conduct themselves, as well as promises, the most important of which are the following (cf. *Këpha Aleph* 2:5, 9; *Hazon* 5:10; 20:6):

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1 Meyer, Frederick Brotherton. *Mosheh: God's Servant*. A "One Evening" Condensed Book series. Westchester, Ill.: Good NewsPublishers, 1961;p. 210

*Shemoth* 19<sup>5</sup> ‘And now, if you diligently obey My voice, and shall guard My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession above all the peoples – for all the earth is Mine – <sup>6</sup>‘and you shall be to Me a reign of priests and a set-apart nation.’ Those are the words which you are to speak to the children of *Yisra’el*.

Most scholars agree that *Shemoth* 19:3-6 is the heart of *Torah*. From this we learn that all peoples belong to *YAH* because the entire earth belongs to Him, but He has singled *Yisra’el* out as His firstborn, the people who were supposed to teach the rest of the world to live according to their way of life. *Mosheh* goes back to the elders of the people, teaching them what he has learnt; they go to the leaders of tribes and teach them, who in turn pass all this knowledge on to the rest of the people, as *YAH* had commanded *Mosheh*:

*Shemoth* 19<sup>8</sup> ‘And all the people answered together and said, “All that *יהוה* has spoken we shall do.” So *Mosheh* brought back the words of the people to *יהוה*.’

This reply from the people comes without hesitation. We will see later that they repeat these words on two different occasions (cf. 24:3, 7), but they don’t uphold their promise. Typically human, they are eager to satisfy *YAH*, but they do not yet realise that every human being has a rebellious spirit that kicks against the prods, the *yetzer hara*, that evil tendency we referred to earlier, which only brings out selfishness in man. They would experience this later when discontentment breaks out again.

Intimacy with *YAH* should be the most important factor in our lives. Whether you have plenty of money, many friends, prosperity and happiness in this life, it is as good as nothing if you have not yet developed the necessary intimacy with *YAH*. Man was not created only to live **for** *YAH*, but also **with** Him. If you are not living in His presence and have not experienced His presence in your life in a tangible way, you have not truly lived. It is therefore essential that you seek the will of *YAH* with your whole being, that you would be willing to sacrifice everything, for the sake of that intimacy with Him. You should set aside at least one hour each day for prayer, praise, and study of Scripture so that you can develop and promote that intimacy.

Here we see the mood of the narration changes. What should have created a festive atmosphere for the meeting with *YAH*, now changes into a frightening event during which lightning and thunder occur, coupled with distress and fear. Where there had never been boundaries, these are now established; anyone, even an animal, who touches the mountain must be killed. We must realise that boundaries are set for our protection. Removing boundaries does not create freedom, but danger and the possibility of death. Within *YAH*’s borders we will always have the necessary freedom and protection.

The people are to set themselves apart for two days; men are not allowed to approach their wives and everyone should wash their clothes. On the third day, *YAH* will appear to them. *Mosheh* is instructed twice to let the people understand that they are not to come near the mountain, nor touch it. The sign of fire is used by which *YAH* reveals Himself to the people. Fire is a representation of separation that illuminates, purifies and ennobles. The smoke and shaking that accompany this event indicate the omnipotence of *YAH* after which the clear sound of a trumpet is heard directly from the heavens (cf. *Mattithyahu* 24:31; *Qorintiyim Aleph* 15:52; *Tas’loniqim Aleph* 4:16; *Hazon* 8:13). Immanuel Velikovsky<sup>2</sup> suggested that a volcanic eruption could have occurred with accompanying trumpet-type sounds, but he also admits that the location normally accepted as *Sinai* is not volcanic in nature. It is therefore only the hand of *YAH* displaying His omnipotence.

Here at *Sinai* the people will receive both *Torah*, *YAH*’s instructions, as well as the tabernacle. *Torah* promotes obedience of the redeemed people of *YAH* while the tabernacle promotes praise and worship. We therefore see that *Torah* and the tabernacle have to do with two important expressions of trust of man, having been redeemed by the grace of the power of *YAH*: obedience and worship. However, there is

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2 Velikovsky, Immanuel. *Worlds in Collision*. Paperback ed. New York: Pocket Books, Simon and Schuster, 1950, pp.108-111



something very important to take note of here. *Torah*, incorrectly translated as 'law', in no way changes the provision of, or detracts from the promises *YAH* had given *Abraham* as a covenant. *YAH* didn't give us *Torah* in order for unbelievers to be justified (cf. *Ma'asei* 15:10-11; *Galatiyim* 2:16, 21; 3:3-9, 14, 17, 24-25), but as an aid to be set apart, rules by which we should live daily as redeemed people. Therefore, when Christians bring the accusation that we should "not be **under** the law," we can answer them that we should "not be **without** the law."

Ten days after *Yeshua* ascended to heaven, obedient believers gathered and *Kěpha*, in obedience to *Shemoth* 19:4-6, addressed the twelve tribes of *Yisra'el* during which he quoted these exact words *YAH* had given *Mosheh* at *Sinai*. It happened on the same festival, *Shabu'ot*, that the people at *Sinai* received the Ten Words given by *YAH* to *Mosheh*, something we will address shortly. A remnant of the twelve tribes, about 120 men, gathered in the upper room in *Yerushalayim* for their morning prayers during the celebration of the festival of *Shabu'ot*. Many people were also outside at that time. *Ruach HaQodesh* came powerfully over these men. *Kěpha* stood in the outer room and addressed men from different nations with the quote mentioned above:

*Kěpha Aleph 2* <sup>9</sup>But you are a **chosen race, a royal priesthood, a set-apart nation, a people for a possession**, that you should proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, [emphasis original]

These men were touched by *Kěpha's* message, also the way he interpreted the words *Yeshua* had shared with them, and in humility of spirit they returned to the ways as taught by their forefathers. Those outside also experienced the upper room event during which tongues of anointing descended upon them. Scripture teaches us that three thousand men were anointed by *Ruach HaQodesh* on that day, the same number that were killed during the worship of the golden calf, a study we will handle in about four weeks from now in the will of *YAH*.

Only people who are committed to *YAH* and live in obedience according to the covenant He had made with *Abraham*, can respect *Shabu'ot* and other festivals of *YAH*. From this group only a handful of people, being in the right place, will receive that anointing. There are many believers who, to this day, still do not understand what the festival of *Shabu'ot* is all about, because they refuse to study *Torah*, thinking they have enough knowledge and pursue other trivialities instead, doing their own research on renegade fads. In *Hazon* 3:14 *Yeshua* rebukes the congregation of *Laodikeia* because they are lukewarm. We learn from the words of *Yeshua*:

*Hazon 3* <sup>20</sup>"See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

This door is *Shabu'ot*, the entrance to the tabernacle. The first three festivals of *YAH* took place in the outer court of the tabernacle, in public, visible for all to see, perhaps even be convinced. All three these festivals have already been fulfilled, as well as the festival of *Shabu'ot*. *Yeshua* now stands at the entrance of the tabernacle and those who hear his knocking and open, will enter with Him to celebrate the three remaining festivals, festivals that will no longer be public, but in total seclusion. During *Shabu'ot*, at the door of the tabernacle, the bride will receive the *k'tubah*, the *Torah*, in which all rules of *YAH* are outlined, as well as the promises He makes to His bride. Some will accept these and enter, while those who refuse will be cast out into outer darkness.

Last week we learnt about the *man* the nation had to collect every day. Regardless of the amount collected, it amounted to one *omer* – just enough. It also teaches us, starting at the first day after the weekly *Shabbat*, to count every day during the festival of *Pěsaḥ* for seven weeks, until day 50, when *Shabu'ot* commences. During this period of time we literally count the blessings that *YAH* pours out on us, as the *man* He had poured out on the people. They had enough to eat and our blessings are enough to see us through.

This study does not lend itself to teaching the fine details regarding a Scriptural marriage, but we have that documentation available on request. What we would like to highlight here, though, is the marriage between *YAH* and His chosen people. Everything is spelled out in the seven festivals (*cf. Wayyiqra* 23 in full), a dress rehearsal of what will happen in the *olam haba*, the future world. As believers we learn during every festival the importance of preparing ourselves to stand pure and ready before our Bridegroom:

- 🥂 *Pēsah* is when the bride is called out to set herself apart and filled with *Ruach HaQodesh*;
- 🥂 Unleavened Bread, along with the counting of the *`omer*, is preparation for purity;
- 🥂 Offerings of first fruits, a gesture of gratitude for *YAH*'s provision;
- 🥂 *Shabū'ot* is the engagement ceremony during which the marriage covenant is given;
- 🥂 *Yom t'ruah* is the announcement of the Bridegroom's return to fetch His bride;
- 🥂 *Yom Kippur* is the celebration of the marriage, the wedding day;
- 🥂 *Sukkoth* is the wedding reception, also known in some circles as the Supper of the Lamb. During this occasion, the nations will come together as guests to participate in the festival (*cf. Zeḱaryah* 14:16-21; *Ḥazon* 19:7).

It is extremely important that no believer will ever make excuses of any kind to not attend festivals – in their entirety, but especially for the entire period in the cases of *Pēsah* and *Sukkoth*. It is first and foremost a sign of obedience, but also in order to receive blessings, as the obedient *talmidim* experienced in the upper room. *YAH* does not distribute blessings where we are in disobedience, therefore we need to be on the spot and at the appointment where blessings are distributed. The rules that *YAH* gave to the nation by means of *Mosheh*, also known as the Law of *Mosheh*, is extremely comprehensive and not limited to just the ten words we will study shortly. There are both rules of disclosure, as well as administrative rules.

When *YAH* starts speaking, the people are distressed and request that He would preferably only speak to *Mosheh*, who would later relay the words to them. This also ensures that nobody would approach the mountain, the order *YAH* had given previously. With this request that they prefer not to hear *YAH* directly, but would listen to *Mosheh*, the people show their unwillingness, something which could also lead to disobedience. By using a go-between, it creates a spirit that may even lead to idolatry. This is one of the many reasons why *Yeshua* had to die on a torture stake on our behalf, so that we can have direct access to *YAH* once again, another reason why we don't worship *Yeshua*, but only *YAH*.

We know of two types of laws, rules, that exist in the *TaNakh*:

- 🥂 Irrefutable laws: these can be both positive or negative and the Ten Words of *YAH* is a good example. It typically includes words like "You may..." and "You may not..."
- 🥂 Subtle or witty laws: this is also positive or negative, but is determined by circumstances. It reads almost like modern computer language and is characterised by "if ... then..."

However, compared to other rules of the ANE, the Decalogue (ten words) is positive and concise. *YAH* grants unprecedented freedom to *Yisra'el*, with very few restrictions on their person (*cf. Berēshith* 1:29-30; 2:16-17). The ten words that form the foundation of *YAH*'s rules make use of verbs instead of nouns. The latter sometimes creates confusion and there is always a gap for debate, while verbs are constructive and avoid any confusion. *YAH* gave us ten commandments, not ten suggestions. They were all put together to bring order to a chaotic world caused by sin and addiction.

Most scholars divide the ten words into two groups, but in different ways:

- 🥂 The older method, used especially by Hebrew scholars, is known as the Philonic method, named after the Hebrew scholar Philo. Here two groups of five commands are placed together and are also illustrated as such on the two stone tablets that *Mosheh* brought from the mountain.

- 🏆 The more modern method, Augustinian, is named after the church father Augustine, according to Origin, and divides it into two parts; the first four commands are on one stone tablet and the last six on the other. It is based on the first four commandments which directly relate to YAH, whereas the last six have to do with our relationship to each other as human beings (cf. *Mattithyahu* 22:36-40).

During excavations it was found that the original stone tablets could possibly each contain all ten instructions. This inference is made because of the usage in the ANE where any contract would always be prepared in duplicate – one for each party and very similar to our modern methods. This explanation is more acceptable than those previously mentioned, especially when we start researching the customs and traditions of those peoples. This would mean that one copy of the contract would be kept in the temple while the other is kept in a safe place of the parties concerned.

With ten words YAH transformed chaos into order and now, again with only ten words, He confirms order in the life of man, the crown of His Creation. Let's study each one separately from *Shemoth* 20:

1. Verse 3 teaches us: **You have no other mighty ones against My face.** First of all, it affirms the absolute Unity of YAH (cf. *D'varim* 4:6), therefore it includes anything that could draw our attention away from YAH, such as money, family, work, hobbies and much more. As we mentioned earlier, YAH expects a unique relationship with each believer.
2. Verses 4 to 6 teach us: **You do not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth, you do not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, יהוה your Elohim am a jealous Ėl, visiting the crookedness of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing loving-commitment to thousands, to those who love Me and guard My commands.** This should be obvious, but we still see people wearing crosses around their necks, hanging them on their walls or from the rear-view mirrors in their vehicles; others place strange figurines from Africa or other places and similar items throughout their homes. All of this is pure idolatry, even if you don't bow down to them, because these items were made by pagans and mostly contain curses from the tribes that made it or the places they originated from.

A quick note: the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches add words one and two (vv. 3-6) together as one and then divide v. 17 which deals with desires. No specific reason can be found for this, but we will point out more such irregularities later at [addendum B](#) where we place a list of differences and similarities between three groups.

3. Verse 7 teaches us: **You do not bring the Name of יהוה your Elohim to naught, for יהוה does not leave the one unpunished who brings His Name to naught.** From this we learn that YAH's Name is not used randomly and in any way – it is set apart. Use it during a message, study, or teaching, but not during ordinary conversations.
4. Verses 8 to 11 teach us: **Remember the Sabbath day, to set it apart. Six days you labour, and shall do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of יהוה your Elohim. You do not do any work – you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days יהוה made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore יהוה blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart.** This is the longest and most weighty word. Many Christians claim they don't need to revere the *Shabbat* because Jesus had nailed it to the cross – something that is not recorded anywhere in Scripture. *Yeshua* teaches us in *Mattithyahu* 5:17-19 that he came to fulfil the *Torah* (including *Shabbat*), to expand and explain it better for ignorant people like us and people with whom He walked on earth. *Sha'ul* teaches us that only the **charge against us** was nailed to the torture stake:



*Qolasim 2* <sup>14</sup> having blotted out that which was written by hand against us – by the dogmas – which stood against us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the stake.  
[emphasis added for clarification]

We are therefore obliged to honour YAH by fully respecting the *Shabbat* He had established at Creation, also according to the rules He put in place.

5. Verse 12 teaches us: **Respect your father and your mother, so that your days are prolonged upon the soil which יהוה your Elohim is giving you.** Although we cannot choose our parents, as the saying goes, YAH chose them for us. They have been appointed as leaders over us, as *Mosheh* was appointed by YAH as leader of *Yisra'el*. Even parents who abuse their children should be respected by their children, while the children should learn not to behave similarly towards their parents and their offspring. This can only be achieved through the Way of Truth – something that is your and my duty to bring home to everyone who crosses our path.
6. Vers 13 teaches us: **You do not murder.** This is also part of the *Noahide* laws, something that is a general set of rules for every society on earth. However, included here is that we should learn to guard our tongues, as we may sometimes offend or spiritually injure people, condemning them in a way that could be worse than physically killing them. This behavior is mostly observed between families and clans, but does not exclude spiritual groups, especially when people have different opinions.
7. Verse 14 teaches us: **You do not commit adultery.** Here we notice different opinions, but Scripture teaches us that it specifically concerns one or both people who are already married, but become sexually involved with others. The law of YAH requires that two people of the opposite sex get married to each other under His guidance and protection. As soon as a person seeks love outside of marriage, they transgress the law. We have to realise that what YAH has brought together, may not be separated in any way by any human.
8. Verse 15 teaches us: **You do not steal.** This may sound like something inferior, but it involves much more. Each person only possesses what YAH has granted to him or her. When you steal something from someone, no matter how small you may consider it, you are putting yourself above YAH by trying to claim for yourself something that had been awarded to someone else.
9. Verse 16 teaches us: **You do not bear false witness against your neighbour.** This includes not lying under any circumstances. *Hasatan* is the father of lies and was cast out of heaven for that very reason. By bringing your neighbor into disfavour with false testimonies or lies, you are once again trying to act as a judge over him, something that is strictly forbidden. Please refer back to previous sections in this study regarding judgement.
10. Verse 17 teaches us: **You do not covet your neighbour's house, you do not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbour.** This assignment is very closely related to the previous two, because once again YAH has allocated something to a specific person, giving him or her the authority to use as necessary. If you are lacking something, in your own opinion, it may simply be because YAH can't trust you with whatever you covet. Each person receives what YAH knows he or she can handle. *Yeshua* teaches us from a parable:

*Mattithyahu 25* <sup>21</sup> "And his master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy servant. You were trustworthy over a little, I shall set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

There is nothing wrong with obtaining something, after the necessary finances, research and other matters are handled in a justifiable way. However, wanting to have something just because your neighbour has it, is going directly against the commands and will of YAH.

After these words, *Mosheh* is ordered to build an altar of stone, with the proviso that it should not be made from hewn stone. From this we learn that he would have chosen and prepared suitable stones beforehand, stones that would fit together, almost like believers in YAH are 'uncut', but learn to fit in and stand together. This type of altar would take longer to build, as every stone would have to be placed against another to determine it's correct position. It is similar to a puzzle. Regardless of the number of pieces, each

piece has only one specific place – it does not fit anywhere else. You and I, as pieces of that heavenly puzzle, have a specific purpose and can't see that complete, finished, puzzle; however, YAH knows where each one would fit in and for Him it is important that we remain who and what we are. Therefore, never try or pretend to be someone else; there are enough of them already.

Finally, we learn from this *sidrah* of a type of attire, something that will be studied in more detail later. Priests must be properly dressed at all times, so that private parts are not exposed. You and I are priests, something we learnt from this study. This means that we will also be dressed appropriately to set an example for newcomers on The Way, thereby showing the necessary respect for YAH. Your dress code is a sign of who you are and attending a gathering in a sloppy way is a sign that you have no respect towards YAH Who you have come to worship. The same goes for women and as priests it is our task to ensure that our wives never seem inferior or cheap (*cf. Timotiyos Aleph 2:8-10; Qolasim 3:5-17 et al*).

In conclusion: each of us came into this world to live a meaningful life based on eternal values. However, the hustle and bustle of our daily lives sometimes try to change our priorities, causing us to veer off course. This is when YAH brings us to severe life-changing circumstances that pull us out of our delusions and force us back to reality. From here we would once again need to take stock of our preferences and start living according to what really matters. Praise YAH for His provision and loving care.

*Shabbat shalom!*

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15 Sh'vat 5785 / 13 February 2025

#### Sources:

Unless otherwise stated, all text is quoted from The Scriptures (2009)<sup>3</sup>. Due to personal belief, the word 'God' is replaced with the Hebrew '*Elohim*' or sometimes inflections thereof.

You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series – Dr. Bob Utleigh

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic *Torah* with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Book of the Upright

*The Word of יהוה is free, therefore this study may be distributed free of charge, provided no changes are made.*

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3 <https://isr-messianic.org/>

## Addendum A

How should a leader be protected from falling?

It is fundamental to understand that humility and contrition are essential in a spiritual leader. These qualities are the foundation that prevents missteps when experiencing and conveying supernatural power. Humility keeps us grounded in reality, and contrition reminds us of our dependence on *Elohim*.

Suffering and spiritual maturity are processes that purify and strengthen. Through suffering, we learn to trust and become more dependent on our Creator, while spiritual maturity gives us the wisdom to handle supernatural power responsibly and with discernment.

A group of true friends is a key factor in this process. A small council of trustworthy individuals, based on commitment, transparency, and accountability, provides a safe environment for spiritual growth. Here, even the main leaders can be corrected, which helps maintain humility and prevents abuse of power and extreme deviations.

There are temptations that are particularly dangerous on this spiritual path. Money, power, and pride can easily corrupt, leading a leader away from their purpose. Sex, criticism, and false doctrines can weaken morals and create confusion. “Civil matters”, distractions, and food can divert attention from what is truly important.

Being vigilant and listening to those who have different opinions is crucial to maintaining balance and the right perspective. Recognizing that one is vulnerable to making mistakes and being deceived is an important step in self-protection.

Knowing and protecting one’s own weaknesses is crucial to avoid being exploited by the enemy. In this context, the enemy’s primary goal is not to destroy spiritual leaders, but to use them to cause as much harm as possible to others. This underscores the importance of integrity and vigilance in spiritual leadership. A leader is created to influence others so they can be effective channels for good, but if they deviate, their influence can be just as powerful and effective for evil.

## Addendum B

Comparisons<sup>4</sup> of the Decalogue between Protestants, Hebrews and Catholics.

### Protestant

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

### Jewish

1. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
2. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath in honor of the Lord thy God; on it thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/2007/03/chart-comparing-the-ten-commandments.aspx>

5. Honor thy father and thy mother; in order that thy days may be prolonged upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

### **Catholic**

1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember thou keep the Sabbath Day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.