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Jethro: Prophet and Priest of Midian



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INTRODUCTION

Moses can be considered one of the most significant prophets in the Old Testament. Because of Moses' greatness, credit is due to his mentor and father-in-law, Jethro **יִתְרוֹ**. The significance of Jethro's calling and ministry is often overshadowed by the more extensive prophetic narratives of Abraham and Moses. Jethro, therefore, is the main link between these two prophetic lines and is worthy of a place among the great early prophets of the Old Testament. Although the Old Testament limits the narrative surrounding Jethro to a few chapters in the Book of Exodus, the content and detail of these chapters provide a multitude of information on the ministry and priesthood of this man. Jethro is called the priest of Midian **כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן** which tells us that he was in a leadership position and performed priestly duties at either a shrine, temple, or mountain alter. His prophetic role is apparent as he introduces Moses to the true God of his fathers, Yehowah **יְהוָה**, and mentors Moses in the duties of a shepherd and judge of Israel.



Jethro plays a prominent role in the history of Israel, and the Old Testament records his main roles as father, priest, prophet and mentor. As a father, Jethro holds a significant place among the Old Testament Patriarchs and stands at the head of a principal Abrahamic clan. As a priest, Jethro descended from a long priesthood line and ministered over a desert region containing the mountain of God. As a prophet, Jethro obtained foresight into the mission of his son-in-law, Moses, the future prophet of Israel. Finally, as a mentor, Jethro instructed Moses in the duties of all the above mentioned roles, i.e. father, priest, prophet as well as trained him to be a caring shepherd and faithful follower of God. A detailed analysis of Jethro in these roles can be acquired from the writings and revelations contained in our holy scriptures.

Jethro as Father

We are first introduced to the man Jethro in the second chapter of the Book of Exodus. In this chapter, Jethro is first seen in his role as a father of seven daughters, the oldest of which was Zipporah. After a skirmish with some riotous shepherds, the daughters return to report to "Reuel their father" of how Moses single handedly "stood up and helped" the girls (Exodus 2:16-17). Some important points can be drawn from these

passages which correspond to Jethro's fatherly role. First, although Jethro is introduced to us initially as "the priest of Midian" (2:16), his primary role to his family is that of a loving father. Second, Jethro is referred to here not by his proper name but more importantly by his clan name, Reuel רְעוּאֵל. This was probably done to illustrate that Jethro is not only a father to his own family, but a patriarch of an entire clan.¹

In their rush to inform their father of the altercation at the watering hole, the daughters of Jethro neglected their valiant deliverer. Once Jethro saw that all the daughters were accounted for, he inquired about their lack of hospitality by asking: "And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man?" (Exodus 2:20). This lack of hospitality would appear as a reflection on the upbringing of Jethro's family and clan. Therefore, he instructed his daughters to go back and summon Moses to his tent for a meal. The hospitality of this Midianite family made Moses feel "content to dwell with the man" and because of Moses' valor and service, Jethro felt he would be the perfect husband to care for his daughter, as he would himself. Therefore, "he gave Moses Zipporah, his daughter" to be his wife (2:21). Through this union between Moses (an Israelite) and Zipporah (a Midianite), Jethro's family began to increase with the birth of his grandson, Gershom (2:22).

The next time Jethro appeared in his patriarchal role is after Moses and the tribes of Israel were liberated from Egyptian bondage by the God Yahovah. Back in Midian, Jethro received word of "all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 18:1). Jethro, his daughter Zipporah, as well as his grandsons Gershom and Eliezer were probably anxiously waiting for word of Moses' welfare and safety. Because of the danger and severity of Moses' mission in Egypt, he sent his wife and sons back to the custody of Jethro in Midian, where they would be safe and cared for. As soon as Jethro heard that the Lord delivered Moses and Israel from Egypt, he sent a message back to Moses, saying: "I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her" (18:6). Upon Jethro's entrance into the camp of Israel, Moses "went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him' and they asked each other of their welfare" (18:7). It is interesting that no mention is made to Moses' reunion with his wife or sons, only with his respected father, Jethro. Moses, the author of the Book of Exodus, probably did this for a conscious reason, that is, to emphasize the patriarchal role of Jethro and their close relationship with him.

Jethro as Priest

Jethro is first mentioned as the “priest of Midian” in Exodus 2:16 as stated above. The sudden appearance of this priest out in the desert raises the questions for whom he was priest, and from whom he received his priesthood? It is clear that Jethro is the priest of the God of the mountain in the land of Midian, who later revealed himself to Moses as I Will Be or Yehowah (Exodus 3:1, 14).² In answer to the latter question, from whom Jethro received his priesthood authority, the Exodus account is silent. The only evidence we can draw from the first two books of Moses is that Jethro is a descendant of Midian, the son of Abraham. Due to the lack of extensive information on Jethro’s priesthood authority in the Old Testament and the tradition of Moses’ divine reception of priesthood, scholars traditionally adhere to the interpretation of Jethro as a pagan priest of desert gods. We are fortunate to have further commentary on the priesthood authority of Jethro through modern revelation and prophetic exposition.

The key to unlocking the priesthood lineage of Jethro lies in the words of the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in September 1832. Doctrine and Covenants section 84 is rightly designated by the Prophet “a revelation on priesthood.” After the Lord addressed the topic of the temple, he immediately proceeded to reveal for the first time the complete priesthood lineage from Moses to Adam. Beginning with Moses, the Lord revealed:

And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which
he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro

And Jethro received it under the hand of Caleb;

And Caleb received it under the hand of Elihu;

And Elihu under the hand of Jeremy;

And Jeremy under the hand of Gad;

And Gad under the hand of Esaias;

And Esaias received it under the hand of God.

Esaias also lived in the days of Abraham, and was blessed of him--

Which Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who

And from Noah till Enoch, through the lineage of their fathers;

And from Enoch to Abel, who was slain by conspiracy of his

brother, who received the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the
hand of his father Adam, who was the first man” (D&C 84:6-16).

The significant element for our discussion lies with the mysterious priesthood bearers between Jethro and Abraham. The Lord does not give us any more details about the relationship of Caleb, Elihu, Jeremy, Gad, and Esaias to Jethro or Abraham. We can only assume that they were somehow related to each other. Nevertheless, these names are not unfamiliar to the student of the scriptures. We find people with these names attributed to important figures of the Old Testament. Since all these names are derived from standard Hebrew names, we shall first look at the Old Testament for possible answers to the identity or traditions of who these people may be. Although these men are known to the Lord, we can only speculate as to their true identity. The genealogies of the Old Testament provide a catalogue of names whereby to search. The names of Jethro's predecessors—namely Caleb, Elihu, Jeremy, Gad—appear in the early genealogies in a unique context.

The name Caleb appears a number of times in the Old Testament in reference to three different people.³ The most important of these being the Caleb who accompanied the original Israelites on the Exodus and was allowed to enter into the Promised Land with Joshua. This Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, though associated with the tribe of Judah, was not an Israelite but a Kenezite.⁴ The Kenezites were a people living in southern Palestine in the land of Edom in an area also associated with the Midianites. Caleb's father Jephunneh is not listed in any of the genealogies of Judah, and when Moses lists the princes of the twelve tribes who were to spy out the land of Canaan, Caleb is listed but not referred to as a prince. This Caleb was a contemporary of Jethro and could have possessed and bestowed the High Priesthood upon his relative Jethro although he preceded him in years.⁵

The next in the line of Midianite priesthood succession is a man named Elihu who bestowed the priesthood upon Caleb. The Old Testament attributed the name Elihu to five people. Some of these figures are not without interest to our study of these mysterious priests. The oldest reference is in the Book of Job which names one of Job's three companions as Elihu.⁶ The introduction of Elihu also gives his genealogy: "Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram" (Job 32:2). Ram stems from the tribe of Judah and is the ancestor of David as well as the brother of another Caleb the son of Hezron.⁷ We must also note that the setting for the story of Job takes place in the "land of Uz" which was in Edomite and Midianite territory.⁸ Although the genealogy of this Elihu seems to postdate the time of Caleb and Jethro, the traditions of Job are considered to be of a very archaic nature stemming from the regions of Midian.

Next in the priesthood line after Elihu is a man named Jeremy. It is very possible that this is the Greek reading of the Hebrew name Jeremiah as in Matthew 2:17 and 27:9. The name Jeremiah is famous for the prophet who prophesied unto the Jews before the Babylonian Exile. There is, however, references to the Jeremiahs who have interesting ties to our topic. Among the genealogies of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh in 1 Chronicles 5 is one Jeremiah who is associated with a list of famous forefathers inhabiting areas in northern Transjordan east of the Jordan River.⁹ In this list, Jeremiah is associated with a man by the name of Ephraim who in Genesis 25:4 is registered as the son of Midian. This same Ephraim was also one of Jethro's forefathers, and Jeremiah's association with him may be a clue in the identity of Jeremy as a Midianite himself.¹⁰

Jeremy or Jeremiah received the priesthood under the hand of a man named Gad who is also a mysterious figure. There are a few men with the name Gad in the Old Testament with interesting links to Jethro and his priesthood lineage. The first Gad to receive mention is the son of Israel (Genesis 30:11). Although this Gad does not play a significant role in our study, there is one noteworthy descendant of Gad with links to Jethro. In Numbers 2:14, Moses recorded that "the captain of the sons of Gad" in the camp of Israel shall be the son of Reuel. As stated above, Reuel is the name referring specifically to Jethro and the Midianites.

The Old Testament provides further traditions pertaining to important figures named Gad. Associated with King David is the prophet Gad who is called "David's Seer" (2 Samuel 24:11). Gad the seer was a holy man who communicated the word of the Lord to David before and after he was king.¹¹ Though chronologically unattached to Jethro, it is interesting to learn of a tradition of a Gad who is a prophet and a seer of the Lord. Even more intriguing is references in the first book of Chronicles of two descendants of Gad named Jeremiah.¹² Again, because these references are so far removed from Jethro and his priesthood predecessors, we can only acknowledge them as traditions, similarities, and parallelism.

The final personality in the priesthood lineage of Jethro is a man named Esaias. He by far is the most mysterious of all Jethro's predecessors. We do know, however, that the name Esaias—like the name Jeremy—is the Greek reading of the Hebrew name Isaiah.¹³ This tells us that the great prophet Isaiah, who wrote a sixty-six chapter book, was not alone in bearing this name. We also know that Jethro was a descendant of Midian the son of Abraham and that Esaias "also lived in the days of Abraham, and was blessed of him" (D&C 84:13). We are told that Esaias received the priesthood "under the hand of God," but what

exactly does this mean? BYU Professor Sperry—in whose honor this symposium is dedicated—taught that, “Obviously this would not be the pre-existent Savior, but His Father or some authorized representative. If the latter, it would probably be Abraham.”¹⁴ In comparison, we also learn that Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, illustrated in Genesis 14:19 with the similar phrase, “And he blessed him.” In addition, modern prophetic commentary states that the Lord “gave the priesthood to Abraham, who taught his children the principles of righteousness.” A few generations later, Moses would receive it “from Jethro, his father-in-law, who received it through Abraham.”¹⁵

Even with all the above references and parallels, we still do not have direct evidence for who exactly the men were in the priesthood lineage of Jethro. We can safely conclude that they were related to Jethro through his lineage to Midian and Abraham.¹⁶ The many Old Testament references to men with these names are connected to traditions linking them in some way to the Midianites. This is not a coincidence, but remnants of truth and traditions that were somehow retained through the ages of transmission. Although the identity of these men may be a mystery to us, they are known to the Lord who has graciously revealed their priesthood lineage and their association with Jethro.

Jethro as Prophet

Jethro belonged to a long line of prophets going back to Esaias and Abraham.¹⁷ As an ordained priest of the LORD, he had a testimony of the Messiah and knowledge of his mission. Although there are no recorded prophecies of Jethro, we can, however, attribute to him the foresight of his son-in-law’s mission as leader and prophet of Israel. Jethro probably learned from the LORD that this valiant and humble man, who was led through the desolate desert to the land of Midian, was chosen for his earthly mission in the premortal life.¹⁸ Perhaps he knew of the prophecies of Joseph regarding a prophet and a seer that the LORD would raise up? Or perhaps on one of the many occasions at the mountain of God, Jethro received instructions from the LORD of what he was about this matter for, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealed his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Knowing this, Jethro was eager to meet this stranger who naturally delivered and served his flock (Exodus 2:17). Surely this was a man after the LORD’s own heart. With the foresight of a prophet of God, Jethro would train Moses for his prophetic mission by showing him how to be a caring shepherd of a flock and by pointing him in the direction of the habitation of the only true God. Moses became a great prophet known to multitudes throughout time, because he had a great example in the prophet Jethro.

Jethro as Mentor

It was Jethro's duty as mentor of Moses to instruct and train him in all the duties mentioned above but also to train him on how to properly lead and judge Israel. Jethro immediately began this task after Moses' conquest at the well (Exodus 2:17). It is interesting that in the next scene (Exodus 3:1), we see Moses tending Jethro's flock! This may seem like a petty job for such a hero who Moses proved to be; surely Jethro had servants to tend the animals. In Exodus 2:20, Jethro questioned his daughters treatment of their deliverer and ordered them to summon Moses to his tent. Why then was Moses made shepherd of Jethro's flock and not guardian of his house or leader of a Midianite caravan? The answer is because Jethro knew Moses needed to learn about the essential qualities of a shepherd of a flock—humility, care, and leadership.¹⁹ Because Jethro was the priest of the land of Midian, he would have instructed Moses in the nature and dwelling place of Yehowah his God. Exodus 3:1 not only informs us that Moses was the shepherd of a flock, but that he consciously "led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God." The reader gets the sense of Moses' awareness of the sacrality of the space he is approaching, as well as his preparedness for the event about to take place. The text proceeds to inform us that Moses was determined to see more of the great sight he was beholding: "And Moses said: I will turn aside now, and see this great sight" (3:3). The Lord then called him by name and in return Moses answered in the traditional Hebrew idiom of readiness and preparedness *hinneni* or "here am I."²⁰ Jethro taught and prepared Moses to meet his God, who would qualify and strengthen the new prophet for his critical mission in Egypt.

After Moses' theophany, he "returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand" (Exodus 4:18-20). Moses would depart from his mentor a spiritual giant, however, his training was far from complete. Jethro's mentorship to Moses could be considered pure speculation had he disappeared from the pages of the Old Testament after Moses departed. On the contrary, Jethro reappears in

Exodus 18 after Moses accomplished the first part of his mission. In this chapter, Jethro resumed his role as mentor to fully complete the training of Moses.

Exodus 18 begins: “Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people” (18:1). On the opposite end, Moses led again his flock as he learned by tending the flock of Jethro—this time all the Tribes of Israel—to the mountain of God to rendezvous with Jethro the priest of the region (18:2-5). Upon the priest’s approach to the camp of Israel, Moses went forth to meet his respected mentor. When they met, Moses, the challenger of Pharaoh and parter of the Red Sea, bowed himself down and kissed, presumably, the feet of the priest or the hem of his priestly robe (18:7). Although this greeting can be considered the traditional and formal Near Eastern custom, it can also be considered a display of Moses’ respect for his father-in-law’s authority and position. Within Moses’ tent, which was the central local and seat of the tribal leader, he proceeded to report to Jethro the wonderful works the LORD had performed by his hand (18:8). As a result, “Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel” (18:9). The priest then blessed the LORD and testified: “Now I know that the LORD [Yehowah] is greater than all gods” (18:10-11).²¹ Like the words of the LORD to Abraham in Genesis 22:12, Jethro uttered a confirmation of his testimony and a proclamation to all that Yehowah was the only true God.

The next scene in Exodus 18 has Jethro officiating over a burnt-offering sacrifice and sacred meal. (18:12) Here it is Jethro, not Moses nor Aaron, who demonstrated the true order of sacrifice in the desert. Exodus 18:12 continues: “And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.” As a typical Near Eastern host, it would have been normal for Moses to host a sacrificial meal in honor of his guest. Yet it is his respected guest who presided, conducted, and officiated at the sacrifice and meal. This shift in roles is very unusual unless something more than a simple welcome party is being described. It can probably be interpreted in this context as ritualistic instruction by the veteran priest, Jethro, and the initiation of the leaders of Israel into the worship of Yehowah. This appears to be what is happening, for the account continues with this instruction theme.

The next scene resumes on the following day as Moses sat in judgment from morning until evening deciding the cases of the people (Exodus 18:13). Jethro, the veteran priest, observed Moses’ actions and saw the danger in the weighty task he took upon himself. We are not told how Moses came to be a judge, only that he is trying to act like one. Neither are we informed that God revealed the method of proper judgment to him. It

appears that Moses seems to be learning as he goes along. Jethro, obviously familiar with the duty, instructs the new Israelite priest on the proper priesthood method by which he can effectively judge his people. The seasoned priest stated:

Now listen to me! I will give you counsel,
and God be with you! You should represent
the people before God, and you should bring
their cases before God; teach them the statutes
and instructions...You should also look for
able men...Let them sit as judges for the people
at all times; let them bring every important case
to you, but decide every minor case themselves.
So it will be easier for you (NSRV Exodus 18:19-22).

That Moses was in need of advice about how to be an effective servant and leader is not the case, he had already proved that he was. Jethro, however, provided instructive counsel regarding the technicalities of Moses' calling as Judge and Priest of the Lord. The fact that Moses acted according to the counsel of Jethro, supports the idea of Jethro as mentor and Moses as pupil. The text witnesses: "So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said" (18:24). After instructing Moses in the technicalities of his priesthood duty and initiating Aaron and the elders of Israel into the cult of Yehowah, the priest of Midian departed and "went his way into his own land" (18:27).²²

The account in Exodus 18 provides ample evidence that Jethro acted as mentor to the first Israelite Priest of the Exodus, Moses, by relaying the technicalities of the priestly procedures regarding sacrifice, sacred meals, judgment, and revelation to him and his Israelite novices. This view profoundly adjusts the traditional idea of Israelite priesthood beginning strictly with Moses. However, with a detailed study of the priesthood of Jethro, we must conclude that the authority and training of Moses' priesthood was a product of his relationship with Jethro, the priest of Midian.

Conclusion

As stated in the opening remarks of this study, Jethro, the priest of Midian is often overshadowed by others in the Hebrew Bible. He becomes more noteworthy when we see him in his roles as a father, a prophet, a priest, and a mentor. As a Father, he loved his family and stood as a leader of his clan. As a priest, he descended from a long line of righteous Midianite priests whose traditions and memories are interspersed throughout

the Old Testament. As a Prophet, he foresaw the critical mission of Moses and instilled in him the necessary qualities of a leader. And finally as a Mentor, he instructed and trained Moses and the Levites in the proper priesthood government and worship of God. This examination of Jethro as the priestly mentor of Moses and instructor of the future priests of Israel is not meant to demean the position of Moses as prophet and leader of ancient Israel, but to show that Moses' greatness is a result of the righteous example of Jethro the Midianite.

Notes

1. The name Reuel appears in six other Old Testament passages, directly or indirectly, referring to Jethro and his clan. In Num 10:29 the clan name Raguel (the phonetically correct pronunciation of Reuel) is used for Jethro the father of Hobab (see William F. Albright, "Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition," CBQ 25 [1963] 1-11). In Gen 36:4, 10, 13, 17; 1 Chr 1:35-37 Reuel is listed as a descendant of Esau. This is not surprising since much of the southern geography of Edom was settled by the Midianites (cf. Kadesh-Barnea, Seir, Tina and Kenaz). In 1 Chr 9:8, descendants of Reuel are listed with the returnees to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Exile. These were probably descendants of the Mosaic-Midianite priests from the sanctuary of Shiloh (1 Chr 9:5). Finally, Num 2:14 lists Reuel as a descendant of Gad which is very interesting considering a Gad is listed in Jethro's priesthood lineage (D&C 84:11).

2. Jethro probably referred to the God of the mountain by the name Yahweh, or a similar name, like his forefathers. To Moses, however, this was the name familiar to the Midianites not the Israelites in Egypt. JST Exodus 6:3 states that Moses was to tell the children of Israel that Yahweh or Jehovah—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—sent him.

3. The three Calebs are: Caleb the son of Jephunneh (Num 13:6; 14:6; 26:65; 32:12; 34:19; Deut 1:36; Jos 14:6-14; 15:13-20; Jud 1:12, 13, 16; 1 Chr 4:15); Caleb the son of Hezron (1 Chr 2:50). Caleb the son of Hezron and Caleb the son of Our are related and stem from the tribe of Judah. Caleb the son of Jephunneh is associated with the tribe of Judah but is in fact a Kenezite, relatives of the Midianites. See Mark J. Fretz and Raphael I. Panitz, "Caleb," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [ABD], Vol. 1 ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 808-810.

4. The Kenezites stem from an ancestor by the name of Kenaz. The Old Testament mentions three people with this name: Kenaz the son of Esau (Gen 36:11; 1 Chr 1:36); Kenaz the younger brother of Caleb son of Jephunneh (Jos 14:14; 15:17; Jud 1:13; 3:9, 11; 1 Chr 4:15); and Kenaz the grandson of Caleb (1 Chr 4:15). Jethro is called a Kenite

which was a non-Israelite tribe (Jud 1:16), like the Kenezites, who lived in the regions of Edom and Midian. They became associated with the Israelites as a result of Israel's wanderings in the desert regions of Midian. Because the Kenezites and other tribal groups lived in the southern areas allotted to the tribe of Judah, they were allied with and then absorbed by Judah (See J. Kenneth Kuntz, "Kenaz," ABD, 4:17). Note also that the desert region incorporated into Judah vocalized, Middin (*Midiyn*) in Jos 15:61 has the same consonantal spelling as Midian (*Midyan*).

5. In Jos 14:7-10, we learn that Caleb was in his early forties when he spied out the Promised Land with Joshua. Although we do not know the age of Jethro, we usually assume he is much older than Moses who was in his eighties when he left Midian. If a younger Caleb was to ordain an older Jethro, we should not be surprised. We find all over the scriptures the motif of the elder as recipient of the younger, especially in the Old Testament. (cf. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Nephi, Joseph Smith, etc.).

6. The book of Job is often dated to the time of Abraham due to its archaic language and terminology. This would fit perfect with a tradition of an Elihu who lived some time between Abraham and Jethro. The references to other men with this name include the brother of David (1 Chr 27:18); a Manassehite general (1 Chr 12:21); and a Levite gatekeeper who possessed great abilities and was an authority over his ancestral house (1 Chr 26:1-7).

7. See 1 Chr 2:9, 25.

8. See Lam 4:21; Jer 25:20; Gen 36:28. See also Ernst Axel Knauf, "Uz," ABD, 6:770-771.

9. See 1 Chr 5:23-24.

10. See also 1 Chr 1:33. The other figures listed with Jeremiah and Epher also have interesting Midianite connections. Ishi has an ancestor named Epher (a Midianite) and Caleb (a Kenezite) who are listed among the tribe of Judah (1 Chr 4:1, 11, 17, 20). Azriel is associated with another Jeremiah, the prophet. Hodaviah is listed in Ezra 2:40 as a Levite (perhaps of the Mosaic-Midianite group; see Frank M. Cross, "The Priestly Houses of Early Israel," in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973] pp. 195-207) and in 1 Chr 9:7-8 with the heads of the families of Reuel, a Midianite clan.

11. See 2 Sam 22:5; 24:11-19; 2 Chr 29:9, 25 makes reference to a book of Gad.

12. See 1 Chr 12:4, 8, 10, 13, 14.

13. See Luke 4:17; Acts 8:30.

14. Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), P. 389.

15. Wilford Woodruff in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints'

Book Depot, 1854-86), 11:244-45.

16. *Times and Seasons*, 2:489: "Midian was the son of Abraham, by his second wife Keturah. He and his posterity peopled the land, which was called after his name, and *Jethro being fifth in regular descent from Midian*, lived in the days of Moses, and was priest of the Most High God, when Moses was a young man, forty years before God called him to lead Israel from Egypt." (Emphasis added).

17. See Rudger Clawson *Conference Report*, October 1909, p.65.

18. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979), p. 365.

19. It has been suggested that this was not just any flock but a special flock, a *Tempelhirt*. (See G.B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925], p. 201). Also that Jethro was a priest of a temple in his region (which is not unlikely according to discoveries of sanctuaries made in Timna, Arad, and Kuntillet-Ajrud; see Benjamin Mazar, "The Sanctuary of Arad and the Family of Hobab the Kenite," *JNES* 24 [1965] 297-303) and that Moses was made keeper or guardian of the sacrificial flock of Jethro. Although to some this may appear highly speculative, however, it does seem to follow the sacrificial tradition of the patriarchs in the Book of Genesis where priest-like figures having some sort of priesthood authority such as Adam, Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and Jacob offer animal sacrifices. See also, Aelred Cody, "Exodus 18, 12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites," *Biblica* 49 (1968) 153-66; and A. Cody, *A History of Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), pp.44-48.

20. See also Gen 22:1; 37:3; 46:2; 1 Sam 3:4-10; Isa 6:8.

21. This statement is used by opponents of Midianite origins of Israelite religion as an example of Jethro's conversion to Yahwism. The text says nothing of the sort. It does, however, offer further insight into Yahwistic monolatry, that is, strict obedience to one god though others may exist. Jethro was plainly stating that now he knew that Yahweh was greater than all other gods. His statement does not say that he worshipped these other gods, neither does it say that he denied their existence, just that Yahweh, the god he already knew and long worshipped, was confirmed in his eyes as the greatest. Compare the same statement made by God toward Abraham in Gen 22:12.

22. This is not the end of Midianite contact and influence with Moses or the children of Israel. Hobab who was probably the son of Jethro is asked by Moses to be a guide through the desert (Num 10:29-32); Midianite tribes settle in the southern territory of Judah (Jud 1:16; 4:11). Midianite priests may have also remained affiliated with the house of Levi and Moses thought the history of Israel, hence the many references quoted in this study referring to Midianite tradition. See Cross, "The Priestly Houses of Early Israel."