

Introduction:

Not really sure if the title of this lesson really gets at the idea of this lesson. Yes, Jethro was Moses' father in-law but much more.

I) Background

A) Reuel/Jethro

Exodus 2:16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

Exodus 2:18 When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How is it that you have come so soon today?"

1. Moses flees Egypt after killing an Egyptian slave master and goes to Midian.
2. God's divine providence at work.

B) The priest of Midian.

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

1. Not sure about his priesthood at this point. Melchizedek was a priest of God.
2. Patriarchal Dispensation, God spoke directly to the heads of families.
3. Midian was an idolatrous country.

C) He had seven daughters. **2.16**

1. They were shepherdesses – tended to their father's flock.
2. They faced an obstacle

Exodus 2:17a Then the shepherds came and drove them away;

3. Moses came to their aid

Exodus 2:17b but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

- a. Going to a well and watering a flock is a good way to meet a future husband/wife.
- b. Abraham's servant in **Genesis 24.11ff**; Jacob in **Genesis 29.10**.
- c. Want a worker go to a place of work. Want a godly spouse, go places godly people go.

Point 1 Jethro's reaction

Exodus 2:20 So he said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

1. Jethro recognized a hard worker
2. Gave his daughter Zipporah as a wife to Moses.
3. Wanted someone to provide for his daughter and family.

II) After the Plagues, Meets Moses

Exodus 18:1 And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people-that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. **2** Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

A) Jethro recognized the work of God

1. Comes to Moses in the wilderness.

Exodus 18:5 and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. **6** Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with

your wife and her two sons with her."

2. A warm relationship,

Exodus 18:7 *So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about their well-being, and they went into the tent.*

- a. Some people allow in-law relationships to be strained. (Jacob/Laban)
- b. Should be working together. Easier if both are serving God.

B) Jethro rejoiced

Exodus 18:9 *Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.*

1. Deliverance of Israel, not his people of Midian.
2. Gave God the credit
3. Recognized the true God.

Exodus 18:11 *"Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them."*

4. Serves as a priest of God.

Exodus 18:12 *Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.*

Point 2 - Jethro served God on God's conditions

1. People often want to serve God on their conditions.
2. I will serve God if... He will spare my love one, I can stay in this relationship, I can continue to commit this sin, etc.

3. The conditions of serving God are not under negotiations.
 - a. Believing in Jesus is not subject to change
 - b. Repenting is not conditional
 - c. Confessing Christ is not a matter of interpretation
 - d. Baptism is not optional
 - e. Obedience is not just for some

III) Jethro's Wise Counsel

Exodus 18:14 So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" **15** And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. **16** "When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

A) Moses was serving as a leader, God's spokesman, and judge

1. Consider the size of Israel, the complaints, hours of listening, the stress.
2. This is not good, **v. 17**

B) Jethro's wise counsel

1. By this time Moses and Jethro had years of getting to know each other.
2. They had built a relationship with each other.

Point 3 –

1. Teach them

Exodus 18:20 "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do."

2. Appoint qualified men

Exodus 18:21 "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

- a. Fear God- have a reverence for, serious minded
- b. Not covetous- subject to bribes
- c. Sense of organization

3. Let them do their task

Exodus 18:22 "And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you.

4. You take care of the big matters.

- a. Reminds me of **Acts 6** and the Apostles with the Hellenist widows.
- b. These are lessons for families, work places, congregations.

Conclusion:

Jethro and Moses had a relationship as in-laws which we can learn from. But all of us need to recognize the true God, rejoice in His salvation be ministers of God and give wise counsel.